DEVELOPMENT AND INITIAL VALIDATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL OF FORGIVENESS FOLLOWING INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT

by

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ABSTRACT

AMANDA REBECCA HARDY D'ANGELO. Development and initial testing of a comprehensive model of forgiveness following interpersonal conflict (Under the direction of DR. AMY PETERMAN and DR. CHARLIE L. REEVE).

Psychological research on forgiveness has become increasingly prevalent over the past several years. However, there remain significant gaps in the theory guiding this research. This dissertation developed and tested a comprehensive model of the state forgiveness process across two studies. The first study used a constructivist grounded theory approach to discover the major themes in the forgiveness process. Thirteen interviewees discussed recent experiences of having been wronged by someone. From these interviews seven major categories emerged: history, the event, immediate aftermath, festering, fading, apology, and letting go and moving on. The second study tested the validity and usefulness of the model using questionnaire data from 185 university students. The hypotheses in the second study fell under two aims: identifying significant predictors of state forgiveness and identifying important life outcomes predicted by forgiveness. All hypotheses, with the exception of one, regarding main effects were fully or partially supported; however, those involving interaction effects were not supported. Modifications were made to the proposed model based on results from both studies within the context of past findings in the forgiveness literature. Overall, the model performed well under scrutiny and proved useful in guiding hypothesis development and results interpretation. Implications and limitations of the present findings are discussed in detail as well as directions for future research.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The psychological research on forgiveness in recent years has grown exponentially. Results have consistently shown that forgiveness is associated with better overall physical and psychological health (Lawler-Row, 2010; Lawler, Younger, Piferi, Jobe, Edmondson, & Jones, 2005; Witvliet, 2001); however, despite strong empirical findings, the underlying theory that should be guiding forgiveness research has been somewhat lacking. Important questions about forgiveness have been left unanswered along the way (Strelan & Covic, 2006). What is forgiveness? Why is it important? Is it always good to forgive? These are just a few of many seemingly straightforward questions about forgiveness that have been left unanswered or only partially answered by forgiveness researchers (Enright et al., 1992). However, more recent research on forgiveness has often focused either on its relationship to health constructs (e.g., Lawler-Row et al., 2005) or on interventions that encourage participants to forgive (see Wade & Johnson, 2008). While these studies often yield informative findings, the nuances in defining forgiveness, how it unfolds, and the context in which it occurs are often ignored or glossed over. This is likely due in part to the lack of a comprehensive model that describes both how the forgiveness process unfolds and how it fits into the broader scheme of one's life.

Considering the current state of the forgiveness literature, the purpose of this dissertation was threefold. First, the relevant theory and empirical findings on forgiveness

were reviewed. Second, a comprehensive theoretical model of the forgiveness process was developed. This model was based on the existing models of forgiveness as well as data collected from semi-structured qualitative interviews. Finally, an initial test of the validity of the model was conducted.

The reason such a model has not been developed before now is perhaps due to the complex nature of forgiveness. Furthermore, it seems that historical assumptions about forgiveness continue to influence research on the subject. The earliest writings on forgiveness go back thousands of years in religious texts, with the Hebrew Bible containing the first texts identifying and distinguishing forgiveness from other constructs (Enright, 1992; Vine, 1985). Different religions have historically viewed forgiveness somewhat differently (Cohen, Malka, Rozin, & Cherfas, 2006; McCullough & Worthington, 1999). This is an important point to remember when studying forgiveness, because psychological writings on the subject are very new compared to religious writings. Therefore, it is not surprising that psychological writings on forgiveness are heavily influenced by religious assumptions. Also, it is not only forgiveness researchers who are influenced by religious views on forgiveness; layperson ideas about forgiveness are influenced by religion as well. Forgiveness is an important component of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and is recognized as a virtue in Buddhism and Confucianism (Cohen, et al., 2006; Enright, 1992; Laufer et al., 2009; Lawler-Row, 2010; McCullough & Worthington, 1999; Rye et al., 2000; Schultz, Tallman, & Altmaier, 2010).

There are allusions to forgiveness in Buddhism and Confucianism (Enright, 1992). Buddhism and Confucianism place an emphasis on mercy and compassion. Within these systems discussions of mercy and compassion, ideas that are similar to forgiveness

emerge; however, forgiveness itself is never discussed as its own distinct construct within Buddhist or Confucian teachings (Enright, et al., 1992). Rather, it is conceptualized within the context of other similar constructs such as mercy, compassion, altruism, and magnanimity (Enright, et al., 1992).

In contrast to Buddhism and Confucianism, three other major religious systems, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all discuss forgiveness as a distinct construct (Enright, et al., 1992). The Hebrew Bible contains some of the most ancient comprehensive writings about forgiveness (Enright, et al., 1992). For example, the word salah, which is translated into English as “to forgive,” is mentioned 46 times in the Hebrew Bible (Enright, et al., 1992).

While these religions do have differences in conceptualizing forgiveness, one commonality between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is that the forgiveness of God or Allah encourages and enables people to forgive one another (McCullough & Worthington, 1999). However, it is important to consider the unique perspectives each of these religions has toward forgiveness because their differences might be contributing to the lack of consensus on the definition of forgiveness and the lack of a theoretical model to guide forgiveness research. Furthermore, it is likely that religious perspectives on forgiveness will influence the assumptions of both researchers and laypersons. It was only after centuries of theological and philosophical writings on forgiveness that the first case studies on forgiveness began to emerge in the psychological literature in the 1970s. Not surprisingly, much of that literature was heavily influenced by religious doctrine (e.g., Close, 1970). Enright and colleagues (1992) compared ancient religious writings on forgiveness to peer-reviewed articles on forgiveness that were published in the 1980s and

1990s and found important similarities between ancient and modern conceptualizations of forgiveness. For example, Enright and colleagues (1992) noted that both the ancient and modern writings on forgiveness included decreased negative reactions and increased beneficence toward a wrongdoer.

Since the 1980s and 1990s, empirical research on forgiveness has grown exponentially (Baskin & Enright, 2004; McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2000). This influx in research has improved understanding of forgiveness to some extent (e.g., how forgiveness is distinct from other similar processes or how forgiveness relates to mental and physical health; Enright et al., 1992). However, this large number of writings from different authors with varying perspectives in a short amount of time may have contributed to the lack of consensus within the forgiveness literature (Enright et al., 1992). There currently remains a lack of consensus on a definition of forgiveness and an inadequate theoretical foundation guiding the empirical research. It was the goal of this dissertation to overcome these limitations in forgiveness research by developing a comprehensive model that would provide a stronger theoretical context for forgiveness research.

Defining And Conceptualizing Forgiveness

The lack of an agreed upon, formal definition of forgiveness is one factor that significantly complicates the forgiveness research literature. (Kaminer, Stein, Mbange, Zungu-Dirwayi, 2000; Lawler-Row, Raines, Edlis-Matityahou, & Moore, 2007; McCullough et al., 2000). There remain nearly as many definitions of forgiveness as there are researchers of the subject, and it can be difficult to find consistencies between

definitions (Kaminer et al., 2000; Legaree, Turner & Lollis, 2007). For example, Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) developed a definition of forgiveness used by many researchers:

> People, on rationally determining that they have been unfairly treated, forgive when they willfully abandon resentment and related responses (to which they have a right) and endeavor to respond to the wrongdoer based on the moral principle of beneficence, which may include compassion, unconditional worth, generosity, and moral love (to which the wrongdoer, by nature of the hurtful act or acts, has no right). (p. 29)

In contrast to Enright and Fitzgibbons's (2000) definition, McCullough and colleagues (2000) use a broader definition of forgiveness: "an intraindividual, prosocial change toward a perceived transgressor that is situated within a specific interpersonal context" (p.9). Throughout the forgiveness literature there are definitions that range from the detailed definition provided by Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) to the minimalist definition provided by McCullough et al. (2000).

Despite the apparent difficulty in achieving a common definition of forgiveness, most researchers agree that a core component of forgiveness is forgoing one's right to negative thoughts, feelings, and/or actions toward a wrongdoer (Berry & Worthington, 2001; Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Kaminer et al., 2000; Lawler-Row et al., 2007, 2008; Lawler, Younger, Piferi, Billington, Jobe, Edmondson, et al. et al., 2003; Legaree et al., 2007; McCullough et al., 2000). There is also a second, related component of forgiveness, which involves fostering positive thoughts, feelings, and/or actions toward a wrongdoer (Berry & Worthington, 2001; Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Kaminer et al., 2000; Lawler-Row et al., 2007, 2008; Lawler, Younger, Piferi, Billington, Jobe, Edmondson, et al. et al., 2003; McCullough et al., 2000). However, there is not a consensus as to whether this second component is necessary to the forgiveness process (Legaree et al., 2007). Overall, it seems that there are characteristics of the wrongdoing

and the relationship to the wrongdoer that influence whether this second component (i.e., increased positive thoughts, feelings, and actions) is necessary to the forgiveness process (Worthington, 2005). For the purposes of this study, forgiveness was defined as a response to an interpersonal wrongdoing that includes forgoing one's rights to negative thoughts, feelings, and actions toward the wrongdoer and *may* also include fostering positive thoughts, feelings, and actions toward the wrongdoer (Berry & Worthington, 2001; Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Kaminer et al., 2000; Lawler-Row et al., 2007, 2008; Lawler, Younger, Piferi, Billington, Jobe, Edmondson, et al. et al., 2003; Legaree et al., 2007; McCullough et al., 2000).

An additional consideration adds to the difficulty in achieving a common definition; namely, the distinction between trait forgiveness and state forgiveness. Trait forgiveness, also known as dispositional forgiveness or forgivingness, refers to a person's tendency to forgive others and seems to be conceptualized akin to a personality trait (Brown & Phillips, 2005; Mullet & Azar, 2009). Someone high in trait forgiveness would be more apt to forgive wrongdoings across situations relative to someone low in trait forgiveness. In contrast, state forgiveness seems to refer to the degree of forgiveness manifest in relation to a specific wrongdoing (McCullough & Worthington, 1999). People can forgive some wrongdoings and not others. This would mean that the forgiver has a higher level of state forgiveness in one situation than another.

Although state and trait forgiveness are significantly positively related to one another, this does not mean that someone high in trait forgiveness would experience state forgiveness in every situation (Lawler, Younger, Piferi, Jobe, Edmondson, & Jones, 2005). Overall, it seems that trait forgiveness, as the name implies, is a construct that is

fairly stable over time (Lawler-Row et al., 2003). In contrast, state forgiveness can vary between situations and can be conceptualized as a process rather than a construct (Lawler-Row et al., 2003). Therefore, the present study used the term trait forgiveness as a label for the construct of one's overall tendency to forgive, while the term state forgiveness was used as a label for the process of forgiving a specific wrongdoing. However, it is important to note that, like other aspects of forgiveness, there are discrepancies among researchers in the conceptualization of state and trait forgiveness.

While there have been difficulties determining what constitutes forgiveness, there has been agreement on how forgiveness is distinct from other, similar processes (Kaminer et al., 2000; Rye et al., 2001). Such processes include pardoning, forgetting, condoning, excusing, and reconciling (Enright, Eastin, Golden, Sarinopoulos, et al., 1992; Lawler-Row et al., 2007; Luskin, 2002; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Worthington, 2005). While these processes may be related to forgiveness, they are describing clearly different phenomena. Pardoning is a legal term describing eliminating consequences associated with a crime (Kaminer et al., 2000). Forgetting refers to a lack of memory of the event (Kaminer et al., 2000). The term condone implies justifying the wrongdoing and acting as if it were acceptable or harmless (Kaminer et al., 2000). To excuse an event means to ignore it altogether and attempt to remove blame from the wrongdoer (Lawler-Row et al., 2007).

Finally, reconciling consists of mending the relationship with the wrongdoer and settling or resolving differences (Enright et al., 1992; Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Gaertner, 2011; Kaminer et al., 2000; McCullough et al., 2000). The most important distinction involves the relationship between the victim and the wrongdoer. While

forgiveness is focused almost entirely on the experience of the victim, reconciliation is focused on the victim, the wrongdoer, and the relationship between the two (Smedes, 1996; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). For example, it would be possible for a victim to forgive a wrongdoer who was now deceased; however it would be impossible for that same victim to reconcile with the wrongdoer because there is no opportunity for a restored relationship. Enright and colleagues (1992) describe forgiveness as a process that happens within one person (i.e., the forgiver), while the reconciliation process happens between both or all of the people in the relationship (i.e., the forgiver and the wrongdoer). Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to do so, similar arguments detailing the differences between forgiveness and related processes (e.g., pardoning, condoning, or excusing) could also be made. While all of these terms are similar and related to forgiveness, they are describing processes that are distinct from forgiveness (Lawler-Row et al., 2007; Luskin, 2002; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Worthington, 2005).

Although there is agreement among researchers on the distinction between forgiveness and related processes such as those listed above, there is evidence to suggest that many laypersons associate release from consequences, reconciliation, and forgetting with the definition of forgiveness (Jeffress 2000; Lawler, 2007; Lawler-Row et al., 2007). These discrepancies between scientific versus lay definitions of forgiveness have implications for forgiveness research. For instance, when asking research participants about forgiveness their personal definitions will influence their responses. If researchers are attempting to measure forgiveness and participants are basing responses on other constructs such as forgetting, this has implications for construct validity of forgiveness measures. One way researchers have attempted to circumvent the discrepancy between

secular and scientific definitions of forgiveness is by using measures of forgiveness that do not actually mention the word "forgive." For example, the Transgression–Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory-18 (TRIM-18) is a self-report measure of forgiveness that never uses any form of the word "forgive" in the instructions or items on the questionnaire. (McCullough, Root, & Cohen, 2006).

Another source of ambiguity in forgiveness research involves labels for the event or series of events that are being forgiven as well as the people involved in interpersonal forgiveness. Newberg and colleagues (2000) state, "that for forgiveness to be able to happen at all, there must be an initial harm or injury to the self that is recognized" (p. 101). However, there are different terms used to label harmful or injurious acts. Throughout the forgiveness literature, the terms transgression, offense, and wrongdoing are used interchangeably to describe such acts, often with no explanation given as to what these terms mean. It follows that the terms transgressor, offender, and wrongdoer are also used interchangeably to describe the person being forgiven.

After careful review of the forgiveness literature as well as definitions of terms used to describe a harmful or injurious act, it appears that the words wrongdoing and wrongdoer are most appropriate for labeling the event or situation being forgiven as well as the responsible individual(s). The word wrongdoing seems more appropriate than the word transgression, which can have religious connotations for many people. The word wrongdoing also seems more appropriate than the word offense, which can refer to an action that one might consider rude or shocking, but not something that might be forgiven. Therefore, the term wrongdoing was used to describe events for which

forgiveness is a possible response. As such, the term wrongdoer will be used to describe the person who engaged in the wrongful act.

Existing Models of the Forgiveness Process

Despite the abundance of models of forgiveness, the actual process of forgiveness is only moderately understood and has not undergone sufficient empirical examination (Strelan & Covic, 2006). This is not surprising given the discrepancies in definitions of forgiveness described above. Furthermore, the fact that most models of forgiveness were designed within the contexts of religious beliefs, the therapeutic process or both may have limited the scope of these models (e.g., Enright and Fitzgibbons's (2000) Process Model of Forgiveness Therapy). Also, there seem to be two types of existing forgiveness model, each with its own shortcomings. On the one hand, most existing models (e.g., Enright and Fitzgibbons's (2000) Process Model of Forgiveness Therapy) focus on the stages of the forgiveness process without explaining how it fits into a broader context or how it relates to relevant constructs. On the other hand, there are a few models (e.g., McCullough and colleagues' (1997,1998, 2000) Motivational Model of Forgiveness) that focus mainly on the relationship between forgiveness and relevant constructs without describing how the forgiveness process unfolds.

In order to understand how existing models may be improved, it is important to note the consistencies between them. McCullough and Worthington (1994) found four different stages that are common across process models of forgiveness: (1) "recognition of the wrongdoing;" (2) "commitment or decision to forgive;" (3) "cognitive or emotive activity;" (4) "behavioral action" (p. 5). The recognition of the wrongdoing is required in order for the forgiveness process to take place (Newberg, d'Aquili, Newberg, &

deMarici, 2000). The commitment to forgive (stage 2) is part of the broader process of deliberate cognitive and affective processing (stage 3; Newberg et al., 2000). Finally, these cognitive and affective changes (stage 3) lead to outward changes or behavioral expressions of forgiveness (stage 4; Newberg et al., 2000).

Strelan and Covic (2006) also reviewed models of state forgiveness (models comprised of sequential stages that involve cognitive, behavioral, and affective components) and found 28 different models published in peer-reviewed journals. Despite finding 28 different models, the authors were able to find similarities among these models (Strelan & Covic, 2006). According to Strelan and Covic, (2006) the following stages were consistent across forgiveness models: (1) "initial feelings of anger and hurt;" (2) "negative affective and cognitive consequences;" (3) "an acknowledgement that previous strategies of dealing with the hurt are not working;" (4) "a decision to either forgive, or consider forgiving;" (5) and an "understanding of, or empathy for, the wrongdoer" (pp.1063-1064).

Strelan and Covic (2006) also note a number of limitations of the process-based models of forgiveness they reviewed. First and foremost, the existing models of forgiveness have inadequate theoretical grounding and empirical support (Strelan & Covic, 2006). Strelan and Covic (2006) believe that this is due primarily to a lack of agreement among researchers on what forgiveness actually is, and hence what can be considered the final stage of the process. Also, there are discrepancies in the order of the last three stages listed above (i.e., numbers three, four, and five). In addition to these shortcomings, the stages proposed by Strelan and Covic (2006) are more prescriptive in nature rather than descriptive. For instance, the third stage is described as a realization

that negative reactions are ineffective. Since the authors do not offer empirical support for negative reactions being ineffective, it seems that this is more of an assumption possibly resulting from researcher bias. This prescriptive tone limits the generalizability of the model because it does not account for individuals who do not progress through the stages as described.

As McCullough and Worthington (1994) and Strelan and Covic's (2006) reviews show, there are a number of forgiveness models in the literature. However, two models (i.e., Enright and Fitzgibbons's (2000) Process Model of Forgiveness Therapy; and McCullough's (2000) Motivational Model of Forgiveness) seem to be most detailed and used most often. Since it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to review all existing models of forgiveness, these two models were reviewed in-depth to demonstrate the strengths and shortcomings of existing models. These two models were chosen because they appear to be the most theoretically sound models of those in existence. Furthermore, these two models are referenced most consistently in the empirical forgiveness literature. These two models were reviewed in order to demonstrate the existing state of forgiveness theory and the need for a comprehensive model of forgiveness that can undergo empirical testing.

Enright & Fitzgibbons's (2000) Process Model of Forgiveness Therapy is divided into four phases: uncovering, decision, work, and deepening (Klatt & Enright, 2011). Each of these four phases contains between three (in the decision phase) and eight (in the uncovering phase) units resulting in a total of 20 units (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000). The Process Model of Forgiveness Therapy (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000) was developed to help clients in a counseling setting move through the forgiveness process

(Klatt & Enright, 2011). Therefore, the term "client" was used when discussing this model to describe the person who has been wronged. Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) also recognize that not all clients are willing to attempt or even consider forgiveness as an option. Their model was developed to guide treatment for clients who had a desire to forgive their wrongdoers, but needed help in order to do so.

In the uncovering phase of The Process Model of Forgiveness Therapy, the client increases his/her insight into the wrongdoing and works through the pain caused by the wrongdoing (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000). This phase contains eight units, making it the longest of the four phases in the model. Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) conceptualize these units as the emotional reactions someone initially experiences following a wrongdoing. According to the model, during this phase, the client begins to become more aware of how the wrongdoing has impacted his/her life. For example, during the uncovering phase, the client is encouraged to consider if he/she might have certain defenses that are keeping him/her from examining the situation more closely (unit one). The client is also encouraged to uncover his/her anger and set a therapeutic goal to reduce that anger (unit two). In unit three the client is encouraged to admit the shame associated with the wrongdoing. In units four and five, the client increases awareness of his/her reduced emotional energy and his/her cognitive rehearsal of the wrongdoing, respectively. At times, the units in this model are referred to as layers of pain, which clients must uncover in order to better understand their situations. Although there are eight units in this phase of the model, Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) acknowledge that some of the units will not apply to all clients (e.g., comparing one's self with the wrongdoer in unit six or facing permanent injury in unit seven). The final unit of this

phase involves the client's realization that his/her idea that the world is a just place may have been altered. Overall, during this phase of the model, the client becomes more acquainted with how the wrongdoing and its aftermath have impacted his/her life.

After developing increased insight into the situation, the client proceeds to the decision phase (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000). This second phase of the model is used for the client to develop an understanding about what forgiveness is as well as what forgiveness is not. The three units in this phase include a realization that previous reactions to the wrongdoing were ineffective, a willingness to explore the option of forgiveness, and a commitment to attempt to forgive the wrongdoer.

The work phase is the third phase of The Process Model of Forgiveness Therapy. In this phase the client begins to experience changes in his/her thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards the wrongdoer. This phase consists of four units: reframing, empathizing, accepting, and giving. In the reframing unit, the client takes a new perspective on how he/she views the wrongdoer, his/her relationship to the wrongdoer, and him/herself. The therapist encourages this by asking the client questions (e.g., What must it have been like for the wrongdoer as a child?) to encourage a new perspective on the wrongdoer. In the empathizing unit, the client practices showing empathy and compassion towards the wrongdoer. Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) point out that this unit comes naturally on its own more so than other units and it cannot be forced. They also caution that while empathy can be helpful in the forgiving process, it can also be associated with reconciling when it is unhealthy to do so (e.g., in an abusive relationship). The next unit in the work phase is accepting. This unit involves not only accepting the wrong that was done, but also the aftermath and consequences of the wrong. This

involves a willingness to “bear the pain” associated with the wrongdoing (p.83). Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) suggest that by increasing the client’s acceptance of the pain associated with the wrongdoing, he/she becomes able to move on with life and the pain will begin to subside. Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000 conceptualize the final unit of this phase as “giving a moral gift” to the wrongdoer (p.84). They label this moral gift beneficence and suggest that it can be manifested in a number of different ways (e.g., smiling at the wrongdoer or being concerned about the wrongdoer). This unit is often one of the most difficult for clients and they should not be pressured to complete this unit before they are ready.

The deepening phase is the final phase of The Process Model of Forgiveness. This phase consists of five units: finding meaning through forgiveness, realizing the client has needed forgiveness in the past, feeling less alone in the world, feeling a new sense of purpose in life, and increased awareness of positive emotional impact of forgiveness. Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) point out that the units of the deepening phase often appear earlier on than described in the model. They point out that it is important for the therapist to recognize when these units emerge while working with clients.

Support for the phases and sequence of this model has been shown by comparing participant descriptions of their forgiveness process to proposed stages (Knutson, Enright, and Garbers, 2008; Miller, Osterndorf, Hepp-Dax, &Enright, 1999). These types of comparisons have shown strong positive correlations (e.g., r = .79 by Miller and colleagues 1999) between participant statements and The Process Model of Forgiveness Therapy (Knutson, Enright, and Garbers, 2008; Miller, Osterndorf, Hepp-Dax, &Enright, 1999. Denton and Martin (1998) asked social workers to describe the order in which their

clients progressed through the forgiveness process. The phases and sequences described by the social workers were very similar to those found in The Process Model of Forgiveness Therapy.

The second forgiveness model to be discussed is The Motivational Model of Forgiveness (McCullough, 2000; McCullough et al., 1997, 1998). This model is influenced by Kelley and Thibault's (1978) interdependence theory. McCullough and colleagues (1998) believe that forgiveness is similar to the constructs accommodation (Rusbult et al., 1991) and willingness to sacrifice (Van Lange et al., 1997) described in the interdependent theory literature. The Motivational Model of Forgiveness posits that forgiveness is a prosocial and motivational process that is primarily driven by empathy (McCullough, 2000; McCullough et al., 1997, 1998). The term prosocial refers to the social benefits that can occur when one's motivations towards a wrongdoer become more positive and less negative (McCullough, 2000, 2001). These benefits could include the welfare of others as well as the forgiver's relationships with others.

The Motivational Model of Forgiveness also suggests that forgiveness is a fundamentally motivational process. McCullough (2000) identified three motivational reactions to an interpersonal wrongdoing. The first two motivations that may occur following a wrongdoing are a motivation to seek revenge and/or a motivation to avoid the wrongdoer (McCullough, 2000; Ghaemmaphami, Allemand, & Martin, 2011). These two motivations typically occur automatically following a wrongdoing whereas the third motivation, benevolence, can occur consciously over time. Thus, the process of forgiveness involves a transition from high levels of motivations towards revenge and avoidance into high levels of motivations towards benevolence.

McCullough and colleagues (1998) also describe four categories of variables that help determine whether or not someone will forgive (i.e., social-cognitive determinants, offense-related determinants, relational determinants, and personality-level determinants). However, they point out that because the process of forgiveness is primarily driven by empathy, they suggest that if its effects are controlled, the four categories of determinants will have relatively small impacts on forgiveness.

Although The Process Model of Forgiveness Therapy and the Motivational Model of Forgiveness are the most comprehensive models of state forgiveness, these models are not without their limitations. McCullough and Worthington (1994) suggested that models of forgiveness should provide hypotheses that can be tested empirically and should include the antecedents, outcomes, and moderating characteristics of forgiveness. McCullough and Worthington (2004) suggested that process models of forgiveness could be more useful if they considered individual differences and considered what factors contribute to or detract from the forgiveness process with an emphasis on how and why individuals transition through the different phases of forgiveness (Klatt & Enright, 2011). They also suggested that process models focus on what factors facilitate or complicate forgiveness (McCullough & Worthington, 2004). Klatt and Enright (2011) suggested that models of forgiveness should include the efforts people take to move towards forgiveness, how people move from one phase of the forgiveness process to another, and what social, personal, and contextual variables influence the forgiveness process.

Bacharach (1989) indicated that a theory must contain predictions and explanations about relationships between variables. Bacharach's (1989) criteria for a theory also included boundaries that are based on the assumptions of the model.

Furthermore, Bacharach (1989) suggests that theories should communicate their predictions, explanations, and boundaries clearly so that they might be supported or refuted empirically.

When viewed through the lens of the criteria listed above, shortcomings in the two models become apparent. First, Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) note that The Process Model of Forgiveness Therapy is a prescriptive model rather than descriptive one. It focuses more on how the process of forgiveness *should* progress rather than how it actually does. This is likely due in part to the fact that it was developed within the context of therapy with forgiveness as the goal. The second shortcoming in this model is its lack of propositions regarding how forgiveness relates to other constructs.

While Enright and Fitzgibbons's (2000) model was developed in the context of forgiveness therapy, McCullough and colleagues' (2000) model was developed within the context of close interpersonal relationships. The assumptions from this model should be tested outside of this context of close interpersonal relationships (e.g., strangers; McCullough, et al., 1998). Furthermore, this model identifies forgiveness as a process that involves moving toward less negative to more positive motivations. However, the majority of the research on this model has focused on the relationship between state forgiveness and related constructs (e.g., McCullough et al., 1998) rather than the actual process or how one progresses through it.

Despite the shortcomings discussed above, these two models do have strengths that are helpful in guiding future research. Enright and Fitzgibbons's (2000) model provides detailed accounts of each phase of the model and how people in therapy progress through them. McCullough and colleagues' (1997, 1998, 2000) model makes

propositions regarding how forgiveness relates to other constructs and fits into the broader picture of one's life. The strengths of these models lie in different, but complimentary areas. If these strengths were combined, it would likely lead to a more comprehensive and theoretically sound model. This improved model could guide future research in answering the questions that remain about forgiveness. Can a consensus be reached among researchers and laypersons on a definition of forgiveness? After a wrongdoing, how do most people progress through the process of forgiveness? How and why does forgiveness fit into a broader context of overall health?

A Comprehensive Model of the Forgiveness Process

In order to address existing questions and promote cohesion within the forgiveness literature, a comprehensive forgiveness model was developed. In addition to the core processes, this model included possible psychological, physical, and social variables, which impact how (or perhaps even whether) a person progresses though the forgiveness process. As discussed previously, trait forgiveness can be conceptualized as individual differences in the tendency to engage in the forgiveness process, whereas state forgiveness is more appropriately conceptualized as the psychological state resulting from the process. Therefore, the proposed model applies to the process that would ultimately lead one to experience a state of forgiveness. The present study developed the proposed model of forgiveness in order to have a theoretical guide for future forgiveness research.

Before discussing this proposed model in-depth, it is important to note that it is only a preliminary model based on previous literature on forgiveness. It was not intended to be definitive or final. Rather, it was intended to be a summary of the past findings on

the subject that can be used to guide the attempt to develop a comprehensive model of forgiveness. Given the number of models of forgiveness already in existence, it would have been impossible for a new model not to be influenced by existing models in some way. Furthermore, it would have been impractical to attempt to develop a new model from scratch without being informed by past forgiveness literature. It was important to consider past findings on forgiveness in order to have a starting point for data collection and so that the past efforts, failures, and successes of past researchers were not simply repeated. However, it was also important to have a theory be grounded in data collection so that the impact of the assumptions of the researcher were minimized. This dissertation attempted to strike a balance between developing a model that was grounded in data collection and one that was informed by past findings. In order to strive for that balance, the proposed model was intended to outline the assumptions that influenced the data collection process, while also being flexible so that the data could drive the development of the model.

The proposed model was heavily influenced by previous findings and theories of forgiveness as reviewed above. Specifically, the model was heavily influenced by Enright and Fitzgibbons's (2000) and McCullough's (2000) models of forgiveness. Also, the findings from McCullough and Worthington's (1994) and Strelan and Covic's (2006) reviews of process models of forgiveness were used to guide the development of the proposed model. It is obvious that the models in existence are not without their shortcomings. Therefore, the proposed model is intended to be a flexible model that outlines previous findings in the forgiveness literature, while leaving room for new findings to influence the model.

In addition to existing forgiveness theory, the basis of the proposed model comes from another research tradition as well. Noting the limitations of previous theories of forgiveness, related areas of psychological research were searched for models that might provide additional insight. As such, the proposed model is influenced by a similar positive psychological construct known as posttraumatic growth (PTG; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995). The PTG model was used as a general template for developing the forgiveness model because it is a similar positive psychological process and PTG theory has strengths that can inform the areas where forgiveness theory is lacking. The functional descriptive model of PTG developed by Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) provides a comprehensive overview of how PTG occurs and how it fits into the broader context of trauma and well-being. The PTG model includes a number of elements, such as the person pre-trauma, the role of socio-cultural factors, and the role of both intrusive and deliberate rumination. The PTG model also shows that there are different pathways that can lead to PTG, rather than a single universal sequence of phases. These characteristics make the functional descriptive PTG model comprehensive and generalizable to a number of individuals and situations. Therefore, the PTG model served as a reference point for the development of a comprehensive model of forgiveness that can generalize to a wide variety of different individuals and situations.

A diagram depicting the proposed forgiveness model can be found in Figure 1. As the top of the model indicates, a conflict and the perception that the conflict involved wrongdoing are the prerequisites for an individual to engage in the process of forgiveness. This is based on the consensus among researchers “that for forgiveness to be

able to happen at all, there must be an initial harm or injury to the self that is recognized" (p. 101, Newberg et al., 2000).

The Four Proposed Phases of the Forgiveness Process

The left column of the model shows the four phases of the forgiveness process as outlined by the proposed model. They include automatic reactions, negative motivations, reflection, and resolution. These phases are first discussed as if all other moderating characteristics were equal. Then, the ways in which moderator variables are likely to influence the forgiveness process are discussed.

Automatic Reactions

The automatic reactions phase can be conceptualized as the automatic reactions that occur once one perceives that he/she has been wronged (McCullough, 2000). These automatic reactions are similar to Strelan and Covic's (2006) first two phases of "initial feelings of anger and hurt" and "negative affective and cognitive consequences" (p.1063). This phase is comparable to Enright and Fitzgibbons's (2000) uncovering phase. This phase consists of a composite of negative affective and cognitive reactions (Barber et al., 2005; Enright, Freedman, & Rique, 1998; Fitzgibbons, 1986; McCullough, 2000, 2001; Strelan & Covic, 2006). In this phase, the person who has been wronged would likely initially experience feelings of shock, anger, and sadness. He/she might also have cognitive reactions such as confusion or thoughts such as "I can't believe this happened." It is likely that he/she will experience the distress phase almost instantly once he/she has perceived he/she has been wronged.

Regardless of how one proceeds through the model, it is likely that most people who perceive they have been wronged will pass through this phase even if it is only

momentarily. This phase is labeled automatic reactions because the person who has been wronged typically has limited control over these reactions.

Negative Motivations

The negative motivations phase consists of a composite of negative affective and cognitive reactions, such as intrusive rumination or ongoing feelings of anger and resentment (Barber et al., 2005; Enright, Freedman, & Rique, 1998; Fitzgibbons, 1986; McCullough, 2000, 2001; Strelan & Covic, 2006). This phase also consists of motivations towards revenge and/or avoidance (McCullough, 2000). The person who has been wronged might want to avoid the wrongdoer or she might want to expose the wrongdoing to others as a means of revenge. The person also might have persistent intrusive thoughts about the wrongdoing accompanied by feelings of sadness and anger. While the components of this phase may be similar to those in phase one, the reactions in this phase are more long lasting, giving them the potential to have more of an impact on outcomes. The person who has been wronged also has more control over the components of this phase as compared to the components of the automatic reactions phase.

Reflection

The reflection phase can be conceptualized as the deliberate cognitions that can occur once the initial shock of the event has passed. This phase is similar to the third and fourth phases described by Strelan and Covic (2006): "an acknowledgement that previous strategies of dealing with the hurt are not working" and "a decision to either forgive, or consider forgiving" (p.1064). It is also similar to phases two and three described by McCullough and Worthington (1994): a "commitment or decision to forgive" and "cognitive or emotive activity" (p. 5).

As the individual moves into this phase, the automatic reactions to the event have subsided and the forgiver begins to search for ways to manage his/her reactions. In this phase, one considers whether or not the automatic reactions and/or negative motivations following the event are effective. While the forgiveness literature has yet to include the construct of deliberate rumination (Calhoun, Tedeschi, Triplett, Vishnevsky, & Lindstrom, 2011), this phase represents a shift from more intrusive and automatic rumination to more deliberate and intentional rumination. In some cases this will lead to a decision to attempt more positive reactions to the wrongdoer. However, actual changes in behaviors and affect will not occur until one progresses to the resolution phase discussed below. This is consistent with longitudinal findings that have shown decreases in intrusive rumination being associated with decreases in avoidance and revenge motivations later on (McCullough, et al., 2000; McCullough, 2001).

After the initial shock of the wrongdoing has passed, the person's thoughts and feelings might slowly begin to shift from being more negative and uncontrollable to being more deliberate and productive. He/she might now stop and consider how productive her motivations towards revenge and avoidance are. He/she may begin to think about the consequences of avoiding or seeking revenge against the wrongdoer. The person who has been wronged might also consider alternatives to revenge or avoidance such as having a conversation with the wrongdoer.

Resolution

This phase involves actual changes in motivations (i.e., thoughts, feelings, and/or behaviors) regarding the wrongdoing and the wrongdoer (McCullough, 2000). It is similar to the final phase described by Strelan and Covic (2006): an "understanding of, or

empathy for, the offender" (p.1064) combined with the final phase listed by McCullough and Worthington (1994) "behavioral action" (p. 5). The changes in this phase could consist of reductions in negative reactions such as motivations towards revenge or avoidance (McCullough, 2000). They could also consist of increases in positive reactions such as benevolence motivations (McCullough, 2000). The forgiver may remember times he/she committed a wrongdoing and empathize with the wrongdoer (McCullough, 2001; McCullough, Rachal, Sandage, Worthington, Brown, & Hight, 1998). The forgiver may be less likely to avoid the wrongdoer or seek revenge against the wrongdoer (McCullough, 2000). In some cases, the forgiver may experience a more passive release from negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards the wrongdoer with less of a focus on benevolence (Lawler et al., 2007).

The person who has been wronged might attempt some of the alternative reactions he/she considered in the acknowledgement phase. He/she could notice he/she has fewer thoughts of revenge or feelings of sadness (i.e., passive letting go of negative reactions). The person also might develop empathy for the wrongdoer and attempt to act on the considerations of having a conversation with the wrongdoer (i.e., active increase in positive reactions). This is the phase that will likely vary most from person to person and wrongdoing to wrongdoing. It can include cognitive, behavioral, and affective changes.

As the descriptions above show, there are overlapping components of each of the phases of the model. It is also possible that the forgiver might cycle through phases a number of times. For example, the person who has been wronged might return to the distress phase if he/she is reminded of the wrongdoing. There are also moderating

characteristics, such as the severity of the wrongdoing that will be discussed later, which can influence the length of time one remains in each of the phases.

Constructs Associated with Forgiveness

In addition to describing the phases of the process of forgiveness, the proposed model describes potential outcomes of the forgiveness process. These outcomes are labeled in bottom row of Figure 1. They include psychological health outcomes, physical health outcomes, and relationship outcomes. Each of these outcomes is discussed in-depth below.[1]

Anxiety

Anxiety is often used as an outcomes measure in forgiveness interventions. Typically, interventions focusing on increasing state forgiveness also lead to lower levels of anxiety (e.g., Coyle & Enright, 1997). Overall, both state and trait forgiveness appear to be negatively correlated with anxiety (Subkoviak, Enright, Wu, & Gassin, 1995; Witvliet, Phipps, Feldman, & Beckham, 2004); however, there are some caveats based on gender and type of forgiveness. A study of male and female military veterans showed a significant relationship between state self-forgiveness and anxiety; however, no significant relationship was found between state forgiveness of others and anxiety (Witvliet et al., 2004). In a group of outpatients being treated for anxiety and mood disorders there were significant gender differences in the relationship between anxiety and trait forgiveness (Ryan & Kumar, 2005). There was no significant relationship

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[1] The present study conceptualizes trait forgiveness as a stable construct and state forgiveness as a process that varies between situations. However, this distinction is not always observed in the forgiveness literature. Therefore, when reviewing empirical findings on forgiveness, the labels used by the original authors will be used or in cases where no distinction is made by the authors between state and trait forgiveness, these labels will be applied based on the forgiveness measures that were used in the study.

between anxiety and trait forgiveness in female participants; however, in male participants anxiety and trait forgiveness were significantly correlated.

There are consistent findings showing a negative relationship between both state and trait forgiveness and posttraumatic stress symptoms (Snyder & Heinze, 2005; Solomon, Dekel, & Zerach, 2009; Witvliet, et al., 2004). This is true in many different participants and situations. A negative correlation between posttraumatic stress symptoms and trait forgiveness has been shown in former prisoners of war and military veterans (Solomon et al., 2009; Witvliet, et al., 2004). Furthermore, undergraduates who experienced interpersonal trauma were less likely to experience posttraumatic stress symptoms if they forgave the wrongdoer and did not avoid interacting with him or her (Orcutt, Pickett, & Pope, 2005).

Forgiveness has not only been shown to have a negative correlation with PTS symptoms, but it also has been shown to mediate the relationship between PTS and other outcomes. For instance, in the prisoner of war study mentioned above, trait forgiveness was shown to mediate the relationship between posttraumatic stress symptoms and family adjustment (Solomon et al., 2009). It was actually through forgiveness that participants with posttraumatic stress symptoms were able to adjust to home life once again. Similar results were found in a group of adult survivors of childhood abuse. State forgiveness was shown to mediate the relationship between posttraumatic stress and hostility (Snyder & Heinze, 2005). Through the decision to forgive these participants became less likely to feel hostile towards their abusers.

Depression

In general, depression also appears to be negatively correlated with state and trait forgiveness (Barber, Maltby, & Macaskil, 2005). This relationship has been shown in college students (Webb, Colburn, Heisler, Call, & Chickering, 2008), Christian adolescents (Toussaint & Jorgensen, 2008), war veterans (Witvliet et al., 2004), and members of Eastern cultures (Webb et al., 2008; Tse & Yipp, 2009). In a sample of 72 clinical outpatients, state and trait forgiveness were significantly associated with affect balance and happiness (Toussaint & Friedman, 2009). Trait forgiveness has also been shown to be significantly associated with a composite of positive affect, optimism, and depression in participants in a study in Hong Kong (Tse & Yip, 2009).

There have been inconsistent gender differences found in the association between depression and trait forgiveness. In a sample of outpatients suffering from anxiety and mood disorders, there was no significant relationship in females between trait forgiveness and depression; however male participants endorsed a marginally significant ($p = .052$) negative relationship between depression and trait forgiveness (Ryan & Kumar, 2005). These findings are somewhat contradictory to those in a large nationally representative sample. For females in the sample, trait forgiveness (including self-forgiveness and interpersonal forgiveness) was significantly associated with decreased occurrence of a major depressive episode in the past 12 months; for males, this relationship with depression was found for trait self-forgiveness but not interpersonal trait forgiveness (Toussaint, Williams, Musick, Everson-Rose, 2008).

Rumination

There have been many studies exploring the relationship between forgiveness and rumination; however, these studies have solely focused on intrusive, negative rumination. Most of the research in this area focuses on anger rumination. One such study (Barber et al., 2005), explored the relationship between anger rumination and forgiveness. Angry memories (i.e., anger rumination) of the offense were most strongly negatively associated with forgiveness of self. Thoughts of revenge were most strongly negatively associated with forgiveness of others. Cross-sectional data have shown intrusive rumination about the offense and attempts to suppress it are positively correlated with motivations towards revenge and/or avoidance of the offender (McCullough et al., 2000, McCullough, 2001). Furthermore, as mentioned above, longitudinal findings have shown decreases in intrusive rumination being associated with decreases in avoidance and revenge motivations later on (McCullough, et al., 2000; McCullough, 2001).

Anger

Forgiveness has been shown to be negatively associated with anger and anger rumination (Barber et al., 2005; Konstam, Chernoff, & Deveny, 2001; Stoia-Carabollo, Rye, Pan, Kirschman, Lutz-Zois, & Lyons, 2008) In addition to correlational results, anger has been shown to be a predictor of forgiveness and to mediate the impact of forgiveness on health outcomes. A sample of 63 domestic couples who were in the process of terminating their relationships completed questionnaires on forgiveness, anger, and other psychological variables. Anger was a significant predictor of forgiveness when a motivational measure was used; however, this relationship was not significant when a measure of forgiveness behaviors was used (Welton, Hill & Seybold, 2008). Anger has

also been shown to mediate the relationship between forgiveness and health outcomes (see below for more details; Stoia-Carabollo, Rye, Pan, Kirschman, Lutz-Zois, & Lyons, 2008).

Psychological Well-Being

Forgiveness is positively associated with different characteristics of well-being such as life satisfaction, self-efficacy, self-acceptance, and positive affect (Barber et al., 2005; Subkoviak et al., 1995). In a sample of adults (ages 20-83), trait forgiveness was significantly positively correlated with two components of psychological well-being: environmental mastery and self-acceptance (Hill & Allemand, 2010). State and trait forgiveness have also been shown to be associated with life satisfaction and self-efficacy (Toussaint & Friedman, 2009; Toussaint & Jorgensen, 2008; Tse & Yip, 2009). In two longitudinal studies, Bono, McCullough, and Root (2008) found that increases in state forgiveness over time were associated with corresponding increases in life satisfaction and positive affect as well as corresponding decreases in negative mood. Furthermore, for individuals who report stronger relationship commitment to the wrongdoer, the positive relationship between state forgiveness and psychological well-being is strengthened

Physical Health Outcomes

In addition to psychological health outcomes, there is substantial theoretical speculation and empirical evidence for a link between forgiveness and better physical health (Worthington & Scherer, 2004). Since one aspect of forgiveness involves reducing negative motivations towards a wrongdoer, it follows that individuals who forgive would be less likely to suffer the negative health consequences associated with negative feelings such as anger and hostility (McCullough, 2000). However, both state and trait

forgiveness have been shown to have health benefits that surpass the impact of reducing anger (Lawler-Row, Karremans, Scott, Edlis-Matityahou, & Edwards, 2008; Seybold, Hill, Neumann & Chi 2001).

Perhaps the most important area in which forgiveness is related to health is in objective measures of physical health (e.g., blood pressure levels). In a community sample of adults living in the Northeast United States, trait forgiveness was associated with better red and white blood cell counts and plasma levels in the blood (Seybold, Hill, Neumann & Chi 2001). Forgiveness (both state and trait) also seems related to a reduced stress response when thinking about interpersonal wrongdoings (Edmondson, 2005; Witvliet et al., 2001). For example, trait forgiveness is shown to be associated with larger decreases in cortisol levels following a discussion of interpersonal wrongdoing (Edmondson, 2005). State forgiveness is also related to lower physiological reactivity (e.g., cardiovascular or neuroendocrine response) when discussing wrongdoings (Lawler et al., 2003; Berry &Worthington, 2001).

The motivations for forgiveness seem important to hard measures of health as well. For instance, people who reported forgiving out of religious obligation were more likely to have elevated diastolic blood pressure levels when remembering the wrongdoing than people who reported forgiving out of love for the wrongdoer (Huang & Enright 2000). Furthermore, the negative health consequences (e.g., higher blood pressure) of not forgiving seem to be more intense for relationships that are longer lasting and more intimate (Lawler et al., 2003).

Another health benefit associated with forgiveness is sleep quality. In a community sample of adults both state and trait forgiveness were positively associated

with better sleep quality (Lawler et al., 2005). Furthermore, in a sample of undergraduates, structural equation modeling yielded a pathway in which anger and negative affect mediated the relationship between forgiveness and sleep quality (Stoia-Carabollo et al., 2008). This pathway showed that more forgiveness was associated with less anger rumination and less negative affect, which led to better sleep quality.

Although age is not necessarily a physical health outcome for forgiveness; age has been shown to moderate the relationship between forgiveness and physical health. Middle-aged and older adults tend to report higher levels of self and other forgiveness (Allemand, 2008; Toussaint et al., 2001). Allemand (2008) found that older adults (ages 60 to 83 years) endorsed more trait forgiveness than did younger adults (ages 18 to 35 years). This finding remained even when controlling for the future time perspective. This was consistent with previous findings that showed children and adolescents endorsing the least trait forgiveness overall and older adults endorsing the highest trait forgiveness overall (Enright, Gassin, & Wu, 1992; Girard & Mullet, 1997; Mullet & Girard, 2000; Mullet et al., 1998, 2003; Subkoviak et al., 1995; Toussaint et al., 2001). Not only are people more likely to forgive as they age, they are also more likely to experience physical benefits in conjunction with forgiving (Toussaint et al., 2001). In a large sample of adults living in the United States, Toussaint and colleagues (2001) found that as age increases, the positive relationship between forgiveness and physical health grows stronger.

There is also evidence to suggest that forgiveness plays a role in the relationship between religion and health (Lawler-Row, 2010; McCullough & Worthington, 1999). Lawler-Row (2010) conducted three studies in middle-aged and older adults that explored forgiveness as a mediator of the relationship between religion and health. In all

three studies forgiveness significantly mediated (partially or wholly) the positive association between religion and health (Lawler-Row 2010).

Despite the majority of evidence pointing to a positive association between forgiveness and physical health, there have been some null findings in studies exploring this relationship. For example, forgiveness did not predict reductions in common physical symptoms in a sample of participants from Mumbai, India (Suchday, Friedberg, & Almeida 2006). These findings are similar to those from a sample of 60 undergraduate females (Edmondson, 2005) in which neither state forgiveness nor trait forgiveness was associated with physical symptoms. So, while evidence is strong for a link between forgiveness and physical health, the findings are not unanimous. There also is not a clear understanding of how or why forgiveness seems to have such a strong relationship to physical health.

Relationship Outcomes

There is less empirical evidence on relationship outcomes as compared to psychological and physical outcomes. McCullough and colleagues (2000) refer to forgiveness as a prosocial process because of the potential for social benefits following forgiveness. As mentioned previously, state forgiveness increases the chances that the forgiver will maintain their relationship with the wrongdoer (McCullough et al., 2000). Furthermore, state forgiveness has been shown to mediate the positive association between the relationship before and after the wrongdoing (McCullough et al., 2000). In a group intervention designed to promote state forgiveness, McCullough and Worthington (1995) found participants in forgiveness groups had significant increases in desire for reconciliation as compared to control group participants. State forgiveness has also been

shown to predict feelings of closeness towards a wrongdoer. In a sample of 165 undergraduates Bono and colleagues (2008) found that higher levels of state forgiveness on one day predicted greater feelings of closeness on the following day.

Berry and Worthington (2001) found that a forgiving personality (i.e., trait forgiveness) predicted happier and more loving romantic relationships. Other researchers suggest that these associations between forgiveness and relationships have the potential to increase the forgiver's perceived emotional support (Bono & McCullough, 2006; Karremans and colleagues, 2003). On the other hand, there is a risk that forgiveness could be associated with negative outcomes in abusive relationships (McCullough, 2000).

Potential Moderating Characteristics of the Forgiveness Process

The right column of the proposed model consists of characteristics that can moderate the process of forgiveness. These include individual characteristics, relationship characteristics, and wrongdoing characteristics. These characteristics can influence the likelihood of forgiveness as well as the impact forgiveness can have on psychological, physical, and social outcomes.

Forgiver Characteristics

Forgiver characteristics have been studied frequently in the literature and there are certain forgiver characteristics related to trait and/or state forgiveness. Of the traits of the five-factor model of personality, agreeableness is most closely related to trait forgiveness. Individuals high in agreeableness tend to be high in trait forgiveness and low in vengefulness (Barber et al., 2005; McCullough, 2001). Neuroticism has been shown to be negatively associated with state forgiveness and is generally viewed as being an inhibitor of forgiveness (Barber et al., 2005; Maltby, Wood, Day, Kon, Colley, & Linley, 2008).

As mentioned above, state and trait forgiveness are significantly positively related to one another (Lawler, Younger, Piferi, Jobe, Edmondson, & Jones, 2005). This means that individuals who are generally forgiving people (i.e., high in trait forgiveness) have a high likelihood of forgiving specific situations (i.e., state forgiveness). An important variable related to trait and state forgiveness is known as trait empathy and represents the forgiver's ability to empathize with the wrongdoer. The more one is able to recognize personal flaws and remember times when he/she needed forgiveness, the more likely he/she is to forgive a specific wrongdoing (McCullough, 2001; McCullough et al., 1998). Also, considering situational circumstances that may have contributed to wrongdoer behavior can help facilitate state forgiveness (Bono & McCullough, 2006). A willingness to empathize with a wrongdoer could be a reflection of the quality of the relationship as well as the nature of the wrongdoing (McCullough et al., 1998). Understanding the interaction between these three variables (i.e., empathy for wrongdoer, relationship quality, and nature of the wrongdoing) could help explain differences in trait forgiveness between people as well as individual differences in state forgiveness across situations (McCullough, 2001; McCullough et al., 1998).

Given the ties between forgiveness and religion, it is not surprising that people who consider themselves to be religious are more likely to endorse trait forgiveness or to consider themselves to be forgiving people and to value forgiveness more highly than their counterparts (Laufer et al., 2009; Lawler-Row, 2010; McCullough, 2001; McCullough & Worthington, 1999). However, despite this significant relationship between trait forgiveness and religiousness there is not a strong association between religion and state forgiveness (Laufer et al., 2009; Lawler-Row, 2010; McCullough &

Worthington, 1999; Worthington, 2008). This paradox between religious people valuing forgiveness (i.e., trait forgiveness) but not necessarily being more forgiving (i.e., state forgiveness) is known as the religion-forgiveness discrepancy (Lawler-Row, 2010; Tsang, McCullough & Hoyt, 2005). Possible explanations of this paradox could be the influence of social desirability of respondents, measurement issues, and the distal influence of religion on some decisions to forgive (McCullough & Worthington, 1999; Tsang et al., 2005).

Relationship Characteristics

The relationship to the wrongdoer is another important variable in forgiveness models. People who report relationships with wrongdoers that are more committed, closer, and more satisfying also report higher levels of state forgiveness (Bono & McCullough, 2006; Finkel, 2008; McCullough et al., 1998). In closer relationships, wrongdoers are more likely to apologize and victims are more likely to empathize (McCullough et al., 1998). These two variables (i.e., apology and empathy) have been shown to mediate the relationship between state forgiveness and closeness of the relationship (McCullough et al., 1998).

Relationship commitment (Cann & Baucom 2004; Finkel, 2008; McCullough et al., 1998) is also positively related to forgiveness following a wrongdoing. However, the correlations are not always statistically significant which is probably due to the complexity of relationships. Furthermore, forgiveness may also have a propensity to cause people to maintain their close relationships, which increases the association between state forgiveness and relationship strength (Bono & McCullough, 2006; Karremans and colleagues, 2003). State forgiveness has been found to be associated with

maintaining a relationship following a wrongdoing (McCullough et al., 2000). Higher distress levels following infidelity in a romantic relationship have been shown to be negatively associated with state forgiveness (Cann & Baucom, 2004).

The aforementioned findings apply to situations in which a relationship between wrongdoer and victim exists. However, wrongdoings can occur in the absence of a relationship (e.g., mass shootings). In such cases, there is often little or no opportunity for the victim to engage in beneficence towards the wrongdoer. As mentioned previously, Worthington (2005) suggests that in the absence of a relationship, a decrease in negative motivations towards wrongdoer is sufficient and beneficence is not necessary to constitute forgiveness.

Burnette and colleagues (2012) explored how the interaction between two variables impacted the forgiveness process. One of the variables was the perceived possibility that one might benefit from the relationship with the wrongdoer. The other variable was the perceived risk of exploitation by the wrongdoer. Burnette and colleagues (2012) suggested that whether the potential costs outweigh the potential benefits to forgiving a wrongdoer will significantly impact whether or not an individual decides to forgive.

Wrongdoing Characteristics

In addition to characteristics of the forgiver and the relationship, characteristics of the wrongdoing impact the process of forgiveness. One wrongdoing characteristic is the perceived severity of the wrongdoing. Researchers have suggested that in theory more severe wrongdoings would be more difficult to forgive (Lawler-Row et al., 2005; McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, 2000; Thoresen et al., 2000). There are empirical

findings supporting this hypothesis as well (Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Girard & Mullet, 1997). Another important characteristic of the offense is whether or not an apology has been given (McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough 2000). Typically, when an apology is given the likelihood of forgiveness increases (McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997; Mullet & Azar, 2009). As mentioned above, apologies are more likely to occur in closer relationships and they have been shown to mediate the association between relationship closeness and state forgiveness (McCullough et al., 1998).

Another characteristic that modifies the forgiving process is time since the wrongdoing. As time since the wrongdoing increases, there is typically a steady decrease in negative motivations towards avoidance and revenge (McCullough, Fincham, & Tsang, 2003). However, there is not a consistent trend in positive motivations towards benevolence (McCullough et al., 2003). McCullough and colleagues (2003) suggest that this is due to the greater amount of effort used in increasing benevolence motivations as compared to negative motivations. Furthermore, these authors suggest that consistent changes in negative motivations (i.e., revenge and avoidance) over time demonstrate a need for more longitudinal data on the forgiveness process. Overall, the findings on wrongdoing characteristics suggest that wrongdoings that are less severe, farther in the past, and for which the victim has received an apology are more likely to be forgiven that wrongdoings that are more severe, more recent, and for which no apology has been given.

A Summary of the Proposed Model

The proposed comprehensive model of forgiveness described above makes a number of assumptions regarding the phases of the process of forgiveness, the possible outcomes of forgiveness, and the moderating characteristics of forgiveness. These assumptions are based on the existing forgiveness literature. It is important to be aware of these assumptions for a few reasons. First, these assumptions can guide the data collection process in a way that builds on existing knowledge of forgiveness. It is also important to be aware of these assumptions to that they might be changed if they are not supported by the data. The following section will provide a summary of the assumptions of the model.

1. The perceived severity of a wrongdoing will be directly related to the degree of automatic reactions, such as anger, negative affect, and intrusive rumination.
2. A greater degree of intense automatic reactions will be followed by a greater degree of negative motivations, characterized by revenge and avoidance.
3. A greater degree of negative motivations will be followed by a greater degree of reflection, which will be characterized by deliberate rumination, reevaluating reactions, considering alternative reactions, and a decision to attempt alternative reactions.
4. A greater degree of reflection will be followed by a greater degree of resolution, which will be characterized by developing empathy for the wrongdoer, reduced avoidance motivations, reduced revenge motivations, and increased beneficence motivations.
5. A greater degree of resolution will predict better physical and psychological outcomes, as well as a better post-wrongdoing relationship with the wrongdoer.

6. Individual characteristics (i.e., demographics, personality traits, trait empathy, and spiritual beliefs), the pre-wrongdoing relationship with the wrongdoer, and characteristics of the wrongdoing will influence all phases of the forgiveness process, as well as moderate the relationship between forgiveness and physical outcomes, psychological outcomes, and post-wrongdoing relationship with the wrongdoer.

This dissertation was divided into two separate studies in order to further develop and validate the proposed model. The goal of Study One was to determine how closely the proposed model reflected the experiences of individuals who had recently been wronged. In order to compare the model to actual experiences of individuals, detailed and in-depth data were collected from participants who reportedly had recently been wronged by another person. Study One focused mainly on participants' descriptions of the wrongdoing, their relationship to the wrongdoer, and the aftermath of the wrongdoing. Participant descriptions were then compared to the proposed model and the model was revised accordingly in order to reflect the findings from Study One. The goal of Study Two was to provide further validation of the model by testing the assumptions listed above. While Study One used participant descriptions of the aftermath of a wrongdoing, Study Two used quantitative data to test the relationships represented in the model.

CHAPTER 2: STUDY ONE METHODS

Participants

Faculty/staff and students at a university in the Southeastern United States, who were 18 years or older and who reported having experienced an interpersonal wrongdoing no shorter than two weeks ago and no longer than two years ago were eligible for participation. Participant demographic information can be found in Table 1 of the Appendix. A prescreen survey was used to determine if these eligibility requirements were met. The minimum limit of two weeks allowed sufficient time for participants to progress at least partially through the forgiveness process. The maximum limit of two years allowed for a large number of participants to be eligible for participation, but helped increase the likelihood of adequate recall for the event. As this study was intended to collect rich, detailed data on different types of wrongdoings across different types of participants, no specific criteria were used to select certain types of wrongdoings or participant characteristics. Eligible participants were contacted in the order in which they completed the prescreen survey. Thirteen participants were interviewed for Study One. This is the number at which it was determined that saturation was achieved and there would likely have been diminishing returns for continued data collection (Mason, 2010).

Materials

Prescreen Questionnaire

The prescreen questionnaire asked participants to disclose their age, ethnicity, university status (i.e., faculty, staff, undergraduate student, or graduate student), highest degree earned (for faculty and staff), parents' highest degree earned (for students), and religious affiliation. In addition to demographics, the prescreen questionnaire asked "Have you been significantly wronged by another person within the past two years?" If the person answered yes to this question, they were asked "when did the wrongdoing take place" and to "briefly describe the wrongdoing" on the prescreen questionnaire.

Email Invitation

Eligible participants (see participants section for details on eligibility) were contacted via email. A copy of the email invitation can be found in Appendix C.

Interview- Part I

The interview component of the study was a semi-structured two-part interview that was audio recorded. The first part of the interview consisted mainly of open-ended questions intended to prompt detailed narratives from participants. A copy of the schedule for part I of the interview can be found in Appendix C.

Questions seven and eight were added to the interview schedule before the fifth participant was interviewed. These questions were included in all subsequent interviews. Also, in interviews one through four, the primary researcher attempted to follow the interview schedule as closely as possible. However, as data collection and initial coding progressed, it became obvious that interviewees would often answer questions before they were asked. Therefore, in later interviews, the researcher tended to allow the

interview to flow more naturally and would only ask the questions at the end of the interview that had not already been addressed. For example, if an interviewee had previously mentioned that their wrongdoer had never apologized, then question number three (i.e., “Did X (e.g., your friend, your mother) apologize?”) would not have been asked at the end of the interview.

Interview- Part II

The second part of the interview was structured in a way that was intended to have participants recall their experience chronologically. Part two of the interview was also audio recorded and combined the time-ruler method (Thorbjörnsson et al., 1999) with the narrative picturing technique (Stuhlmiller & Thorsen, 1997) per Reeve and colleagues’ description (2004) to evoke retrospective longitudinal responses from participants in a single data collection. Participants were asked to draw a line representing the trajectory of their forgiveness process from the time of the wrongdoing to the present day. The time-ruler method has been used successfully in the health psychology (Means, Swan, Jobe,& Esposito, 1994; Smith & Jobe, 1994) and organizational psychology literatures (Thorbjörnsson et al., 1999). It is not the participants’ drawings that are of interest for data analysis so much as the responses that are evoked from having participants discuss the trajectory of their experiences from beginning to present. In other words, having a visual representation of the timeline of events in front of participants is expected to help them remember and discuss the progression of events from just before the wrongdoing until the present. This made it easier for the interviewer to have a dialogue with them about the timeline of events following the wrongdoing. It also

allowed for data on the chronology of events to be collected at a single point in time. The interview schedue for part II can be found in Appendix C.

After participants finished the interview, they were asked to complete the following questionnaires: Transgression Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory-18 (McCullough, Root, & Cohen, 2006), The Forgiveness Scale (Rye, Loiacono, Folk, Olszewski, Heim, & Madia, 2001), Event-Related Rumination Inventory (Cann, et al., 2011), and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). These measures were included in Study One in order to have quantitative data to compare to the qualitative data collected in the interviews. See Appendix C for copies of the quantitative measures used in Study One.

Questionnaires

The Transgression–Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory-18 (TRIM-18; McCullough et al., 2006) was used to measure avoidance motivations, revenge motivations, and benevolence motivations. The original TRIM (McCullough et al., 1998) consisted of 12 items and two subscales. More recently, McCullough and colleagues (2006) added six more questions and a third subscale resulting in the TRIM-18. The TRIM-18 measures state forgiveness of an actual wrongdoing. Respondents rate items from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Scores are calculated for three subscales: Revenge (e.g., I'll make him/her pay), Avoidance (e.g., I keep as much distance between us as possible), and Benevolence (e.g., Even though his/her actions hurt me, I have goodwill for him/her).

Authors report acceptable internal consistency for Avoidance (α =.86), Revenge (α =.90), and Benevolence (α =.87) subscales as well as test-retest reliability over a three-

week period (Avoidance subscale = .86; Revenge subscale = .79). Authors also report support for construct validity. The TRIM and TRIM-18 correlate significantly with a single-item measure of forgiveness (McCullough et al., 1998, 2006). The Avoidance and Revenge subscales are shown to have low correlations with measures of social desirability. Confirmatory factor analysis of the original TRIM supported the two-factor structure (McCullough et al., 1998). However, when the benevolence factor was added, items from this factor loaded negatively on the Avoidance factor (McCullough, 2006). Therefore, McCullough and colleagues (2006) suggest reverse-scoring the Benevolence items and combining them with the Avoidance items on the Avoidance versus Benevolence factor (higher scores indicating higher Avoidance and lower Benevolence).

As mentioned previously, the word forgiveness is never used in the instructions or items on this questionnaire. The authors intentionally excluded the word forgiveness from the measure to avoid confounding from differences in personal definitions of forgiveness. This also avoids discrepancies between scientific and lay definitions of forgiveness mentioned above (Jeffress, 2000).

The TRIM-18 was chosen for a few reasons. It is a psychometrically sound instrument that has been used often by forgiveness researchers in the past. Its subscale scores (i.e., revenge, avoidance, and benevolence) also provided important quantitative and objective information regarding participants' current thoughts and feelings towards the wrongdoer. The avoidance subscale provided information on the degree to which a participant had a desire to avoid the wrongdoer or act as if he/she did not exist. The revenge subscale provided information on the degree to which the participant felt motivated to get even or to wish for bad things to happen to the wrongdoer. The

benevolence subscale provided information on the degree to which the participant harbored positive feelings and wanted to act kindly towards the wrongdoer. Overall, the information gathered from the TRIM-18 was helpful for comparing to the participant interviews to see if their scores on the three subscales were aligned with their narratives.

The Forgiveness Scale (TFS; Rye, Loiacono, Folk, Olszewski, Heim, & Madia, 2001) was used to measure affective responses, behavioral responses, and cognitive responses to the wrongdoing. The Forgiveness Scale (Rye et al., 2001) is a 15-item Likert-type scale measuring the level of forgiveness towards an actual wrongdoer. Respondents are asked to think about an actual wrongdoing and report on their affective (e.g., "If I encountered the person who wronged me I would feel at peace."), cognitive (e.g., "I spend time thinking about ways to get back at the person who wronged me"), and behavioral (e.g., I avoid certain people and/or places because they remind me of the person who wronged me) responses to the wrongdoer.

Factor analysis yielded a two-factor solution for the scale consisting of an absence of negative reactions subscale and presence of positive reactions subscale. Authors report acceptable internal consistency (Absence of Negative Cronbach's alpha = .86; Presence of Positive Cronbach's alpha = .85) and test-retest reliability (Absence of Negative r = .76; Presence of Positive r = .76) for both subscales over a 15-day period. Authors also report significant positive relationships with other measures of forgiveness as well as a single item measure of forgiveness. Furthermore, TFS has been shown to be significantly positively related to religiousness, hope, and spiritual well-being and negatively related to anger (Rye et al., 2001).

The Forgiveness Scale was chosen because, like the TRIM-18, it is a psychometrically sound measure that has been used often in forgiveness research. Aside from the name of the scale, the word forgiveness is never mentioned in the questionnaire. It was chosen in addition to the TRIM-18, because it provided a different perspective on where participants stand in the forgiveness process. The TRIM-18 divides responses into three categories (i.e., benevolence, avoidance, and revenge) and is focused more on the motivations toward a wrongdoer. In contrast, TFS divides responses into two categories (i.e., positive and negative) and is focused more on thoughts, feelings, and actions toward a wrongdoer.

The Event Related Rumination Inventory (ERRI; Cann, et al., 2011) was used to measure intrusive and deliberate rumination during the weeks immediately after the wrongdoing. Intrusive rumination is a component of the distress phase of the proposed model and deliberate rumination is a component of the reflection stage of the proposed model. The ERRI is a 20-item self-report questionnaire designed to measure thought processes following stressful events. Questions are divided into those pertaining to intrusive rumination (e.g., I thought about the event when I did not mean to) and those pertaining to deliberate rumination (e.g., I thought about whether I could find meaning from the experience). Factor analyses in two separate samples offered support the two-factor solution for the measure (Cann et al., 2011). Authors also report acceptable internal consistency for both scales (Intrusive Rumination $\alpha = .94$; Deliberate Rumination $\alpha = .88$). Both scales consist of 10 items with responses ranging from 0 (not at all) to 3 (often).

Typically measures of rumination focus only on the unwanted type of repetitive thinking (e.g., Nolen-Hoeksema and Morrow's Response Styles Questionnaire-Ruminative Response Scale, 1991), while ignoring the more intentional and controlled form of recurrent thoughts (Cann et al., 2011). The ERRI's inclusion of deliberate rumination makes it a uniquely useful measure. Furthermore, the version of the ERRI used in this study allows for the passage of time in that it asks about rumination levels immediately after the event rather than presently. This allows a glimpse into how one's thinking patterns in the past impact them currently.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was used as a measure of the participants overall contentment with his/her life. The SWLS is a 5-item measure of global life satisfaction using a 7-point likert-type response scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). The scale has good internal reliability ($\alpha = .87$) and good test–retest reliability over a 2-month interval ($r = .82$; Diener et al., 1985). Scores are divided into six groups ranging from extremely dissatisfied (scores from five to nine) to highly satisfied (scores from 30 to 35). This measure was chosen based on its past use in college students and forgiveness research. It was also an appealing measure of life satisfaction because of its consideration of the major domains influencing life-satisfaction (i.e., relationships, work/school life, personal growth, spirituality, and leisure), which are also relevant to the forgiveness process.

Procedure

Theoretical Framework

This study used a constructivist grounded theory perspective for data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory methodology is well known for its

commitment to grounding the final product of research in the data collected (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). A constructivist approach to grounded theory acknowledges the researcher's subjective role in collecting and analyzing data (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006; Mills, Bonner, Francis, 2006).

Although researchers do not typically begin grounded theory data collection with a model in mind, there are instances in which this is the most appropriate option (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Birks & Mills, 2011). The present study represented such an instance for several reasons. First, given the number of existing theories on forgiveness there was no need to develop a completely new model that was uninformed by those already in existence. Furthermore, it would have been impossible to enter the data collection process without being biased by the existing literature. The development of the proposed model was an acknowledgement of the researcher's bias that was present before the model was written down. The proposed model helped to increase the researcher's awareness of these biases so that they could be more successfully managed during the data collection and analysis. Keeping this in mind, researcher bias was of particular concern in this study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Birks & Mills, 2011; Johnson, 1999). Therefore, special care was taken to monitor researcher bias.

During data collection, strategies for acknowledging and minimizing researcher bias included methods triangulation, reflexivity, and detailed memos (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Johnson, 1999). The strategy of methods triangulation was used by a) utilizing different forms of data collection in parts one and two of the interview; and b) including quantitative measures in the study. Reflexivity was used in addition to methods triangulation in order to minimize researcher bias. For example, the interviewer used self-

awareness and critical reflection during participant interviews (Johnson, 1999). Clinical interviewing skills (e.g., reflecting statements back to the participant using participant's own words) were also used to determine the most appropriate line of questioning for each individual interview. By using the participant's own language in summary statements and asking the participant if summaries were correct, the influence on the narrative being provided was likely reduced (Johnson, 1999). The final strategy for minimizing researcher bias was the use of memos, which is described in detail below.

Low inference descriptors (e.g., using participants' wording), investigator triangulation, and reliability checks were used during data collection and analysis in order to reduce researcher bias (per the suggestions of Corbin & Strauss, 2008 and Johnson, 1999). Labels assigned to categories were either verbatim or close paraphrasing of participants' wordings. Also, a research assistant completed verbatim transcriptions for all 13 interviews and the primary researcher completed verbatim transcriptions for three interviews. The primary researcher and the research assistant reviewed any discrepancies between transcriptions until revisions were agreed upon so that the resulting transcriptions were identical.

A research assistant also completed initial codings for two interviews as reliability checks. In preparation for coding the interviews, the primary researcher and research assistant coded a sample interview from a textbook and reviewed their findings with one another. Then, they proceeded with coding the interviews for the study. While the initial codings of the two interviews were not identical (as is typical in qualitative data analysis), overall they were very similar in how the incidents tended to be grouped and labeled. Where there were discrepancies, the research assistant's codes were used to

minimize the influence of the primary researcher's bias. The reliability checks revealed three main themes. One of the main differences was the tendency for the research assistant to consider larger segments of data to be a single incident. Another main difference was the research assistant's tendency to group more incidents together into a single category. The final main difference was the research assistant's tendency not to use the participants' words as labels for categories. Ultimately, these tendencies resulted in the research assistant's initial codings to have a broader perspective than those of the primary researcher. This provided insight into the primary researcher's tendency to be overly focused on minor details while neglecting the larger picture. The primary researcher used these insights while coding subsequent interviews and attempted to apply broader labels to larger segments of data. After initial coding was completed for all participants, one of the participants (who had granted permission previously) was emailed a copy of her coded transcript and asked for her feedback. This participant replied that she "agreed" with how the interview had been coded and offered no suggestions for revising the codes. During the process of editing focused codes into the final manuscript, the primary researcher submitted focused codes to the research assistant for review. The research assistant made suggestions on how to organize the results section and report the quantitative scores for each participant. Otherwise, she had no other suggestions for improving the codes.

The efforts described above to ensure rigor in this study were highly influenced by Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory perspective. This perspective was also highly influential in the procedures described below.

Memos

One of the most important tools throughout the study was the use of memos (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Memos were used in all phases of data collection and analysis. Some memos consisted of short, dated notes written by the researcher while designing the study, collecting data, and analyzing data. These memos were used to inform the process of developing interviews, choosing questionnaires, and analyzing data. Other memos were used to define and describe the major categories that emerged in the data (for greater detail, see "Focused Coding" section below). Eventually, major portions of these memos were used in the results and discussion sections of this text.

Consent and Confidentiality

IRB approval was obtained prior to data collection. Informed consent was obtained by having participants read and sign the participant consent form prior to their participation in the study (see Appendix D). There was also a notation at the bottom of the screening survey obtaining informed consent (see Appendix D).

Confidentiality was maintained by assigning a number sequentially to each participant. This number was used to identify all demographic information, qualitative data, and quantitative data. The researcher did not use participant names or other identifying information during the interview or quantitative data collection. If a participant disclosed identifying information (e.g., name) in the interview, it was removed or changed in the written transcript to protect confidentiality.

All digital data, including audio recordings, were stored in password protected electronic files accessible only to the primary researcher and research advisors. All hard

copies, including the participant consent forms, were stored in a locked file cabinet accessible only to the primary researcher and research advisors.

Recruitment

Prospective participants could access the prescreen survey in four ways. First, the study was posted on the psychology department research website and participants were assigned research credit for participation. Second, undergraduate psychology students enrolled in courses other than introduction to psychology were recruited in person in their classrooms when instructor approval is granted. Third, flyers were posted around the university and placed in faculty/staff mailboxes when the department head granted approval to do so. Fourth, an email containing a link to the prescreen survey was emailed to faculty, staff, and students. A list of email addresses was obtained from the Office of Institutional Research.

Psychology research pool participants were given .5 research credits for completing the prescreen survey. All other participants were entered into a drawing for a $50 Target gift card. Individuals who were eligible for inclusion were sent an email inviting them to participate in the interview portion of the study. Participants who attended the interview were given 3 research credits (psychology research pool) or a $10 Target gift card (all other participants).

Interview and Questionnaire Administration

The primary researcher conducted one-on-one interviews in a psychology research lab. When participants arrived in the lab they were asked to read and sign the informed consent document. Then the recording device was turned on and the researcher read aloud from the interview schedule.

As mentioned above, in earlier interviews, the primary researcher tended to stick closely to the interview schedule in an attempt to maintain consistency across interviews. However, as the researcher became more comfortable with the process, it seemed more important to obtain the richest, most detailed data possible by attending to what seemed most salient for the interviewees. Therefore, in later interviews, the researcher loosely followed the schedule, but rapport, flow, and the interviewees' cues became increasingly prioritized in the protocol.

Once both parts of the interview were completed, participants were given hard copies of the questionnaires and asked to read and follow directions carefully. When participants completed the questionnaires, they were given the debriefing form. Participants who were faculty or staff members were informed that they were not eligible for services at the counseling center on campus; however, they were informed that they could use the resources on the counseling center website and that the counseling center staff could refer them to resources in the community if needed. After participants completed the study, the researcher gave them their compensation (i.e., research credit or gift card). The interviewer stopped recording at the beginning of one interview in order to assess for safety and determine if the participant felt comfortable proceeding with the interview. The interviewer reminded the participant that she was a volunteer and could stop at anytime without penalty. The participant denied any safety concerns and indicated she was comfortable proceeding with the interview. If any participant had withdrawn from the study (none did), this would not have impacted their compensation.

Transcription

In order for the transcription process to inform the interview process, it was divided into two separate phases: rough transcriptions and verbatim transcriptions. Rough transcriptions were used to inform the interview process, while verbatim transcriptions were used for data coding. The primary researcher completed rough transcriptions as soon as possible after each interview took place (usually the same day). This involved the primary researcher listening to the entire interview one or two times and transcribing as much of the interview as possible. This allowed the primary researcher to continue with the use of memos to inform coding and theory integration. The memos recorded during transcription focused on the main themes that arose during the interview and what questions it might have been helpful to ask. This helped in generating questions in future interviews and helped the primary researcher be more aware of themes that emerged in the interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). It also allowed the primary researcher to remain saturated in the data during the interview process and to make modifications as needed. This allowed the data to influence data collection process (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Questions seven and eight of the interview schedule were added based on the researchers findings from rough transcriptions. While completing the rough transcriptions of the first four interviews, the primary researcher identified these questions as ones that would likely be helpful in future interviews and added them to the interview schedule.

After rough transcriptions of all interviews were completed, they were revised to reflect, word-for-word, what was said in each interview as accurately as possible. The final product from the verbatim transcriptions was used in the coding process.

Initial Coding

During the initial coding process each interview was coded in its entirety before moving on to the next. First, each sentence or phrase that represented a single idea (i.e., incident) was given a code that summarized it. Charmaz (2006) calls this coding incident to incident. The researcher proceeded through the interview and compared each incident to the ones before. Each incident was either given an existing code or its own unique one. Once all incidents had been assigned a code, the researcher moved on to the next interview.

Focused Coding

After initial codes were assigned for all interviews, tentative categories were explored. The primary researcher examined the most significant and frequent codes that emerged within and across interviews (Charmaz, 2006). Once tentative categories were identified, memos were written to describe each category. Participant drawings and scores on questionnaires also informed the coding process. Drawings from the time-ruler method were reviewed as needed in order to consider the role of the passage of time. Scores from the questionnaires were compared with data from the transcripts and memos in order to inform the interpretation of the data. The goals of each of the focused coding memos were to define the category, identify its properties, describe the factors influencing it, outline it's consequences, and discuss how it relates to other categories (Charmaz, 2006).

Per the suggestion of Charmaz (2006) the coding process was circular in nature. Focused coding often raised questions regarding initial coding (e.g., What do category "a" and "b" have in common?). When this happened, the researcher returned to initial

codes, questionnaires, and time-ruler drawings for review. Sometimes this process provided insight that was used to provide more detailed focused codes. Other times it revealed the need to revise initial codes to better fit the data. The circular process of reviewing the data, assigning initial codes, choosing tentative categories, and writing/editing focused codes, was repeated numerous times until the final draft of the results section was complete (Charmaz, 2006).

CHAPTER 3: STUDY ONE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 30 people completed the prescreen questionnaire. Of those who completed the questionnaire, 23 were eligible for the study. All 23 eligible participants were invited for an interview. Of those invited, seven did not respond to the invitation, three no-showed for their scheduled interview (one no-showed twice), and 13 completed the interview. The 13 participants were comprised of 11 females and two males. Their ages ranged from 18 to 37 with an average age of 24 (median age = 20; modal age = 20). Ten participants identified as undergraduates, two identified as graduate students, and one identified as a faculty/staff member. Seven participants identified as white, three identified as African American, two identified as Asian, and one identified as Hispanic.

The length of the interviews ranged from 20 minutes to 72 minutes with an average length of approximately 42 minutes. The resulting transcripts ranged from 10 pages to 31 pages in length. Summaries of each participant's interview are listed below. Demographic information can be found in Table 1 of the Appendix. Participant scores on quantitative measures can be found in Table 2 of the Appendix. Participants have been assigned pseudonyms in order to protect their identities.

"Seth"

Seth identified as a 19-year-old Caucasian male who was an undergraduate student. He identified as Catholic. He described being treated unfairly by a referee during

a sporting event. Seth's event reportedly occurred a little less than two years before his interview. He stated, "the ref. and I had a history" and described past games in which he and the referee had argued. Seth also mentioned that his father and the referee knew one another. Otherwise, Seth denied any type of relationship with the referee outside of sporting events. When asked if he had forgiven the referee, Seth responded, "I have and I haven't." He indicated that he had forgiven the referee "in the fact that it's just a game;" however, he reportedly "still didn't like the way he acted."

"Mary"

Mary identified a 20-year-old Caucasian female who was an undergraduate student. She selected "Other" when identifying her religion and specified "nondenominational" in the text box. Mary described having "a bad falling out" with her roommate about one year before her interview. The falling out eventually led to Mary moving out. She described having a platonic friendship with her roommate before the falling out. There was reportedly another roommate involved in the situation and Mary sometimes felt like "the middle man" between the two of them. However, Mary denied ever feeling wronged by the second roommate. At the time of the interview, Mary reported that she had forgiven the first roommate because she had "apologized" to Mary and they "talked about it." She reported that she no longer lived with the roommate, but "consider[ed] her one of [her] best friends again."

"Dean"

Dean identified as a 19-year-old African American male who was an undergraduate student. When asked to identify his religious affiliation, Dean selected "Other" and specified "Christian" in the text box. He described being "betrayed" and

"abandoned" by a group of three friends as he prepared to leave home for college about eighteen months before his interview. He described his friends remaining in his hometown while he left for college. Dean reported that he found out that his friends were "stab[bing] [him] in the back" by telling others "he thinks he's better than everyone" and "he's going to fail." He described a dinner outing with his friends that ended in an argument and "big uproar." Dean reportedly had very little contact with two of his friends after the dinner. At the time of the interview, Dean indicated that he had forgiven all three of his friends "because that's how [he] was raised." He described one of them apologizing to him and indicated that he maintained his friendship with that friend. However, Dean reported not having "any type of communication" with "the other two" and said he "wouldn't be surprised if was 20 or 30 years down the road and we still don't talk."

"Elaine"

Elaine identified as a 31-year-old Caucasian female who was an undergraduate student. She selected "Protestant" as her religious affiliation. Elaine described a romantic interest calling her a "train wreck behind [her] back" about six months before her interview. Elaine described being friends, but also having romantic feelings for him before he called her a train wreck. She reported that she had forgiven him and they had "hung out" since the incident and she did not "feel mad anymore."

"Kate"

Kate identified as a 27-year-old Caucasian female who was an undergraduate student. She selected "Other" as her religious affiliation and specified "nondenominational" in the text box. Kate originally described a conversation with her

husband about “family issues” in her prescreen paperwork. However, during her interview, she decided to discuss issues in her relationship with her mother-in-law (e.g., mother-in-law being “controlling;” and making comments about participant’s weight) as these were more salient for her. These issues reportedly occurred off and on for the past six years before her interview. During her interview, Kate specifically focused on how she felt “unappreciated” while planning a baby shower with her mother-in-law about three months prior to her interview. Kate described having to “forgive” her mother-in-law for “a lot of stuff.” She indicated that over time she learned to “let it go” in order to “deal with her.”

“Trish”

Trish identified as a 28-year-old African American female who was a university faculty/staff member (she selected both faculty and staff on the demographics questionnaire). She selected “Other” as her religious affiliation and specified “Christian” in the text box. Trish described her money being stolen out of her purse by a stranger at a party about six months before her interview. She indicated that she had “never seen the guy” before the party and had not seen him since. Trish reported that she forgave the man for stealing her money. However, when asked if she forgave his girlfriend who brought him to the party, she indicated, “I don’t actually.” Trish indicated that she thought the girlfriend “could have apologized,” but that instead she became “defensive” and “denied” that her boyfriend stole Trish’s money. Trish reported that she had not spoken to the girlfriend since the incident despite attending a few of the same social functions.

“Nicky”

Nicky identified as a 20-year-old Caucasian female who was an undergraduate student. She selected “Protestant” as her religious affiliation. Nicky described her friend refusing to talk to her after losing their virginity to one another. Her event reportedly occurred a little less than two years before her interview. She described being close friends with him, while also having romantic feelings for him beforehand. Nicky reported that she did not forgive her friend and did not “know how to forgive him when he still acts so, I mean he almost acts angry with me.” Nicky indicated that she and her friend had not talked about the incident despite her repeated attempts to discuss it with him.

“Gabby”

Gabby identified as an 18-year-old Asian female who was an undergraduate student. She selected “Other” for her religion and did not specify further. Gaby described being in a romantic relationship involving ongoing physical and verbal abuse. She reportedly began dating him about seven months before her interview and broke up with him after about one month. She indicated that her relationship with her ex-boyfriend was “great” before they started dating. However, Gabby described him becoming “controlling” and “abusive” once they became boyfriend and girlfriend. Gabby indicated that she had forgiven her ex-boyfriend “in a way” and that she “would accept” if he were to apologize.

“Ashley”

Ashley identified as a 20-year-old Hispanic female who was an undergraduate student. She selected “Other” as her religion and did not specify further.
Ashley described being in an “unhealthy” romantic relationship, which ended after her ex-boyfriend had a violent outburst. She described repeated verbal abuse that occurred

during the course of the relationship, but the focus of her interview was on this incident in which her boyfriend was physically abusive towards her. Her event reportedly occurred about eight months before her interview. She reported that she had "forgiven him," but also indicated, "I'm not going to sit here and tell you that I'm going to have dinner with him." Ashley also reported that her ex-boyfriend's roommate was a "bystander" to the event and did not intervene. She described the roommate as one of her "best friends" before the incident and indicated that she had forgiven him; however, Ashley reported that she had not spoken to him since the event and their "friendship never grew after that."

"Rachel"

Rachel identified as a 20-year-old Arab female who was an undergraduate student. She selected "Islam" as her religious affiliation. Rachel described being "cheated" into overpaying for her rent by her roommates. She indicated that she was matched with her roommates on a website and only met them briefly before moving in. She reported within the first few weeks of moving in that she discovered her roommates had "lied" about the cost of their rent. This participant equated this to "stealing." The incident reportedly occurred about one month before her interview. Rachel reportedly forgave her roommates, but did not "trust them" anymore.

"Casey"

Casey identified as a 28-year-old Caucasian female who was an undergraduate student. When asked about her religious affiliation, she selected "Not religious." Casey described having an acquaintance who "lied" in order "to try and end [Casey's] relationship with [Casey's] boyfriend." This participant described her "boyfriend's

sister's best friend" telling the sister that the participant was "trying to cheat" on her boyfriend. Casey described being "hesitant" to get to know the acquaintance beforehand. The incident reportedly occurred about eighteen months before Casey's interview. Casey reported that she had not forgiven her acquaintance and added, "I don't know that I know how to forgive." Casey was contacted to review the coding of her interview and in her response, she made this comment: "it was kind of funny reading this...I'm actually friends with that girl now."

"Monica"

Monica identified as a 27-year-old African American female who was a graduate student. She selected "Protestant" as her religious affiliation. Monica described having a graduate advisor who was unsupportive and "lied" to the committee during Monica's dissertation proposal. Monica's event reportedly occurred about three months before her interview. When asked if she had forgiven her mentor, Monica reported that she had not "thought about that," and added, "since I hadn't thought about it, I would say no, I haven't."

"Jess"

Jess identified as a 37-year-old Caucasian female who reportedly was a graduate student. When asked about her religious affiliation she selected "Not religious." Jess described her father having an ongoing extramarital affair. Jess described her father "leaving" her mother for another woman about eighteen months before the interview. She indicated that her father left and returned multiple times. Before the interview, Jess's father had returned to living with her mother for about six months. Jess reported that she

wanted to forgive her father and thought "eventually" she would, but that it would be "gradual."

Findings

Seven major categories emerged from the interview data: history, the event, immediate aftermath, apology, festering, fading, and letting go and moving on. Each of these categories is discussed in detail below.

History

Individuals who have been hurt by someone do not begin with a clean slate. They have histories that influence how the event unfolds as well as their perceptions of it. They have memories of past experiences that influence their perceptions. They have assumptions about who they are and who their wrongdoer is. They may or may not have a preexisting relationship with the wrongdoer, which also influences their perceptions. All 13 interviewees in this study mentioned one or more of these preexisting circumstances or traits that they believed were relevant to their events. Their descriptions clustered into the subcategories discussed below (i.e., past experiences, self-perceptions, perceptions of wrongdoer, and preexisting relationship).

Past Experiences

Past experiences are memories of situations from the person's history that are triggered by the wrongdoing. When thinking about or discussing the wrongdoing at length, these situations inevitably come to the forefront of the person's mind. For some people, the fact that they "never had anything like this happen" to them before is particularly important. Nicky reported that she was "still bothered" by "losing [her] friend" and said she never "had a friend just stop talking to [her] like that and especially

under those circumstances." Rachel described her situation with her roommates as "ridiculous" because she had "never experienced anything" like it. She said, she "didn't know people were like this." Gabby described herself as "naïve" and pointed out that she "never had a real relationship with a guy" before her ex-boyfriend. These examples show how a lack of similar past experiences to draw from can color how one thinks and feels about a wrongdoing. People with no recollection of similar circumstances in the past, such as Nicky and Rachel, seem to experience more shock and disbelief afterward.

While for some it is important that this experience is unique for them, others are reminded of similar "issues in the past." For these people, the wrongdoing seems to take them back to those past experiences that resonate with the current situation. Casey described her situation as a "flashback" to "girls spreading rumors" about her in middle school. Monica reported that this was "actually the second time" she had difficulties with an academic mentor. It seems that those who have already been through similar situations (e.g., Casey and Monica) tend to be less shocked, but more angry and frustrated than people with no recollection of comparable experiences.

Self-Perceptions

Self-perceptions are observations about oneself that become salient in light of the wrongdoing. Overall, these observations tend to be more positive in nature with a few exceptions. Descriptors that participants used to described themselves included "easygoing," "close-knit," "spiritual," "forgiving," and "honest." One of these was mentioned by Gabby and was of particular interest for this study:

> I've always been a really forgiving person actually. I got bullied a lot in high school. I forgave all those kids and, you know, my mom and my dad have they're not very supportive, and I love them, but, they wouldn't win an award to be honest. I love them, but they would not win an award. And I forgive them. I've

> never really held, I don't normally hold, anger at people, so holding anger against him was actually odd for me because that's not normal for me.

The negative self-perceptions (if any) that arise, seem to have contributed to the situation in some way. For example, Seth described his conflict with the referee, but admitted numerous times in the interview that he "was a hothead" and he displayed an understanding that this tendency exacerbated his situation.

In general, self-perceptions seem to be closely related to one's past experiences when thinking about the wrongdoing. As mentioned above, Nicky and Rachel both discussed their wrongdoings as unique situations for them. This seemed closely related to how they viewed themselves. This is Nicky's quote referenced previously within in its broader context:

> I'm one of those people, I don't like to have a huge group of just like acquaintances that I have, you know, I'll say I have 30 friends. I'm very close-knit and I take my few friends I have very seriously and they're all really close relationships. And so, and I've never, had anything like that happen to me. I've never, any relationship that has ended has always just kind of drifted apart or it's been, I've dealt with it. I guess I've just never had a friend just stop talking to me like that and especially under those circumstances.

This quote shows how Nicky's memories of past situations intersect with her self-perceptions to influence her reactions to the wrongdoing. She goes on in her interview to discuss her feelings of anger, frustration, and confusion. These emotions seem to be intensified by the fact that she has "never had anything like that happen" to her, and by her view that she is a "close-knit" person who takes her friendships "very seriously."

Perceptions of Wrongdoer

Not only do people who have been wronged have ideas about who they are, they have assumptions about who their wrongdoers are as well. In contrast to self-perceptions, the perceptions of the wrongdoer tend to be more negative than positive. While

interviewees used words like “honest,” “easygoing,” and “forgiving” to describe themselves; they used words like “controlling,” “evil,” and “loser” to describe their wrongdoers. This was Ashley’s description of her ex-boyfriend:

> I don’t want to judge him the wrong way but, he was four years older than me and he was still a [year in school] at the time and I was progressing and he wasn’t. He didn’t have a job and, he didn’t have anything going for him really. All he did was go to school but he’d fail most of his classes or he’d do poorly in most of his classes. And it wasn’t until I removed myself from the relationship that I realized that he wasn’t any good for me because, even before that situation occurred he would bring me down emotionally and mentally and, it wasn’t, healthy for me.

It appears that one of the benefits to viewing oneself positively while viewing the wrongdoer negatively is that it brings attention to the differences between the two. This may help the person feel less connected to the wrongdoer. In Ashley’s excerpt above, she notes that she was “progressing” while “he wasn’t.” Mary discussed how she and her roommates “were all brought up completely differently.” She explained that the roommate with whom she had the falling out was raised not to “talk about anything” to maintain an image of being “perfect.” In contrast, Mary reportedly “was brought up where you talk about your feelings, get it all out there so you’re not bottling up, so we were just all extremely different.”

In some cases, this focus on the negative may also lead to empathy for the wrongdoer. After discussing how her ex-boyfriend did not have “anything going for him,” She explained further by saying “I don’t think that bad things should, categorize that person as just that” and pointed out “he was good to a certain extent.” Monica reported that it helped for her to remember that her mentor is “human” and “makes mistakes.”

There were a few other instances in which the interviewees would acknowledge more positive traits in their wrongdoer. For example, Casey reported being hesitant to get to know her wrongdoer because she had a "crush" on Casey's boyfriend. Casey also described her as "not really a very good friend." However, Casey also noticed these positive attributes about her wrongdoer:

> She is fun and she like, I mean she did have fun aspects of her before this happened. She's like a comedian who doesn't really, you know she goes out and has a blast, doesn't really care what people think. And I'm already kind of drawn to those kind of people. I like when people just go let loose and have fun.

This acknowledgement of positive traits was a turning point for Casey. She described sitting in a social setting watching her wrongdoer "having fun." Casey reported coming to the realization that "I want to be having fun, but instead I'm feeling this way." After that realization Casey began "trying to have positive interactions with her hoping that if I have enough then they'll help me…Not necessarily forget it but shove it aside so those negative feelings don't keep coming back and staying." Attempts at "positive interactions" in the future seem easier for people who are able to see the good in their wrongdoers.

It is important to note that there are instances in which there is more than one wrongdoer. When this is the case, some people oscillate between thinking of the wrongdoers as "unit" and viewing them as individuals. In some instances the person views those involved as a unit. The interviewer pointed out that Rachel tended to refer to her roommates as a unit. This was Rachel's response: "Yes, a unit, because they knew each other before. And this is a funny thing too, both of them don't trust each other, but they're friends. So, I guess that also should have indicated the kind of people they are." While some people, like Rachel, think of those involved as a unit, others, like Mary, view

them as individuals. In other words, Rachel felt equally “surprised” and “angry” towards both of her roommates for cheating her out of extra rent money. In contrast, Mary felt “hurt” and “betrayed” by only one roommate. Ashley held her ex-boyfriend’s roommate equally accountable for being a “bystander” and not doing “anything” when her ex-boyfriend “assaulted” her. Trish forgave the man she believes stole her money, but did not forgive his girlfriend for not apologizing. As these examples show, the process of forgiveness becomes even more complex when multiple people are involved.

Preexisting Relationship

The preexisting relationship with the wrongdoer consists of the type of relationship (e.g., family members, strangers, or acquaintances) as well as the closeness of it. The types of relationships can be clustered into discrete groups (e.g., family or friends). The preexisting relationships described in this study fell into seven categories: strangers, acquaintances, platonic friends, romantic interest, romantic partner, family, and colleague.

While the type of relationship can be grouped into categories, the closeness of the relationship seems to exist more on a continuum. For example, Monica’s mentor could be labeled as her colleague; however, the closeness of their relationship was more complex and nuanced. For example, Monica described being her mentor’s “favorite” student. Monica also said, “she kind of liked me, I guess, I always felt she liked me.” However, despite her perceptions of how her mentor felt about her, Monica described intentionally withholding from her mentor the fact that she was “getting married.” Monica indicated that she did not tell her mentor this because she did not plan on inviting her to the wedding, because they were “not that close.”

In some instances, the preexisting relationship with the wrongdoer is closely related to past experiences. For example, Seth indicated that he and the referee "weren't close as friends, but we knew each other well." Seth also pointed out that he and the referee "had a history" and had "never really got[ten] along well." He described the referee not calling penalties when Seth was "targeted" by other players; however, Seth pointed out that the referee "would always call it on [Seth] when [he] did something wrong." Seth described thinking the referee treated him unfairly in the past and in the game he described. These past experiences with this referee impacted Seth's reaction to the situation he described in his interview. His situation would likely have been very different if he had a different referee that day.

Seth also discussed holding the referee more accountable than the other player who "targeted" him. For Seth, the referee was more accountable not only because he had more power as the referee, but also because of their history. Trish also discussed accountability in her interview. As mentioned above, Trish reportedly had forgiven the man who "stole" from her, but had not forgiven his girlfriend. She described holding the girlfriend more "accountable" because "she knew [Trish] more on a personal level" than the man did. For Trish, this made it more difficult to forgive the girlfriend than the man she believes stole from her.

For some people, their relationship with the wrongdoer seems to influence how motivated they are to forgive the wrongdoer. Casey described being "stuck" with her boyfriend's sister as well as her best friend. Kate described her mother-in-law as someone who is "always going to be around." In both of their cases it seemed as if attempting to

forgive wrongdoers was important in part, because they were going to have to be around them.

For Jess, it seemed that her relationships with her parents intersected with her perceived severity of what they did to influence her motivation to forgive. On the one hand, Jess described being “closer” with her father and having more “similar interests” to him than her mother. On the other hand, she saw her father’s actions (i.e., his affair and leaving her mother) as much more severe than her mother’s (i.e., reconciling with Jess’s father multiple times). She reported being angry with her father was “logical” because he “crossed so many lines.” However, she indicated that she was also angry with her mother even though she did not think she “should” be because it was “her life, her choices.” Jess seemed to want to forgive her father based on their past relationship, but the severity of what he did made this more difficult. On the other hand, she seemed to want to forgive her mother because she “did nothing wrong,” but her lack of closeness with her mother seemed to make this more difficult.

The Event

There are many different types of events that can be forgiven and this can have implications for the forgiveness process. For people who have been wronged, their recollections of how and when the event unfolded can be very salient. People’s reactions to, and recollections of, an event can vary depending on how long ago it occurred and how long it lasted. The characteristics of the event and its perceived severity can also have implications for the person’s reactions to it.

Timeframe of the Event

The timeframe of the event has two related components. First, it involves how long ago the event took place. Participants in this study described events that occurred between one month (Rachel) and two years (Seth and Nicky) before their interviews. In some cases, like Gabby's, it seems time helps negative thoughts and feelings fade. Gabby's description of the line she drew for the time-ruler portion of the interview was interesting. She described her feelings for her ex-boyfriend "flatten[ing] out" to where they no longer went "up" or "down," but rather they "faded" over time. To demonstrate this in her drawing, she took her pencil and "erase[d] the line a little" so it was "less visible." It seems for people like Gabby, that although the quality of their feelings may not change, their intensity fades over time. However, there are instances when time is not associated with fading emotions. Both Jess and Nicky reported they were "still angry" at the time of their interviews. Nicky's drawing of her feelings towards her wrongdoer showed slight fading, but it was small enough to appear negligible. In Jess's case, her festering and fading followed the cycle of her father leaving and returning multiple times.

The timeframe of the event also includes whether it is discrete or ongoing. Wrongdoings seem to lie on a continuum beginning with one-time events and continuing to ongoing issues. Kate's wrongdoing was the most continuous in nature. She described many "ups" and "downs" in her relationship with her mother-in-law for the past six years. Jess's wrongdoing was also ongoing in nature. She described her father leaving and returning to her mother "off and on" for about eighteen months. Both Kate and Jess's time-ruler drawings showed a cyclical pattern of peaks and valleys demonstrating their feelings towards their wrongdoers. These cycles reportedly began with more positive

feelings towards their wrongdoers followed by a steep decline in reaction to the most recent event (e.g., Jess's father leaving her mother once again). These negative feelings would then flatten out and gradually improve until the next event occurred. People like Kate and Jess who have experienced ongoing wrongdoings tend to continually cycle through the forgiveness process as the wrongdoings continue over time.

Type of Event

There are different event characteristics that may be significant to a person who has been wronged. There were eight event characteristics that emerged across interviews in this study: stealing, putting a "sour note" on a special event, estrangement, lying, abuse of power, backstabbing, and physical altercation.

Two participants (i.e., Rachel and Trish) reported that their events involved "stealing." Trish's situation was more straightforward in that it involved money being taken from her purse. Rachel's situation involved her roommates "lying" to her in order to "cheat" her into paying more than her share of rent. However, in her interview Rachel equated this to "stealing."

There were six participants who described their events as putting a "sour note" on a special event. Trish reported that not only what she "robbed" of money, but she was also "robbed of a good time" at her friends Christmas party. Elaine described being able to remember the event specifically because "it was [her] birthday." Although Kate's situation was more ongoing, she mainly focused on her mother-in-laws actions while preparing for a baby shower. Nicky and Casey were both attended social events that did not go as expected. Monica was expecting to pass her dissertation proposal. For these

participants, the impact of the wrongdoing seemed intensified because their expectations to enjoy themselves at a special event were not met.

Some people feel wronged after becoming estranged from a loved one. This estrangement often involves a cycle of avoidance and conflict. Four participants described becoming estranged from a loved one in this manner. Mary and Dean both described being close friends with their wrongdoers initially, but gradually growing more distant over time. Mary reportedly started spending time with other friends when her roommate prioritized her boyfriend over Mary. Dean indicated that he and his friends "went [their] separate ways" after high school. Nicky reported that after she and her friend had sex, their relationship "went from talking and hanging out everyday" to "just nothing and no explanation." Jess described gradually losing "communication" with her father as he continued to leave and then reconcile with her mother.

Lying was another common characteristic of the events described by participants. Casey described her event as including "lies that involve [her]." In Rachel and Jess's situations they were reportedly told lies. Monica's situation involved both being told a lie and having lies told about her.

Abuse of power can also be a common characteristic of wrongdoings. This power may be overt as in Seth's situation with the referee or Monica's situation with her advisor. Power may also come in the form of influence as with Kate's mother-in-law.

For some people, their event involves backstabbing. Mary described her roommate "using everything" Mary had confided in her against her. Kate reported that her event was more hurtful because "it was said to someone else and not to [her]." Dean

described hearing rumors that had been spread about him from third parties. Elaine described feeling like she had been wronged by her romantic interest:

> I felt like it [wronged], because it was said to somebody other than myself. It was said to my friends, who, then I was embarrassed. I felt stupid that I had invited this person and then he's going to go and act that way. So I felt I was wronged because perhaps if he would have said that to my face and said, "You're being annoying," or something, I wouldn't have felt so wronged because that's just being honest and saying, "Hey." But to badmouth me to somebody who he doesn't even know, who's my best friend and just talk bad about me, then yeah, I felt like I was wronged for that.

Wrongdoings may also involve physical harm. Ashley was the only participant who described a "physical assault." Interestingly, Seth's did describe getting into a physical fight with another player; but he placed the blame on the referee who was abusing his power. Also, Ashley reported that she thought her boyfriend's roommate was more at fault than her boyfriend. She described thinking that he should have intervened on her behalf.

Perceived Severity of Event

Another important aspect of the event seems to be how severe the person perceives it to be. Some judge severity of an event by whether or not their reactions to it were intense or out of the ordinary for them. These are Mary's thoughts on how serious her event was:

> I feel like it was very serious I think it was very serious, like I didn't talk to Roommate One. Just the things that we both said to each other, were so mean and hurtful and I just feel like I was always on the defense. If anyone said anything, I would just snap at them real quick and I'm not a snappy person at all. So it just kind of changed. I feel like it was very serious.

Mary described acting in ways that were out of the norm for her following the event. Another participant also expressed this idea that the seriousness of the event was related to one's reaction to it. Nicky shared similar reasoning, saying:

> I feel like this was like the most major thing I could think about it and it's what made me so angry, because the other times I think about, I'm pretty easy going, go with the flow, whatever. Not a lot bothers me. So I think that since this still bothers me that's what stuck out.

Mary and Nicky seem to have considered their emotional reactions to the wrongdoing when determining how serious the event was. Trish and Monica seemed to think their events were very serious because of what *might* have happened had the situation taken a turn for the worse. For example, Trish ranked the seriousness of her situation as a "seven" out of 10. This is her explanation for this ranking:

> Yeah just because not necessarily the money but just because this dude had a rap sheet. Imagine if he's a thief and then forgery, we really don't know who this guy was, you know? Um, so that was really the scary part after I looked online and it just so, I don't go around just looking up people online; but it's one of those things if intuition tells you to do something and then when I discovered it, it was like 'Wow, we was actually just having a great time with this unknown guy.'

Also, see this example from Monica:

> My committee could have thought I was absolutely stupid, you know, they could have made me, um, go back to the drawing board and start over, um, it, it, she could have -- I don't like that she could have easily destroyed my character or who I was in this situation.

Monica and Trish seemed to think their situations were very serious because of what could have potentially gone wrong.

In some cases, one's perception of the seriousness of the event is related to past experiences. Casey described her situation as "a flashback" because she "had issues in the past with girls spreading rumors about [her]." Casey explained further by saying "whenever this girl did that, it just brought [her] back to all those negative emotions [she] felt when the other girls did it." She also indicated that her situation "evoked a lot of intense emotions for [her]." Casey's reaction to her event was exacerbated by memories from her past that came back to her in the immediate aftermath.

Sometimes people have conflicting thoughts about the seriousness of their events. On the one hand, their events seem like a "big deal" to them; however, they realize their situations "could have been worse" or might not have been as serious in the broader scheme of things. Elaine described it this way:

> Life is just full of ups and downs and struggles, so for a life situation, there's so much worse out there than somebody's calling you a bad name. Your house could burn down or you could lose a parent or a child or a family member. Life is just so full of lots of things, that somebody calling you a bad name is not that big of a deal. But how I reacted to that, it was a big deal to me and, I really cared. And everybody has different problems and we all react to them differently. And then it's my problem so of course I reacted to it and it was a big deal to me.

Elaine seemed to view her situation from two different perspectives. When viewing her situation from her own personal perspective, she indicated, "it was a big deal to me;" however, when viewing it more objectively, she acknowledged it was "not that big of a deal" in the broader context of life. Sometimes people's ideas about the seriousness of their events can change over time. For people like Seth and Dean, their events seemed like a "big deal" at first, but over time they seemed less serious. Dean described his situation with his friends being "like another World War" to start with, but he described things "simmering down" over time.

Overall it seems people judge the seriousness of their events based on a few factors. First, their reactions to the event and whether or not these reactions are out of the ordinary for them seem important to determining the seriousness of the event. Second, some people gauge seriousness based on what potentially could have gone wrong. Third, past experiences can impact how one views the seriousness of the event.

In addition to these factors, people may take different perspectives when considering the seriousness of their events. Events often seem less serious when

considered in the broader context of life. Thinking about how things "could have been worse" seems to lead people to think their events were less serious. Also, the passage of time may make an event seem less serious. What seems to be "a big deal" at first might seem less so over time.

Immediate Aftermath

The immediate aftermath is the initial state in which the person finds him/herself once the wrongdoing has occurred. In the immediate aftermath of a wrongdoing, there are a number of internal and external reactions that may occur. All 13 participants discussed reactions in at least one (typically both) of these areas. How long the immediate aftermath lasts will vary from person to person as it is not as dependent on the passage of time as it is on the changes that occur within and around the individual who has been wronged.

Internal Reactions

Internal reactions are the responses to the wrongdoing that occur within the person. In the immediate aftermath of a wrongdoing, people tend to react with negative emotions such as sadness, confusion, frustration, anger, and shock. Sadness is one of the most common emotions that arise. The words "hurt," "sad," "depressed," and "upset," were used repeatedly within and across interviews. Elaine reported being "really upset about" her friend "calling [her] a train wreck" because it "really hurt [her] feelings." Kate described being "kind of hurt" when her mother-in-law "wanted to set up things a certain way" for the baby shower "because [they had] been doing all this work, and she didn't care."

Confusion and frustration are also a common emotions experienced in the immediate aftermath. Rachel described her argument with her roommates right after finding out they lied to her about the rent. She reported being unable to understand “why” her roommate “would even get angry at that, at something completely legitimate” and would “get angry enough to try to get back at [Rachel].” She went on to say “it was so frustrating during the argument trying to tell her that this was not [laughs] you know, what people do normally. And it was so frustrating that she was still thinking that she was right.” Rachel’s description showed a combination of confusion and frustration in the immediate aftermath of her event. Nicky, Kate, and Mary also described feeling “frustrated” in the immediate aftermath of their events.

Some people may be “surprised” or “shocked” in the immediate aftermath of their wrongdoing. Trish reported being “shocked and appalled” when the girlfriend “denied” her boyfriend taking Trish’s money. Feelings of shock may sometimes be related to past experiences. As mentioned above, Nicky, Gabby, and Rachel all reported they “never had anything like this happen.” Not surprisingly, all three of these participants discussed feelings of “shock” and “surprise” in the immediate aftermath of their situations.

Anger is another emotion that commonly arises in the immediate aftermath. Not only did Rachel describe feelings of confusion and frustration, she also indicated that she was “mad.” Casey also reported feeling “a lot of intense emotions” immediately after her wrongdoing. She described feeling “angry” and furious in the immediate aftermath of her wrongdoing. Seth described being “triggered” and “set off” by the referee for his unfair treatment.

These negative emotions, such as sadness, anger, and shock are often accompanied by thoughts that resonate for people following their wrongdoings. Some people think about how much they have been hurt, used, or treated unfairly. This is Rachel's description of her thought process during her argument with her roommates: "it's just not fair first of all that you are lying to me and second of all that I'm paying more than you for a smaller room. So it's just the fairness issue."

For some, there is a period of time in which they wonder who is to blame for what happened. Trish described the process of realizing her money was not in her purse, searching for it, wondering where she might have left it, and finally coming to the conclusion it had been taken at the party. She indicated that she tried to give her wrongdoer the "benefit of the doubt" at first. This seems to be a common reaction for some people. Dean described putting himself "at fault" initially and wondering if he "shouldn't have gone to college." Ashley, Gabby, and Rachel also described initially wondering how much they were at "fault" or to "blame" for their experiences.

In addition to emotional and cognitive reactions, people may also experience physical reactions to their wrongdoings. Casey described acute changes in her heart rate and breathing in the immediate aftermath of her wrongdoing. Rachel and Jess both reported "sleepless nights" for a few days following the wrongdoing. These examples show discrete instances in which people that have been wronged experience physical responses to their situations.

External Consequences

External consequences are the aftereffects of the wrongdoing that occur outside one's body. These consequences are typically most noticeable in the relationship with the

wrongdoer. There is typically a rift in the relationship with the wrongdoer following the wrongdoing, even if only a momentary one. Sometimes this rift can be a conflict with the wrongdoer. Seth described reacting to the referee by "yelling" and "using the 'F-word' in multiple obscene ways." Elaine described "texting…mean things" to the friend who called her a "train wreck." Casey described urges to "punch" or have "words" with her wrongdoer had she seen her in person soon after the wrongdoing. In addition to conflict, sometimes the person may avoid the wrongdoer. Casey also indicated that she "hoped and prayed [she] didn't have to see her anytime soon." Jess indicated that her father told her about his affair before a long car trip. She reportedly "elected to drive" on the trip because she did not "want to be next to him" and thought they should "separate" themselves from one another.

For some, the wrongdoing may have consequences that impact their performance. Since Monica's wrongdoing involved her academic mentor, it had direct implications on her schoolwork. She described being "drilled" by her committee during her proposal. She attributed this to her mentor telling them Monica's "paper wasn't ready" to defend. Gabby reported that while she was dating her ex-boyfriend, she would not get her "homework done." She described him making her "sit with him and cuddle with him" instead of attending to her academic work. Seth indicated that the referee "ejected" him from the game and penalized Seth's team following their altercation.

In the immediate aftermath of the wrongdoing many people experience both internal reactions and external consequences. Internal reactions typically consist of negative emotions, thoughts, and physical responses that arise in the aftermath of the

wrongdoing. There are also external consequences, such as a rift in the relationship with the wrongdoer or negative changes in performance that may occur.

Festering

Any of the internal reactions or external consequences of the wrongdoing can fester over time. For some people, these reactions and consequences will become worse as time passes. What follows, are descriptions of what this festering might look like in each of these areas.

Festering Internally

The emotions that people experience immediately after the wrongdoing can sometimes intensify with time. For some, feelings of sadness and loneliness can fester over time. Gabby reported that following her breakup she, "got really upset and moped around for a couple weeks, just pajama pants and teddy bear and chocolate and ice cream." She went on to say, "I guess I was a little bit depressed about it." Elaine reportedly "became all depressed for like a month or so" and "was just really sad about it." Dean indicated it "hurts a lot sometimes" for him to think about how close he once was with his friends and to realize it likely will "never be the same." He also described "feeling alone" because of "not being able to talk to them or have them there." Despite Dean's reported attempts to "brush it off," he indicated that the situation was "always in the back of [his] mind."

Trish indicated that, "the anger kind of progressed" over time for her. When asked how she was feeling during her interview, Nicky described her emotions this way:

> At this point I'm honestly just mad. I'm just angry…because I still just, it's just awkward and there's just still tension and I guess it's because it was never dealt with but yeah, mostly I'm just angry.

Some people can become stuck in a cycle of negative thinking after their wrongdoing. For example, because Monica had problems with advisors in the past, she continued to wonder, “maybe its something about me.” Ashley began crying during her interview and this was the dialogue between her and the interviewer:

> *Interviewer: Tell me what’s coming up for you right now.*
> Just memories, about the situation, how it happened. What did I do to deserve that kind of treatment? I don’t know.
> *Interviewer: So you think you deserved it?*
> No, I mean I’m just saying, I don’t know if it’s my fault or not my fault. If I would have reacted a certain way would things have been different?
>
> Later in her interview, Ashley went on to say the following:
>
> In this instance am I to blame, for the situation that happened or am I not? If I say I am to blame well then I don’t, I personally don’t know what I am to blame for. I don’t know if I was the problem or if he was the problem. I’m not sure because I can’t judge the situation without being biased and I, that’s just, I don’t know. I really don’t.

These excerpts from Ashley’s interview show the cyclical pattern of Ashley’s thinking. Almost a year after her reported physical assault she does not “know” if she is “to blame” and if so, “what [she is] to blame for.” Similarly, Gabby described a “long” period of time in which she “believed” she was “to blame” for the abuse from her ex-boyfriend.

Another pattern of thinking in which people can find themselves is reviewing in their minds what they “should” or “shouldn’t” do in their situations. Rachel and Casey both described conflicts between what they were thinking and feeling. Both reported feeling angry, but also thinking they “shouldn’t be getting angry” and they were “supposed to be dropping it.” Jess also described this discrepancy between what she thought she “should” be doing versus what she was actually doing. When asked by the interviewer, “how does the ‘should’ impact you,” this was her response:

> Oh, it makes me feel guilty that I can't act the way that, you know, that I should be acting, for my age, you know, a logical mindset, I should not be angry, but my emotions override my logic.
> *Interviewer: Okay, so the, 'should' comes from logic for you?*
> Yeah. Yeah.
> *Interviewer: So, what logically, why shouldn't you be angry?*
> Logically, I shouldn't be angry at my mom because she did nothing wrong. She, it's her free choice to take him back. Um, so I should respect her wishes because it is not my life. It is her journey, whatever it may be. And that I should be able to just be there and support her for whatever decisions, you know.

Jess also described how "logically" being angry with her father is "healthy," because "he crossed so many lines." Jess and the interviewer went on to discuss how "it complicates things" to have discrepancies between what she thinks she "should do" concerning her mother and what she actually does. It was obvious that she had spent much time thinking about this without being able to find a resolution. Jess also described feelings of guilt accompanying this thought process. This seems to be a common experience for people struggling with festering internal reactions.

Similar to emotional and cognitive festering, physical reactions can also have long-term impacts on people. While Rachel's sleepless nights only lasted for "two or three days," Jess continued to experience sleeplessness off and on for months. She described bringing this up to her doctor during a routine visit, but Jess indicated that her doctor did not think her situation was "a big deal." Physical reactions may extend beyond sleeplessness and impact one's health more broadly. An excerpt from Gabby's interview sums up how her physical reactions festered over time:

> Didn't eat very much. I was sick. I actually got physically sick in the end. I got a sinus infection, because I was crying, and not taking the best care of myself. I actually remember getting a sinus infection. I remember just not sleeping well, not eating well.

For people like Gabby, physical reactions combined with a lack of self-care could lead them to become ill for a time.

Over time, emotional, cognitive, and physical reactions can begin to have more intense and broad implications for one's health. Feelings of sadness, loneliness, and anger can become more intense as time passes. Cyclical negative thinking patterns may also fester over time. Physical reactions that go unchecked may result in physical illness for a time.

Festering Externally

External consequences also become more impactful with time. One area where this is common is in the relationship with the wrongdoer. For people like Dean, their relationship since the wrongdoing "hasn't' been the same." As mentioned above, his estrangement from his friends seemed related to Dean's feelings of hurt and loneliness. Despite the good times they had in the past, Dean indicated he "wouldn't be surprised if was 20 or 30 years down the road and we still don't talk."

This seems to be a common paradox for people who have been wronged: distancing oneself from the wrongdoer while also longing for a closer relationship with them. Despite the distance between Jess and her father and her feelings of anger towards him, she still described a desire to be closer with both him and her mother. She described looking at people who had "good" relationships with their parents and wanting something similar. Dean and Jess provided examples of how negative feelings, negative thinking patterns, and strained relationships can exacerbate one another over time after a wrongdoing

Sometimes wrongdoings are accompanied by changes in relationships with people other than the wrongdoer. For example, Monica and Kate both described conflicts with their partners that were related to their wrongdoings. Kate originally came to her interview prepared to discuss issues in her relationship with her husband; however, as her interview progressed it seemed these issues with her husband were more a symptoms of the larger problem between Kate and her mother-in-law. When Kate described her conflicts with her mother-in-law as “always bringing up something in our marriage.” Monica described being hypersensitive about boundaries with her husband in response to her mentor constantly crossing them. She reportedly would deny simple requests her husband would make of her and attributed this to her situation with her mentor carrying into her “home life.”

As with other areas in this category, problems with one’s performance can begin to have greater consequences over time. Jess reported that her situation with her parents “did affect” her “score” on an important test for school. She indicated that after getting “that low score” she began to “buckle down,” “study,” and go “all out.” Ashley described, “days where [she] chose not to go to class because [her ex-boyfriend] was going to be there” until she decided she was not going to “fail because of him.” Seth described his performance in subsequent sporting events suffering as a result of his situation with the referee:

> I do remember a lot of games I would play not to my talent or not as well as I could have because I knew he was the ref., because I didn’t want to put myself in a situation to get kicked out. Which didn’t work anyways; I’m pretty sure I got kicked out during the summer games that year, too.

Seth went on to describe another instance where the same referee did not intervene when Seth felt he was being “targeted” by other players. Jess, Ashley, and Seth all recalled

their performance suffering over a period of time after their wrongdoing. For Ashley and Jess, it seemed they reached a point where they realized their performance was suffering and decided to make changes to improve it.

Internal reactions and external consequences can accumulate over time and exacerbate one another. The long-term impact of negative thoughts, feelings, and physical reactions to the wrongdoing can be deleterious to some people. Furthermore, these internal reactions, combined with problems in one's relationships and performance can have negative implications for one's physical and psychological health.

Fading

While some negative reactions and consequences may fester, others may gradually grow more faint over time. This can occur in the internal and external realms. The following are descriptions of how it might look for certain reactions and consequences to fade over time.

Fading Internally

For some people, the emotions they felt in the initial aftermath begin to fade over time. As mentioned above, Casey described initially being "angry" and "furious" at her boyfriend's sister's friend, but she also indicated that she "didn't actually feel the anger very long." She went on to explain, "it changed from being angry at her for doing this to being happy that she had, because of everything I gained, all the comfort and security I gained out of it with my relationship with my boyfriend." Gabby reported that, "a lot of the anger is gone." She also indicated, " a lot of the emotions" she displayed during her interviewer were "minor compared" to what they were initially for her.

Nicky described her emotions towards her friend “getting more neutral.” She indicated that despite the situation staying the same, she experienced changes “internally:”

> I had to just kind of let it go and try to deal with it the best I can in another way, just, try to move on from it. Because it’s obviously not going to get any better trying to talk to him. And I think that was putting more frustration on me trying to talk to him, not getting a response than if I just tried to let it go and not talk to him at all because then he couldn’t make me any more mad than I already was.

As time passes, some people begin to think differently about their situation. Over time, Dean reportedly came to a place where he knew he made the “right choice” in coming to college and “nobody was going to stop [him] from making that right choice.” At the time of her interview, Gabby indicated that she no longer thought the abuse from her ex-boyfriend was “her fault.” This was after a “long” period of time in which she assumed she was “to blame.” It seems for Gabby, these thoughts festered for a while before beginning to fade.

As time passes, some people begin to think about the positive aspects of their situations. Ashley pointed out that her relationship with her ex-boyfriend was not “all bad” and they had “good times” together. Also, some people reflect on what they learned from the situation. A number of participants described having “learned my lesson.” Kate mentioned multiple times in her interview that she has had to “learn how to deal” with her mother-in-law over time. Rachel described using her experience with her roommates to teach her “not to trust everyone.”

As mentioned above, for some people their event seemed very serious immediately afterward, but seemed less serious as time passed. Seth reported that his event “was a big deal at the time, but it’s not a big deal now.” He also indicated, “it’s

just a game, but I don't like the way he acted." Similarly, Dean reported, "in the beginning it was like, another world war;" however he indicated that "as time went on" things "simmered down." Both of these participants acknowledged that at the time the event was very serious to them; but as they looked back on the situation in the interview, it seemed less serious than it had at the time. These are examples of how the perceived seriousness of the event, the timeframe of the event, and fading internal reactions can overlap with one another. For people like Dean and Seth, as time passes their negative cognitions about the event fade and the event seems less serious than it did at first.

Fading Externally

After the initial rift, the relationship may improve over time. Casey described her urges to "punch" or have "words" with her wrongdoer in the immediate aftermath of the event. However, over time Casey described attempts to "reach out" and develop "some goodness between us…because she's not going anywhere." Rachel described her relationship with her roommates returning to "normal" after their argument. Although she indicated that she did not like to "hang out" or "go out" with her roommates, she described talking "normally" and being cordial with them like they were before the argument.

In some cases, the person becomes satisfied having little to no contact with the wrongdoer. As mentioned above, there were times when Ashley would miss one of her classes to avoid her ex-boyfriend, but eventually began attending regularly in order to maintain her grade. At the time of the interview, Ashley reported that it would not "faze" her to "come in contact." Even though Ashley did not reconcile with her boyfriend, she came to a place where she no longer avoided him and would be "cordial" with him if she

saw him. Unlike Jess and Dean, who longed for a closer relationship with their wrongdoers, Ashley was satisfied having little contact with her ex-boyfriend.

Some people will reach out to others for help processing the wrongdoing. A number of participants reported they had disclosed their situation to a loved one in order to receive support. Mary described her mother giving her advice and encouraging her to "forgive" her ex-roommate. Kate indicated that she would often consult with close friends regarding her relationship with her mother-in-law. Dean reported that his friend group treated another one of his friends similarly. He described commiserating with this friend over their similar situations. Additionally, a number of participants remarked about how it was helpful for them to discuss their situations in the interviews.

In addition to improvements in relationships, some people may see improvements in their performance over time. Jess and Ashley both experienced declines in their school performance for a time after the wrongdoing. However, they both eventually decided to improve their performance despite their circumstances. Ashley indicated that she started to attend her class and her grades improved. Jess reported that she decided to "buckle down" and "go all out." For some, like Elaine and Mary, work and school can serve as an escape from thinking about the event or being around the wrongdoer. Elaine described her attempts to "bury [herself] in work and school" in the months after her wrongdoing. Mary reported that she would "choose to be at school and work over going home and relaxing" in order to avoid her roommate. It seems that for some, their focus on performance helps distract them from the wrongdoing.

As time passes, some of the reactions experienced in the immediate aftermath of the wrongdoing will fade. For some, negative feelings such as anger will grow more

faint. Others may begin to engage in more positive thinking patterns with regards to the wrongdoing. The relationship with the wrongdoer may also improve. Finally, some people may see an improvement in their performance as time passes. These are all examples of how negative reactions and consequences may fade over time.

Apology

Somewhere along the way, the wrongdoer may apologize. If and how the wrongdoer apologizes seems important to most people who have been wronged. There are times when the wrongdoer apologizes and this is helpful for the person who was wronged. Mary described her roommate apologizing to her and she indicated that the apology impacted her greatly:

> Very much so, yeah. Um, just knowing that she was like truly sorry and she apologized for saying the things she said and saying things to other people and that's honestly what I wanted to hear, was that she like was sorry and then hearing that I just kind of felt like a weight was lifted off me.

Dean described one of his friends apologizing to him, while the other two did not. While Dean was reportedly impacted by the lack of an apology "in the beginning," he described realizing "people are going to be people" and "it's life." Dean reported that he thinks "it speaks a little about [the] character" of his friend who did apologize to him. He indicated that, "it takes a lot for someone to apologize and really mean it." Similarly, Casey indicated that when her wrongdoer apologized it "helped" and she "gained a little bit of respect for her."

There are instances where there is no apology and this negatively impacts the wronged person's reactions to the event. Seth reported that an apology would have helped "at the time" of the wrongdoing. Seth indicated that the referee did not apologize to him and reported that it impacted him "at the time" because it influenced how he played the

game. As mentioned above, Seth tended to not play to his level of "talent" in games with this particular referee. This is an example of how a lack of an apology overlapped with festering external consequences. For Seth, the referee's lack of an apology was related to him being more cautious during games as to avoid getting "kicked out."

When asked whether her mother-in-law had ever apologized, Kate replied, "No, not once, ever. And that's something that I have to forgive her for even though she never said 'I'm sorry' or 'how do you feel about that.'" For Kate, the absence of an apology is one more thing for which she must forgive her mother-in-law. Monica and Rachel said their wrongdoers did not apologize and did not acknowledge they did "anything wrong." Monica reported that she was not "looking for" an apology because she knew her mentor would not apologize. Rachel described becoming more frustrated when she realized her roommates were not going to apologize or admit any fault.

There may be times when an apology is not helpful. Jess described her father giving a "half-ass apology."

> He basically said he was sorry, but he didn't do anything during my childhood to screw me up, so, that it was fine. In a way it was like, a half-ass apology. I mean, really?
> *Interviewer: So it was an apology, but a half-ass one.*
> Yes. Right. Because he was kind of saying, 'I'm sorry, I don't want to talk about this anymore. I didn't screw up your childhood. I didn't beat you. I was good to you up until, that point so it really doesn't count.'

Even though Jess's father did apologize, she perceived his approach to be very off-putting. For Jess, her father's apology showed his lack of remorse for what he did. Later in the interview, Jess was asked what it would have been like if her father had given her a "real" apology:

> That would have helped. Because then, if someone really gives you an apology, then you're able to say, to speak back. Instead of just saying, 'Okay?' and maybe

> saying, 'Well, this is how I feel,' and being able, for that person to hear yourself out. I wasn't given that choice.

It does not matter to some people whether or not they receive an apology. Elaine and Ashley reported that their wrongdoers did not apologize. They both denied this having an impact on them. Elaine indicated that she does not "need apologies from people." Ashley was unable to recall if her ex-boyfriend had apologized and assumed "that means he didn't apologize, because that would be something you could remember." She also reported that she did not "think anything of" the fact that he did not apologize.

The presence or absence of an apology can influence the forgiveness process in different ways. For some, an apology is helpful, while for others the way it is offered can be off-putting. There are instances where the lack of an apology has negative consequences, but some people do not "need apologies from people."

Letting Go and Moving On

This category represents the final stage of the forgiveness process. From a broad perspective, it seems most people's experiences in this stage can be summed up as "letting go and moving on." However, when focusing on the specific details of this phase, there are a number of nuances in how people conceptualize what it means to let go and/or move on. As with the other stages in the forgiveness process, letting go and moving on can be grouped into internal and external experiences.

Letting Go and Moving on Internally

For some, it is "letting go" of negative emotions that is important. Elaine reported, "I just don't feel mad anymore and I didn't want to feel mad anymore. So I think once I'm not mad anymore and once I don't want to strangle him, then I feel like I've forgiven him." She also added that the situation made her "very sad" and if she had not forgiven

him then she would have been “sad forever,” but instead she decided to “let it go.” Ashley indicated that she knew she had forgiven her ex-boyfriend because she did not “hate him” and did not feel “resentment” towards him. For Kate, forgiveness meant “choosing” what she would get “upset about” and what she would “let go.” Nicky reportedly had not forgiven her friend at the time of her interview, but she said for her, forgiveness would be not being “angry” anymore, being “ok” with what happened, and the situation not “bothering” her anymore. At the time of her interview, she described having gone from being angry nearly “all” the time to only “sometimes.” Nicky defined forgiveness as no longer being angry. She indicated that she is not there yet, but she is “definitely closer” than before. Monica discussed forgiveness as not having “negative feelings or energy” towards the wrongdoer.

Jess indicated that she wanted to forgive her parents and thought “eventually” she would. She discussed the importance of the passage of time in being able to process her emotions:

> I think its just time, you know, lots of time. That it’s not so fresh. And then in a way it becomes normal. And then you can kind of make fun about it because, well, what else are you going to do? You can’t stay angry forever, that’s not productive. What’s that going to do? In the end you’ll just end up hurting yourself, I guess.
> *Interviewer: You can’t stay angry forever.*
> I think, I don’t know. Like, to me the American culture is so much, like, something happens, cool, and you have to forgive right away, which I don’t understand. I don’t agree with that at all. I think you need time to process your emotions.

While some people let go of negative emotions, others begin to develop more positive emotions. Dean described forgiveness this way: “accepting what somebody has done or, accepting the situation as it is. And instead of, bashing it or throwing it out you

learn from it and try to better yourself." Mary described forgiveness leading to being "happy regardless" of how the wrongdoer feels or whether or not they apologize.

For some people, it is the changes in their thinking patterns that are most important to letting go and moving on. Ashley indicated she would wish her ex-boyfriend "good luck in his future" and "wouldn't wish anything bad upon him." Letting go of a "grudge" is the most important part of forgiveness for some individuals. Kate, Rachel, and Elaine all indicated that they thought they had forgiven their wrongdoers (at least in part) because they were "not holding a grudge." For Trish and Casey, forgiveness means being able to "forget" what happened; while Monica indicated that if she were to forgive her mentor, it would still be "smart" for her not to "forget" what happened.

Letting go and moving on often involve a complex combination of emotional and cognitive changes. For example, at one point Rachel indicated that the fact that she was no longer angry at her roommates meant she had forgiven them even though she did not trust them, saying, "I have forgiven them because I'm not angry, but I don't trust them." However, at another point in the interview, Rachel reported that even though she *was* still angry while thinking about the situation, she had forgiven her roommates because she was not holding a grudge: "For some people they might say you're not angry at that person anymore. I'm still angry when I think of it, but I'm not holding a grudge."

While these two excerpts may seem contradictory at first, Rachel's explanation of what "holding a grudge" means to her helps clarify things:

> To me, if you're holding a grudge against someone, you're always angry at them for one thing, always bringing it up or whenever you deal with them you always have that in the back of your mind. To me that takes more effort to remember, because for me I can't stay angry with anyone…So I'm not angry, whenever I think of this I get angry but I'm not, I'm not, the next chance I get to do something wrong to them I'm not going to be like, "Oh, let me remember how

> they did that to me and let me try to get back at them." I'm not. I guess that's what holding a grudge means to me. Getting back at someone for something they did before and I'm not going to do that.

These passages show that for Rachel, forgiving means not "holding a grudge" or not "always" being angry at the person for what they did. She can forgive someone while also withholding trust from them and getting angry whenever she "thinks about" the wrongdoing. As long as she is not constantly replaying what they did to her in her mind and not trying to "get back at" them, then Rachel believes she has forgiven them. As this example shows, the process of forgiving is often complex and nuanced at the individual level. It becomes even more so when comparing themes across individuals.

Letting Go and Moving On Externally

For some people, forgiving is a step on the path towards reconciliation with the wrongdoer. For Elaine, by letting her "anger" and "grudge" off her "shoulders" she was able to "move on" and to "still have a relationship with this person." She described having "spoken" to her friend and having "hung out" with him since the wrongdoing. She said, "if he were to call or text I would answer and talk to him." Mary described becoming close with her ex-roommate again after she (the ex-roommate) apologized: "Now we're fine. We talk. It took like probably two or three months for us to get back to kind of where we were, but now I consider her one of my best friends again."

Casey described thinking that in order to forgive, one must be able to "trust" that person again and let one's "guard down." She indicated that although she made attempts to have "good" interactions with her wrongdoer it was currently all an "act." She described forgiveness as being able to genuinely like her wrongdoer and hoped one day she would be able to do so. For Kate, one of the ways she was able to forgive her mother-

in-law repeatedly was to “talk to her” about the “bigger” issues when they arose in their relationship. For Trish, forgiveness would have been talking to the girlfriend at social functions and “starting over.”

While some people, like Elaine, reconcile with their wrongdoers, other people, like Monica believe, “you can forgive people and not have to have a relationship with them.” Ashley described having forgiven her ex-boyfriend, but indicated that she was “not going to be his friend.” Similarly, Rachel reported that she forgave her roommates, but was not going to “trust” them.

Some people may experience a broadening of their social circles as they move on from the wrongdoing. Mary described spending time with her other friends after she and her ex-roommate grew apart. She reported that in hindsight she realized she and her ex-roommate were too “dependent” on one another. Gabby reportedly left a social club she and her boyfriend were in together and joined a different one. She described gaining a number of new friends after joining the club. Jess indicated that before her father’s affair she was closer with him than her mother. She reported that her estrangement from her father led her to become closer with her mother. Ashley described finding a new boyfriend after her breakup. She described this new partnership being very “different” and “good” in comparison to her relationship with her ex-boyfriend.

Study One Discussion

Seven major categories emerged from the analyses: History, The Event, Immediate Aftermath, Festering, Fading, and Letting Go and Moving On. There are a number of similarities between these categories and the forgiveness model that was originally proposed for this study; however, there are a few differences as well. The

major categories are reviewed below and they are compared to the original version of the proposed forgiveness model. Then the modifications made to the model are discussed. Figure 1 gives a visual depiction of the original version of the model. Figure 2 gives a visual depiction of the revised version of the model. These figures will likely be helpful references while reading this section.

The person's history sets the stage for the event to occur. His/her past experiences, self-perceptions, perceptions of the wrongdoer, and preexisting relationship to the wrongdoer influence how the event unfolds. These components of the person's history also contribute to how the person interprets the event once it has occurred. There can be a number of overlaps between the subcategories of the person's history. The person's past experiences may have influenced their self-perceptions and vice versa. In many cases, the person's preexisting relationship with the wrongdoer and their past experiences may also be related. The self-perceptions subcategory is comparable to the individual characteristics subcategory originally proposed in the model. The preexisting relationship to the wrongdoer was originally labeled pre-wrongdoing relationship with wrongdoer.

The event itself is a major component of the forgiveness process. The timeframe of the event can influence how the person processes it. Was it an ongoing situation or a one-time event? How long ago did the event occur? There are also characteristics of the event that can influence how the person processes it. Furthermore, the perceived seriousness of the event is important to how the person reacts to it. There also seems to be a negative relationship between length of time since the event and perceived severity of the event. As time passes, people seem to consider how things might have "been worse"

and how the wrongdoing measures up in the broader scheme of life. This change in thinking over time seems to lessen perceived seriousness for most people.

The immediate aftermath phase is comparable to the automatic reactions phase originally proposed for the model. The term “automatic” did not seem to fit the data and consequently the label for this phase was changed. It is similar to the first phase (i.e., initial feelings of anger and hurt) in Strelan and Covic’s (2006) review as well as Enright and Fitzgibbons’s (2000) uncovering phase. In the immediate aftermath of the event, the person will likely have strong negative reactions to it. These reactions tend to cluster into either internal or external experiences. Over time these reactions will likely either fester or fade.

The festering phase is comparable to the negative motivations phased originally proposed for the model. It shares commonalities with Strelan and Covic’s (2006) second phase (negative affective and cognitive consequences). There is not a comparable phase in Enright and Fitzgibbons’s (2000) model, which is likely due to its prescriptive nature in contrast to the more descriptive nature of the present study. In other words, Enright and Fitzgibbons’s (2000) model is partially based on an assumption that people progressing through it are moving towards forgiveness.

The fading phase is comparable to the reflection phase originally proposed for the model. It is similar to the work phase of Enright and Fitzgibbons’s (2000) model. It also shares commonalities with stages three (i.e., an acknowledgement that previous strategies of dealing with the hurt are not working) and four (i.e., a decision to either forgive, or consider forgiving) in Strelan and Covic’s (2006) review. The label “fading” was chosen for this phase of the model because, in general, participants described gradual changes

over time rather than a discrete decision to forgive. For example, Gabby used the imagery of holding “baggage” after her breakup and she described the “gradual” process of each of the bags “falling off” over time. It seems that the fading stage will be the final stage in the forgiveness process for most people, because it is the most passive stage. As time passes, people’s reactions seem to naturally fade over time.

In some cases there may be intraindividual differences in the festering and fading stages. For instance, a person may be in the festering phase internally while experiencing fading externally. Casey is a good example of this. She described her attempts at having positive interactions with her wrongdoer, which would suggest fading externally. However, she also described a discrepancy between how she was acting and how she was feeling. Internally, Casey was still experiencing negative thoughts and emotions about her wrongdoer, which would suggest festering internally.

In addition to intraindividual differences, the order of how one progresses through the festering and fading stages will likely differ between individuals as well. After the immediate aftermath of the event, some people may move to the festering stage, while others move into the fading stage. There also may be differences in how quickly or often people oscillate between the festering and fading stages. There may also be instances in which a person does not experience festering. In Kate’s situation, she reported that her relationship with her mother-in-law was a “learning experience.” She described significant changes in her reactions to her mother-in-law from her first year of marriage until the present. Kate indicated that over time she had practiced how to “deal” with her mother-in-law by not taking things “to heart” or “brush them off” of her shoulder. Kate still described this process as forgiveness by “let[ting] it go,” but there was no evidence

that she passed through the festering stage when forgiving smaller issues as compared to "bigger issues."

The presence or absence of an apology can also be an important step in the forgiveness process. Typically, it seems that an apology from the wrongdoer helps the person move closer to letting go and moving on. In contrast, a lack of an apology typically seems to make it more difficult for the person to move towards letting go and moving on. However, there are some exceptions to these trends that are worth noting. First, if the delivery of the apology is off-putting, it may do more harm than good. It also seems there are some people (e.g., Ashley and Elaine) who do not think an apology is important.

The letting go and moving on phase is comparable to the resolution phase originally proposed for the model. It is similar to the deepening phase of Enright and Fitzgibbons's (2000) model. It also shares commonalities with stages four (i.e., a decision to either forgive, or consider forgiving) and five (i.e., understanding of, or empathy for, the wrongdoer) found in Strelan and Covic's (2006) review.

The qualitative differences between the fading and letting go and moving on stages might be subtle enough to be negligible. Rather, it might be best to conceptualize fading and letting go and moving on along a continuum. As negative reactions decrease and positive reactions increase, one moves from fading towards letting go and moving on. Furthermore, the cutoff point where one crosses over from fading to letting go and moving will likely be different from person to person. However, one important distinction between these two phases seems to be the likelihood of returning to the festering phase. It seems common for people progressing through the forgiveness process

to oscillate between the festering and fading stages. It also does not seem uncommon for a person to be festering in one area (e.g., negative thinking patterns) while fading in another (e.g., relationship with the wrongdoer). In contrast to the fading stage, it seems that a person in the letting go and moving on stage would be unlikely to return to the festering stage.

Modifications to the proposed forgiveness model were warranted based on the findings from this study. A notable modification is the change to a number of the labels for the categories and phases in the model. Since the goal of study one was to develop a grounded theory, it was necessary to use labels that best fit the data. The new labels were chosen to summarize and represent the major theme of the data represented in each category (Charmaz, 2006).

The starting point of the model was also modified. Rather than the event being the starting point of the model, the person's history is the starting point of the model. This allowed the progression of the model to more closely represent the passage of time. Secondly, it included the person's history (i.e., personality traits, past experiences, preexisting relationship with the wrongdoer, and perceptions of the wrongdoer) in the progression of the model rather than keeping it separate as a potential moderator to the process. Originally, individual characteristics, pre-wrongdoing relationship with the wrongdoer, and wrongdoing characteristics were represented as potential moderators listed separately from the process of the model. In the revised version these variables were all represented under the History and Event categories. This representation more closely represented the data collected because it reflected the major categories that emerged during data analysis. For example, originally "wrongdoing characteristics" was

listed as a label under the "potential moderators" column of the model. In the revised version of the model, "characteristics of the event" is now a subcategory of "the event" category. This example shows a change from the original label for a subcategory (i.e., wrongdoing characteristics) to a revised label (i.e., characteristics of the event) that more accurately reflects the data collected. This example also demonstrates how the potential moderators from the original version of the model were merged with the phases of the process.

The final change to the model was the exclusion of physical, psychological, and post-wrongdoing relationship outcomes. While there was some evidence for these outcomes in the data (e.g., Gabby's sinus infection and Mary's reconciliation with her roommate), there was not enough evidence to support each of these constructs as a major category in the model. Therefore, these categories were removed from the model unless and until there was more evidence to support their inclusion.

After revising the model to reflect the data collected, the next step was to test primary assumptions within the model. Those primary relations concern the factors that predict and moderate forgiveness (Aim1), and evaluating the effects of forgiveness (Aim 2).

Aim 1: Predicting Forgiveness

1a) People higher in trait forgiveness will have higher levels of state forgiveness compared to those with lower trait forgiveness.

1b) Severity of the wrongdoing will moderate this relationship such that the effect of trait forgiveness on state forgiveness will be lessened as severity increases.

2a) People with closer relationships to the wrongdoer before the wrongdoing will have higher levels of state forgiveness as compared to those with relationships that were not as close.

2b) Severity of the wrongdoing will moderate this relationship such that the effect of relationship closeness on state forgiveness will be lessened as severity increases.

3a) People with higher levels of intrusive rumination soon after the wrongdoing will have lower levels of state forgiveness.

3b) People with higher levels of deliberate rumination soon after the wrongdoing will have higher levels of state forgiveness.

Aim 2: Effects of Forgiveness on life outcomes

4) People higher in state forgiveness will have higher levels of life satisfaction as compared to those with lower state forgiveness.

5) People higher in state forgiveness will experience fewer physical symptoms as compared to those with lower state forgiveness.

6a) People higher in state forgiveness will have closer relationships with the wrongdoer after the wrongdoing as compared to those with lower state forgiveness.

6b) Severity of the wrongdoing will moderate this relationship such that the effect of forgiveness on relationship closeness will be lessened as severity increases.

CHAPTER 4: STUDY TWO METHODS

Participants

Participants were undergraduate students at a university in the Southeastern United States. Participants had to be 18 years or older and had to have experienced an interpersonal wrongdoing no shorter than two weeks ago and no longer than two years ago. The minimum limit of two weeks allowed sufficient time for participants to progress at least partially through the forgiveness process. The maximum limit of two years allowed for a large number of participants to be eligible for participation, but helped ensure adequate recall for the event. As this study was intended to collect data on different types of wrongdoings across different types of participants, no specific criteria were used to select certain types of wrongdoings or participant characteristics.

A total of 270 participants began the survey. Of those, 47 were excluded because they answered "no" when asked if they had experienced a wrongdoing in the past two years. Eighteen participants were excluded because they did not enter an age. Nineteen participants were excluded because their wrongdoing occurred less than two weeks before taking the survey; and one participant was excluded because she described a situation in which she felt she had wronged someone else. This resulted in 185 participants being included in the study. Demographic information on participants can be found in Table 3 of the Appendix.

Participants described a variety of wrongdoings including infedelity by a romantic partner, abuse or neglet from parents, being gossiped about by a friend, and being threatened by a stranger. The following are examples of participant descriptions of their wrongdoings: “My fiance' cheated on me, and got the other woman pregnant.” “I was betrayed by a very close friend of mine. I told her something very important and secretive. It is probably the biggest secret that I have and she told multiple people.” “I was physically abused by a boyfriend.” “Walking to [name of restaurant] with a friend, we were threatened by a car coming out of the parking lot. The driver aimed a gun at us and cocked it, then pulled into [name of restaurant] and watched us for a bit before leaving.” “My parents have chosen to stop being a part of my life socially and financially due to me telling them that my uncle raped me.”

Materials

Participants were recruited through the university’s undergraduate psychology research pool. They received course credit for their participation. Participants signed up for the study online and completed computerized questionnaires in a psychology research lab. The materials used are listed below. All participants completed the prescreen questionnaire. The computerized program was setup to determine whether participants were eligible for the study based on prescreen responses. Participants who were eligible for the study completed all of the measures described below. Those who were not eligible for the study, because they had not experienced a wrongdoing within the set timeframe, completed measures of trait forgiveness, social desirability, satisfaction with life, and physical symptoms.

Prescreen

The prescreen questionnaire asked participants to disclose their age, ethnicity, university status (i.e., faculty, staff, undergraduate student, or graduate student) highest degree earned (for faculty and staff) parents' highest degree earned (for students), and religious affiliation. In addition to demographics, the prescreen questionnaire asked "Have you been significantly wronged by another person within the past two years?" If the person answered yes to this question, they were asked "when did the wrongdoing take place" and to "briefly describe the wrongdoing" on the prescreen questionnaire. A copy of the prescreen questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.

Forgiveness Measures

The Forgiveness Scale (Rye, Loiacono, Folk, Olszewski, Heim, & Madia, 2001) was used to measure affective responses, behavioral responses, and cognitive responses to the wrongdoing. The Forgiveness Scale (Rye et al., 2001) is a 15-item Likert-type scale measuring the level of forgiveness towards an actual wrongdoer. Respondents are asked to think about an actual wrongdoing and report on their affective (e.g., "If I encountered the person who wronged me I would feel at peace."), cognitive (e.g., "I spend time thinking about ways to get back at the person who wronged me"), and behavioral (e.g., I avoid certain people and/or places because they remind me of the person who wronged me) responses to the wrongdoer.

Factor analysis yielded a two-factor solution for the scale consisting of an absence of negative reactions subscale and presence of positive reactions subscale. Authors report acceptable internal consistency (TFS-Absence of Negative $\alpha = .86$; TFS-Presence of Positive $\alpha = .85$) and test-retest reliability (Absence of Negative $r = .76$; Presence of

Positive r = .76) for both subscales over a 15-day period. Cronbach's alphas for the present study were α = .86 for TFS-Absence of Negative subscale and α = .80 for TFS-Presence of Positive. Authors also report significant positive relationships with other measures of forgiveness as well as a single item measure of forgiveness. Furthermore, TFS has been shown to be significantly positively related to religiousness, hope, and spiritual well-being and negatively related to anger (Rye et al., 2001).

The Forgiveness Scale was chosen because it is a psychometrically sound measure that has been used often in forgiveness research. Aside from the name of the scale, the word forgiveness is never mentioned in the questionnaire.

The Transgression–Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory-18 (TRIM-18; McCullough et al., 2006) was used to measure avoidance motivations, revenge motivations, and benevolence motivations. The original TRIM (McCullough et al., 1998) consisted of 12 items and two subscales. More recently, McCullough and colleagues (2006) added six more questions and a third subscale resulting in the TRIM-18. The TRIM-18 measures state forgiveness of an actual wrongdoing. Respondents rate items from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Scores are calculated for three subscales: Revenge (e.g., I'll make him/her pay), Avoidance (e.g., I keep as much distance between us as possible), and Benevolence (e.g., Even though his/her actions hurt me, I have goodwill for him/her).

Authors report acceptable internal consistency for TRIM-18-Avoidance (α =.86), TRIM-18-Revenge (α =.90), and TRIM-18-Benevolence (α =.87) subscales as well as test-retest reliability over a three-week period (Avoidance subscale = .86; Revenge subscale = .79). Cronbach's alphas for the present study were for TRIM-18-Avoidance α

=.91, for TRIM-18-Revenge α =.87, and for TRIM-18-Benevolence α =..88 Authors also report support for construct validity. The TRIM and TRIM-18 correlate significantly with a single-item measure of forgiveness (McCullough et al., 1998, 2006). The Avoidance and Revenge subscales are shown to have low correlations with measures of social desirability. Confirmatory factor analysis of the original TRIM supported the two-factor structure (McCullough et al., 1998). However, when the benevolence factor was added, items from this factor loaded negatively on the Avoidance factor (McCullough, 2006). Therefore, McCullough and colleagues (2006) suggest reverse-scoring the Benevolence items and combining them with the Avoidance items on the Avoidance versus Benevolence factor (higher scores indicating higher Avoidance and lower Benevolence). The Cronbach's alpha for this scale in the present study was α =.94.

As mentioned previously, the word forgiveness is never used in the instructions or items on this questionnaire. The authors intentionally excluded the word forgiveness from the measure to avoid confounding from differences in personal definitions of forgiveness. This also avoids discrepancies between scientific and lay definitions of forgiveness mentioned above (Jeffress, 2000).

The TRIM-18 was chosen for a few reasons. It is a psychometrically sound instrument that has been used often by forgiveness researchers in the past. Its subscale scores (i.e., revenge, avoidance, and benevolence) also provided important quantitative and objective information regarding participants' current thoughts and feelings towards the wrongdoer. The avoidance subscale provided information on the degree to which a participant had a desire to avoid the wrongdoer or act as if he/she did not exist. The revenge subscale provided information on the degree to which the participant felt

motivated to get even or to wish for bad things to happen to the wrongdoer. The benevolence subscale provided information on the degree to which the participant harbored positive feelings and wanted to act kindly towards the wrongdoer.

The Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS) was used as a measure of trait forigveness (Thompson, Snyder, & Hoffman, 2005). This is an 18-item questionnaire measuring trait forgiveness in three domains: HFS-Self (present study α =.81), HFS-Others (present study α =.84), and HFS-Situations (present study α =.80). The scale also yields a global score of trait forgiveness (present study α =.78). Possible item responses range from 1 = almost always false of me to 7 = almost always true of me. Items from each of the subscales include: "Although I feel bad at first when I mess up, over time I can give myself some slack" (self), "Although others have hurt me in the past, I have eventually been able to see them as good people" (others), "Eventually I let go of negative thoughts about bad circumstances that are beyond anyone's control" (situations).

Other Measures

Perceived severity of the wrongdoing was measured by a single-item scale asking: "How severe do you think the wrongdoing was?" Responses ranged from 0 (Not at all) to 6 (Extremely). This item was included on the demographics questionnaire.

Relationship to the Wrongdoer was measured a few different ways. First, participants were asked "how would you classify the nature of your relationship with the wrongdoer?" They were given the following options: romantic partners, family members, platonic friends, work/school colleague, and no relationship. Participant relationships before and after the wrongdoing were measured using the mean of three questions previously used by Bono and colleagues (2008). To measure the relationship before the

wrongdoing, participants were asked the following three questions: 1) "How close were you to the person who wronged you *before* the wrongdoing?" (scale from 0 = not at all to 6 = extremely); 2) "How committed were you to the person who wronged you *before* the wrongdoing" (scale from 0 = not at all to 6 = extremely); and 3) Participants were then shown seven pairs of circles ranging from 0 (no overlap) to 6 (extreme overlap) and asked "Please choose the picture that best describes your relationship with the wrongdoer *before* the wrongdoing." Cronbach's alpha for these three questions in the present study was α =.87. To measure the relationship after the wrongdoing, participants were asked the following three questions: 1) How close are you to the person who wronged you *after* the wrongdoing? (scale from 0 = not at all to 6 = extremely); 2) How committed are you to the person who wronged you *after* the wrongdoing?; and 3) Participants were then shown seven pairs of circles ranging from 0 (no overlap) to 6 (extreme overlap) and asked "Please choose the picture that best describes your relationship with the wrongdoer *after* the wrongdoing." Cronbach's alpha for these three questions in the present study was α =.93. See Appendix C for a complete copy of this scale.

Apology/amends was measured using the mean of two items used previously by Bono and colleagues (2008). Participants were first asked "How apologetic was the wrongdoer towards you?" Then they were asked "To what extent did he/she make amends for what he/she did to you?" The scale on both of these items was 0 (not at all) to 6 (completely). Although none of the hypotheses for Study Two involved apology, it was still included in the study because it was one of the seven major categories that emerged from Study One. The apology scores were used in the correlation matrix as well as post hoc analyses. Cronbach's alpha for the present study was α =.88.

The Event Related Rumination Inventory (ERRI; Cann, et al., 2011) was used to measure intrusive and deliberate rumination during the weeks immediately after the wrongdoing. The ERRI is a 20-item self-report questionnaire designed to measure thought processes following stressful events. Questions are divided into those pertaining to intrusive rumination (e.g., I thought about the event when I did not mean to) and those pertaining to deliberate rumination (e.g., I thought about whether I could find meaning from the experience). Factor analyses in two separate samples offered support the two-factor solution for the measure (Cann et al., 2011). Authors also report acceptable internal consistency for both scales (ERRI-Intrusive Rumination $\alpha = .94$; Deliberate Rumination $\alpha = .88$). Cronbach's alphas in the present study were $\alpha = .95$ for ERRI-Intrusive Rumination and $\alpha = .81$ for ERRI-Deliberate Rumination. Both scales consist of 10 items with responses ranging from 0 (not at all) to 3 (often).

In the past, typically measures of rumination focus only on the unwanted type of repetitive thinking (e.g., Nolen-Hoeksema and Morrow's Response Styles Questionnaire-Ruminative Response Scale, 1991), while ignoring the more intentional and controlled form of recurrent thoughts (Cann et al., 2011). The ERRI's inclusion of deliberate rumination makes it a uniquely useful measure. Furthermore, the version of the ERRI used in this study allows for the passage of time in that it asks about rumination levels immediately after the event rather than presently. This allows a glimpse into how one's thinking patterns in the past impact them currently.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was used as a measure of the participants overall contentment with his/her life. The Satisfaction with Life Scale is a 5-item measure of global life satisfaction using a 7-point

likert-type response scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). The scale has good internal reliability (α = .87) and good test–retest reliability over a 2-month interval (*r* =.82; Diener et al., 1985). The Cronbach's alpha in the present study was .83. Scores are divided into six groups ranging from extremely dissatisfied (5-9) to highly satisfied (30-35). This measure was chosen based on its past use in college students and forgiveness research. It was also an appealing measure of life satisfaction because of its consideration of the major domains influencing life-satisfaction (i.e., relationships, work/school life, personal growth, spirituality, and leisure), which are also relevant to the forgiveness process.

The Cohen-Hoberman Inventory of Physical Symptoms (CHIPS; Cohen & Hoberman, 1983) was used to measure the physical outcomes component of the proposed model. This inventory was chosen because it has been used consistently in the forgiveness literature to measure physical symptoms (e.g., Lawler-Row, 2010). Also the CHIPS was psychometrically tested in a college population. This improves the chances that it will be a reliable and valid measure for the current sample. Also, this inventory is a parsimonious method for assessing a broad range of physical symptoms that could be impacting participants. The CHIPS lists 33 physical symptoms (e.g., pains in heart or chest; poor appetite) and asks respondents how much these symptoms have impacted them in the past two weeks. Authors report acceptable internal consistency (α = .88) and significant correlations between CHIPS scores and the use of Student Health Services over five weeks in two separate samples. Cronbach's alpha in the present study was .93.

Analyses

Quantitative analyses were conducted in SPSS Predictive Analytic Statistics Software -18.0. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations were generated for all study variables. Study variables were screened for normality and extreme multicolinearity between any predictor variables. Cronbach's alphas were calculated when possible. Finally, scatter plots were reviewed to determine if relationships between independent and dependent variables are linear. The analyses used to test each hypothesis are described below.

Aim 1: Predicting Forgiveness

1a) *People higher in trait forgiveness will have higher levels of state forgiveness compared to those with lower trait forgiveness.* 1b) *Severity of the wrongdoing will moderate this relationship such that the effect of trait forgiveness on state forgiveness will be lessened as severity increases.* Hypotheses 1a and 1b were tested using a hierarchical multiple regression in which centered scores from the HFS and the severity scale were entered into the first step of the regression equation. The HFS x severity interaction term was entered into the second step of the regression equation. Four of these regression analyses were performed, using one of the four state forgiveness subscales (i.e., TFS-Absence of Negative; TFS-Presence of Positive; TRIM-18-Avoidance; TRIM-18-Revenge) as the dependent variable in each case.

2a) *People with closer relationships to the wrongdoer before the wrongdoing will have higher levels of state forgiveness as compared to those with relationships that were not as close.* 2b) *Severity of the wrongdoing will moderate this relationship such that the effect of relationship closeness on state forgiveness will be lessened as severity increases.*

Hypotheses 2a and 2b were tested using hierarchical multiple regression in which centered scores from the relationship before scale and the severity scale were entered into the first step of the regression equation. The relationship before-severity interaction term was entered into the second step of the regression equation. Four separate regression equations were completed using the same independent variables. Four of these regression analyses were performed, using one of the four state forgiveness subscales (i.e., TFS-Absence of Negative; TFS-Presence of Positive; TRIM-18-Avoidance; TRIM-18-Revenge) as the dependent variable in each case.

3a) *People with higher levels of intrusive rumination soon after the wrongdoing will have lower levels of state forgiveness.* 3b) *People with higher levels of deliberate rumination soon after the wrongdoing will have higher levels of state forgiveness.* Hypotheses 3a and 3b were tested using hierarchical multiple regression in which HFS scores, severity scores, and relationship before scores were entered into the first step as the control variables. Then, ERRI-Intrusive Rumination and ERRI-Deliberate Rumination scores were entered into the second step as the independent variables. Four separate regression equations were completed using the same independent variables. However, the four state forgiveness subscales (i.e., TFS-Absence of Negative; TFS-Presence of Positive; TRIM-18-Avoidance; and TRIM-18-Revenge) were used to represent the dependent variable, thus resulting in four separate equations.

Aim 2: Effects of Forgiveness on life outcomes

4) *People higher in state forgiveness will have higher levels of life satisfaction as compared to those with lower state forgiveness.* Hypothesis 4 was tested using two separate hierarchical multiple regressions. In the first equation gender, age, and HFS

scores were entered in the first step as the control variables. Then, TFS-Absence of Negative and TFS-Presence of Positive subscale scores were entered into the second step as the independent variables. The second equation also used gender, age, and HFS scores as the control variables. Then, TRIM-18-Avoidance and TRIM-18-Revenge subscale scores were entered into the second step as the independent variables. In both equations SWLS scores were entered as the dependent variable.

5) *People higher in state forgiveness will experience fewer physical symptoms as compared to those with lower state forgiveness.* Hypothesis 5 was tested using two separate hierarchical multiple regressions. In the first equation gender, age, and HFS scores were entered in the first step as the control variables. Then, TFS-Absence of Negative and TFS-Presence of Positive subscale scores were entered into the second step as the independent variables. The second equation also used gender, age, and HFS scores as the control variables. Then, TRIM-18-Avoidance and TRIM-18-Revenge subscale scores were entered into the second step as the independent variables. In both equations CHIPS scores were entered as the dependent variable.

6a) *People higher in state forgiveness will have closer relationships with the wrongdoer after the wrongdoing as compared to those with lower state forgiveness.* 6b) *Severity of the wrongdoing will moderate this relationship such that the effect of forgiveness on relationship closeness will be lessened as severity increases.* Hypotheses 6a and 6b were tested using hierarchical multiple regression in which centered scores from the state forgiveness subscales and the severity scale were entered into the first step of the regression equation. Then, the state forgiveness x severity interaction term was entered into the second step of the regression equation.

Two groups of equations were used to test these hypotheses. The first group consisted of two equations using TFS subscale sores. In both of these equations TFS-Absence of Negative and TFS-Presence of Positive subscale scores were entered into the first step along with severity scale scores. However, in one equation the TFS-Absence of negative x severity interaction term was entered in the second step. In the other equation the TFS-Presence of Positive x severity interaction term was entered in the second step.

The second group consisted of three equations using TRIM-18 subscale scores. In all both of these equations the TRIM-18-Avoidance and TRIM-18-Revenge subscale scores were entered in the first step along with severity scale scores. However, the interaction term was different for each equation. The TRIM-18-Avoidance x severity interaction term was used in the first equation; and the TRIM-18-Revenge x severity interaction term was used in the second equation.

CHAPTER 5: STUDY TWO RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations for Study Two measures can be found in Table 4 of the Appendix. In general, relationships between variables were as expected. All four state forgiveness subscales (i.e., TFS-Absence of Negative and Presence of Positive subscales; and TRIM-18 Avoidance and Revenge subscales) were significantly related to one another in the expected directions. For example, the TFS-Absence of Negative subscale was positively associated with the TFS-Presence of Positive subscale ($r = .49$, $p < .01$). However the TFS-Absence of Negative subscale was negatively associated with the TRIM-18 Avoidance ($r = -.43$, $p < .01$) and Revenge ($r = -.56$, $p < .01$) subscales. These associations were in the expected direction given that *lower* scores on the TRIM-18 subscales represent more forgiveness, whereas *higher* scores on TFS subscales indicate more forgiveness.

The relationships between state forgiveness subscales and other variables were also in the expected directions. For example, the HFS-Other subscale was significantly positively correlated with all four state forgiveness subscales. High levels of trait forgiveness were not only associated with high levels of state forgiveness; they were also associated with more life satisfaction ($r = .36$, $p < .01$) and fewer physical symptoms ($r = -.29$, $p < .01$).

As in past studies intrusive and deliberate rumination were significantly related to one another. Also, the relationships between measures of rumination and state forgiveness were in the expected directions. Furthermore, the more intrusive rumination they experienced, the less likely they were to be satisfied with their lives ($r = .16$, $p < .05$). In contrast, the more deliberate rumination people experienced immediately after the event, the less likely they were to endorse physical symptoms ($r = .19$, $p < .05$). Severity was significantly associated with only one state forgiveness subscale (i.e., TRIM-18 Avoidance subscale, $r = .24$, $p < .01$). It was also significantly associated with more intrusive rumination in the weeks immediately after the wrongdoing ($r = .22$, $p < .01$).

Having a closer relationship with the wrongdoer before the wrongdoing was significantly associated with all but one measure of state forgiveness in the expected directions. A closer relationship with the wrongdoer before the wrongdoing was significantly associated with a closer relationship after the wrongdoing. Having a closer relationship with the wrongdoer after the wrongdoing was significantly associated with all four measures of state forgiveness in the expected directions.

Aim 1: Predicting Forgiveness

Aim 1 of the study was to determine significant predictors of state forgiveness. The hypotheses under this aim were developed using findings from Study One in conjunction with the proposed comprehensive model of forgiveness. In general, there was support for the hypotheses regarding main effects (e.g., higher trait forgiveness predicting higher state forgiveness); however, there was not support for the hypotheses regarding interactions (e.g., trait forgiveness interacting with severity). The detailed findings for each hypothesis are discussed in depth below.

Hypotheses 1a and 1b

Results of hierarchical multiple regression analyses testing this hypothesis can be found in Tables 3 and 4 of the Appendix. Hypothesis 1a posited that people higher in trait forgiveness would have higher levels of state forgiveness compared to those with lower trait forgiveness. There was strong support for this hypothesis. All four analyses showed trait forgiveness having a statistically significant effect on state forgiveness. In the first two analyses (Table 5) trait forgiveness had a significant effect on state forgiveness. Together, HFS-Other scores and severity scores accounted for 19 % and 20 % of the variance of TFS-Absence of Negative scores ($p < .01$) and TFS-Presence of Positive scores ($p < .01$) respectively. Furthermore, HFS-Other scores had a large effect on TFS-Absence of Negative scores ($\beta = .42$, $p < .01$) and TFS-Presence of Positive scores ($\beta = .39$, $p < .01$). Trait forgiveness had a significant effect on state forgiveness in the second two analyses as well (Table 6). Together, HFS-Other scores and severity scores accounted for 12 % and 21 % of the variance of TRIM-18-Avoidance scores ($p < .01$) and TRIM-18-Revenge scores ($p < .01$) respectively. Furthermore, HFS-Other scores had a medium effect on TRIM-18-Avoidance scores ($\beta = -.26$, $p < .01$) and a large effect on TRIM-18-Revenge scores ($\beta = -.43$, $p < .01$).

It was also predicted (hypothesis 1b) that severity of the wrongdoing would moderate the relationship between trait and state forgiveness such that the effect of trait forgiveness on state forgiveness will be lessened as severity increased. This hypothesis was not supported. In none of the four analyses did the interaction term account for a significant increment in variance explained (see Step 2 in Tables 5 and 6).

While there was no support for the effect of trait forgiveness being lessened as severity increased; results did show evidence of trait forgiveness suppressing the effect of severity on state forgiveness. Severity did not have significant zero-order correlations with TFS-Presence of Positive or TRIM-18-Revenge scores. However, when HFS-Other scores were controlled for, severity did have small effects on TFS-Presence of Positive ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .05$) and TRIM-18-Revenge scores ($\beta = .16$, $p < .05$).

Hypotheses 2a and 2b

Hypothesis 2a posited that people with a closer relationship to the wrongdoer before the wrongdoing would have higher levels of state forgiveness as compared to those with relationships that were not as close. This hypothesis was supported in three of four cases (Tables 7 and 8). Together, severity scores and relationship before scores accounted for seven percent of the variance of TFS-Presence of Positive scores ($p < .01$). Furthermore, relationship before scores had a small effect on TFS-Presence of Positive scores ($\beta = .42$, $p < .01$). Relationship closeness before the wrongdoing had a significant effect on state forgiveness in the second two analyses as well (Table 8). Together, relationship before scores and severity scores accounted for 11% and 6 % of the variance of TRIM-18-Avoidance scores ($p < .01$) and TRIM-18-Revenge scores ($p < .01$) respectively. Furthermore, relationship before scores had a small effect on TRIM-18-Avoidance scores ($\beta = -.23$, $p < .01$) and a small effect on TRIM-18-Revenge scores ($\beta = -.19$, $p < .01$).

Hypothesis 2b posited that severity of the wrongdoing would moderate the relationship between relationship closeness and state forgiveness such that the effect of relationship closeness on state forgiveness would be lessened as severity increased. This

hypothesis was not supported. In none of the four analyses did the interaction term account for a significant increment in variance explained (see Step 2 in Tables 7 and 8).

Similar to results from hypothesis one, there was no support for the effect of relationship closeness before the wrongdoing being lessened as severity increased; but results did show evidence of relationship closeness before the wrongdoing suppressing the effect of severity on state forgiveness (compare Table 4 to Tables 7 and 8). Severity did not have significant zero-order correlations with TFS-Presence of Positive or TRIM-18-Revenge scores (Table 4). However, when relationship before scores were controlled for, severity did have small effects on TFS-Presence of Positive ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .05$) and TRIM-18-Revenge scores ($\beta = .17$, $p < .05$).

Hypotheses 3a and 3b

Hypothesis 3a posited that people with higher levels of intrusive rumination soon after the wrongdoing would have lower levels of state forgiveness as compared to those with lower levels of intrusive rumination after the wrongdoing. There was support for this hypothesis in one of the four analyses testing it (Table 9). Together, relationship ERRI-Intrusive Rumination scores and ERRI-Deliberate Rumination scores accounted for 10% of the variance of TFS-Absence of Negative scores after controlling for trait forgiveness, severity, and relationship closeness before the wrongdoing ($\Delta R^2 = .10$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, ERRI-Intrusive Rumination scores had a medium effect on TFS-Absence of Negative scores ($\beta = -.35$, $p < .01$).

Hypothesis 3b stated that people with higher levels of deliberate rumination soon after the wrongdoing would have higher levels of state forgiveness as compared to those with lower levels of deliberate rumination. There was support for this hypothesis in one

of the four analyses testing it (Table 9). Together, relationship ERRI-Intrusive Rumination scores and ERRI-Deliberate Rumination scores accounted for 10% of the variance of TRIM-18-Avoidance scores after controlling for trait forgiveness, severity, and relationship closeness before the wrongdoing ($\Delta R^2 = .10$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, ERRI-Deliberate Rumination scores had a small effect on TFS-Absence of Negative scores ($\beta = .17$, $p < .05$).

Aim 2: Effects of Forgiveness on Life Outcomes

Aim two of the study was to identify outcomes for which state forgiveness is a significant predictor. The hypotheses under this aim were developed using findings from Study One in conjunction with the proposed comprehensive model of forgiveness. In general, there was some support for the hypotheses regarding main effects (e.g., higher trait forgiveness predicting higher state forgiveness), but not for the hypotheses regarding interactions (e.g., trait forgiveness interacting with severity). The detailed findings for each hypothesis are discussed in depth below.

Hypotheses 4

It was expected that people higher in state forgiveness would have higher levels of life satisfaction as compared to those with lower state forgiveness. There was only partial support for this hypothesis in one of the two analyses testing it. In the first analysis (Table 11) TFS-Absence of Negative and TFS-Presence of Positive scores only accounted for three percent of the variance of SWLS scores after controlling for trait forgiveness, age, and gender ($\Delta R^2 = .03$, $p = .07$). Furthermore, TFS-Presence of Positive scores did not significantly predict SWLS scores ($\beta = -.01$, $p = .94$) and TFS-Absence of Negative scores had a small effect on SWLS scores ($\beta = -.18$, $p < .05$). In the second

analysis (Table 12) TRIM-18-Avoidance and TRIM-18-Revenge scores only contributed to one percent of SWLS variance after controlling for trait forgiveness, age, and gender (Δ R^2 =.01, p = .46). Furthermore, neither TRIM-18-Avoidance scores (β = -.03, p = .71) nor TRIM-18-Revenge scores (β = -.08, p = .39) significantly predicted SWLS scores.

Hypothesis 5

It was expected that people higher in state forgiveness would experience fewer physical symptoms as compared to those with lower state forgiveness. There was support for this hypothesis in one of the two analyses testing it. In the first analysis testing this hypothesis (Table 13) combined TFS-Absence of Negative scores and TFS-Presence of accounted for six percent of the variance of CHIPS scores after controlling for trait forgiveness, age, and gender (Δ R^2 = .06, p < .05). TFS-Presence of Positive scores did not significantly predict CHIPS scores (β = .08, p = .35). However, TFS-Absence of Negative scores had a moderate effect on CHIPS scores (β = -.30, p < .01). In the second analysis testing this hypothesis (Table 14) TRIM-18-Avoidance and TRIM-18-Revenge did not contribute to a significant percentage of CHIPS variance after controlling for trait forgiveness, age, and gender (Δ R^2 =.00, p = .81). Furthermore, TRIM-18-Avoidance scores (β = .04, p = .62) and TRIM-18-Revenge scores (β = .01, p = .89) did not significantly predict CHIPS scores.

Hypotheses 6a and 6b

It was expected that people higher in state forgiveness would have closer relationships with the wrongdoer after the wrongdoing as compared to those with lower state forgiveness. There was support for this hypothesis in both cases (Tables 15 and 16). Together, TFS-Absence of Negative scores, TFS-Presence of Positive scores, and

severity scores accounted for 25 % of the variance of relationship after scores ($p < .01$; see Table 15). Furthermore, TFS-Presence of Positive scores had a large effect on relationship after scores ($\beta = .52$, $p < .01$). State forgiveness had a significant effect on relationship closeness after the wrongdoing in the second analyses as well (Table 16). Together, TRIM-18-Avoidance scores, TRIM-18-Revenge scores, and severity scores accounted for 58% of relationship after scores ($p < .05$). Furthermore, TRIM-18-Avoidance scores had a large effect on relationship after scores ($\beta = -.81$, $p < .01$).

It was also predicted that severity of the wrongdoing would moderate the relationship between state forgiveness and relationship closeness after the wrongdoing such that the effect of state forgiveness on relationship closeness after the wrongdoing would be lessened as severity increased. This hypothesis was not supported. In none of the four analyses did the interaction term account for a significant increment in variance explained (see Step 2 in Tables 15 and 16).

Post hoc Analyses

After hypothesis testing was complete, one area where questions remained was in predicting SWLS scores. Results from Study Two showed close relationships between SWLS scores and HFS-Other scores as well as apology/amends scores. These relationships also made sense theoretically and were in line with the proposed forgiveness model. Therefore, it was hypothesized that people with higher levels of trait forgiveness would also have higher levels of satisfaction with life as compared to people with lower levels of trait forgiveness. Furthermore, it was predicted that people who perceived their wrongdoers to be more apologetic and to have made more efforts to seek amends would also experience higher levels of satisfaction with life as compared to people who

perceived their wrongdoers to be less apologetic and to have made fewer efforts to seek amends. These two hypotheses were tested using hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Age, gender, and state forgiveness were entered into the first step of the analysis as control variables. Then, HFS-Other scores and apology/amends scores were entered into the second step as predictor variables. Two equations were used to test this hypothesis. In the first equation, TFS subscale scores were entered to represent state forgiveness as a control variable. In the second equation, TRIM-18 subscale scores were entered to represent state forgiveness as a control variable. Results for these regression equations can be viewed in Tables 17 and 18.

There was support for trait forgiveness and apology/amends as predictors of life satisfaction in both analyses. In the first analysis (Table 17) HFS-Other scores and apology/amends scores together accounted for six percent of the variance of SWLS scores ($\Delta R^2 = .06$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, HFS-Other scores had a moderate effect on SWLS scores ($\beta = .24$, $p < .01$) and apology/amends scores had a small effect on SWLS scores ($\beta = .16$, $p < .05$).

There was also support for trait forgiveness and apology/amends as significant predictors of life satisfaction in the second analysis testing this hypothesis (Table 18). Together, HFS-Other scores and apology/amends scores accounted for nine percent of the variance of SWLS scores ($\Delta R^2 = .09$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, HFS-Other scores had a moderate effect on SWLS scores ($\beta = .27$, $p < .01$) and apology/amends scores had a small effect ($\beta = .20$, $p < .01$).

Study Two Discussion

The first aim of this study was to identify significant predictors of state forgiveness. There was strong support for trait forgiveness as a predictor of state forgiveness. Trait forgiveness scores had a large effect on state forgiveness in three cases and a medium effect on state forgiveness in one case. These results were consistent with previous findings on state and trait forgiveness (Brown et al., 2005; Lawler-Row et al., 2003, 2005). These results were also consistent with the proposed forgiveness model's assumption that one's history (including traits) influences the process of state forgiveness.

There was not support for the effect of trait forgiveness being lessened as severity increased. However, there was evidence that trait forgiveness suppresses the effect of severity on state forgiveness. In other words, there were no zero-order correlations between severity scores and TFS-Presence of Positive, TRIM-18 Avoidance, and TRIM-18 Revenge scores; however, after controlling for HFS-Other scores, severity had a small effect on two of these state forgiveness subscales (i.e., TFS-Presence of Positive and TRIM-18 Revenge) and a moderate effect on one (TRIM-18-Avoidance). These findings are consistent with the theory that severe wrongdoings would be more difficult to forgive (Lawler-Row et al., 2005; McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, 2000; Thoresen et al., 2000) as well as past empirical findings (Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Girard & Mullet, 1997).

There was support for relationship closeness before the wrongdoing as a predictor of state forgiveness. Relationship before scores had small, but significant, effects on state forgiveness in three cases (i.e., TFS-Presence of Positive, TRIM-18-Avoidance, TRIM-18-Revenge). These results were consistent with previous findings on state forgiveness

and the relationship before the wrongdoing (Bono & McCullough, 2006; Finkel, 2008; McCullough et al., 1998). These results were also consistent with the proposed forgiveness model's assumption that the preexisting relationship with the wrongdoer influences the process of state forgiveness.

There was not support for the effect of relationship closeness before the wrongdoing being lessened as severity increased. However, there was evidence that relationship before suppresses the effect of severity on state forgiveness. In other words, there were no zero-order correlations between severity scores and TFS-Presence of Positive, TRIM-18 Avoidance, and TRIM-18 Revenge scores; however, after controlling for relationship closeness scores, severity had a small effect on two of these subscales (i.e., TFS-Presence of Positive and TRIM-18 Revenge) and a moderate effect on one (TRIM-18-Avoidance).

The finding that ERRI-Intrusive Rumination scores had a moderate effect on TFS-Absence of Negative scores is consistent with past findings on intrusive rumination and forgiveness (Barber et al., 2005; McCullough et al, 2001). However, what makes this finding unique is intrusive rumination levels immediately following the event were compared to current levels of state forgiveness. Past forgiveness studies have either a) cross-sectionally compared current levels of intrusive rumination to current levels of state forgiveness (e.g., Barber et al., 2005) or b) compared changes in intrusive rumination over time to changes in state forgiveness over time (McCullough et al., 2001). The present study was the first to compare the current report of past intrusive rumination levels to current state forgiveness levels. This finding also offers further support of the

proposed model because it suggests that a person's reactions in the immediate aftermath of a wrongdoing are important to the forgiveness process.

The finding that deliberate rumination had a small, but significant, effect on state forgiveness (i.e., TFS-Absence of Negative scores) is of particular interest because this was the first study to examine the relationship between deliberate rumination and forgiveness. Previous forgiveness studies have conceptualized rumination as a one-dimensional construct consisting of unwanted negative repetitive thoughts. However, this conceptualization ignores the deliberate and intentional side of rumination (Cann et al., 2011). Examining the relationship between deliberate rumination and forgiveness shed new light on the thinking patterns involved in the forgiveness process. Namely, people who experience more intentional and controlled repetitive thinking in the immediate aftermath of a wrongdoing are more likely to experience state forgiveness later on. As with the finding on intrusive rumination, this finding offered support for the immediate aftermath phase impacting the forgiveness process.

When viewed as a whole, the findings under Aim 1 also help to shed light on one another. Trait forgiveness emerged as the strongest predictor of state forgiveness when compared to the other constructs under Aim 1. The HFS-Other subscale was the only variable to have significant effects on all four state forgiveness subscales. Relationship closeness before the wrongdoing had small effects on three of the four state forgiveness subscales. Severity had small effects on two subscales and a moderate effect on one subscales. Intrusive and deliberate rumination had moderate and small effects, respectively, on one of the four state forgiveness subscales. These findings are important when viewed in the context of the other findings under Aim 1. It appears intrusive and

deliberate rumination immediately after the wrongdoing, predict different components of state forgiveness than those accounted for by severity and relationship closeness before. For example, severity and relationship before both were significant predictors of the same three state forgiveness subscales (i.e., TFS-Presence of Positive, TRIM-18-Avoidance, and TRIM-18-Revenge). The one subscale that was neither significantly predicted by severity nor relationship closeness before was the TFS-Absence of Negative subscale. However, this was the only subscale that was significantly predicted by both intrusive rumination and deliberate rumination. It appears that in order to have a comprehensive understanding of state forgiveness, one must consider all of the constructs included in Aim 1 of this study. Trait forgiveness can be viewed as an overarching predictor of all components of state forgiveness. Severity and relationship closeness before the wrongdoing predict the same three components of state forgiveness (i.e., TFS-Presence of Positive, TRIM-18-Avoidance, and TRIM-18-Revenge), while intrusive and deliberate rumination predict the remaining component (i.e., TFS-Absence of Negative). Furthermore, there was evidence to suggest that both trait forgiveness and relationship closeness before the wrongdoing, suppress the effects of severity on two components of state forgiveness (i.e., TFS-Presence of Positive and TRIM-18-Revenge).

The second aim of this study was to identify important life outcomes predicted by state forgiveness. The SWLS was used to measure life satisfaction as an indicator of overall well-being and psychological health. There was no support for state forgiveness predicting life satisfaction. These results are contrary to some past findings (e.g., Toussaint & Friedman, 2009; Bono et al., 2008). However, there are a number of past studies that have yielded similar results (see Thompson 2005 or McCullough & Witvliet,

2002 for details). Additionally, trait forgiveness has consistently been shown to be a more significant predictor of life satisfaction than state forgiveness (Lawler-Row et al., 2003, 2005; Thompson, 2005; Toussaint & Friedman, 2009). McCullough and colleagues (2001) also noted that SWLS scores were resistant to change over an eight-week period, suggesting life satisfaction would be more susceptible to influence from a trait (i.e., trait forgiveness) than a state (i.e., state forgiveness).

Findings from post hoc analyses helped to clarify the results testing hypothesis four. Post hoc analysis showed that, even when controlling for state forgiveness, trait forgiveness had a moderate effect on satisfaction with life, while apology/amends had a small effect. This suggests that even if life satisfaction is significantly related to state forgiveness (e.g., significant correlation between SWLS scores and TFS-Absence of Negative scores) much of this relationship is due to the overlaps with trait forgiveness and apology/amends.

It was also hypothesized that state forgiveness would predict physical health. The CHIPS was used to measure physical symptoms as an indicator of overall physical health. Results showed that TFS-Absence of Negative had a moderate effect on CHIPS scores, even when controlling for age, gender, and HFS-Other scores. This is in line with results from past studies (e.g., Lawler-Rowe et al., 2005, 2008). However, this was the only state forgiveness subscale to significantly predict CHIPS scores. This suggests that the letting go or decrease in negative component of state forgiveness (as represented by TFS-Absence of Negative subscale) is predictive of fewer physical symptoms, while the moving on (as represented by TFS-Presence of Positive) is not.

It was also hypothesized that relationship with the wrongdoer after the wrongdoing would be predicted by state forgiveness. There were two state forgiveness subscales that significantly predicted relationship closeness afterward. The TFS-Presence of Positive scores and TRIM-18-Avoidance scores both had large effects on relationship after scores. These results are consistent with past findings on state forgiveness predicting relationship closeness after the wrongdoing (e.g., Bono et al., 2008; McCullough et al., 2000; McCullough & Worthington, 1995). Although it was predicted that perceived severity of the wrongdoing would interact with state forgiveness and weaken its association with relationship closeness, this hypothesis was not supported. Furthermore, severity did not significantly predict relationship closeness after the wrongdoing.

Overall, the results from Aim 2 of this study provided important information regarding life outcomes impacted by state and trait forgiveness. First, these results suggest that it is trait forgiveness and apology that significantly predict life satisfaction rather than state forgiveness. Second, these results suggest that letting go of negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviors toward a wrongdoer will lead to fewer physical symptoms. Finally, these results suggest that moving on to positive thoughts feelings, and behaviors towards a wrongdoer will lead to a closer relationship with him/her after the event.

Modifications to the proposed forgiveness model were warranted based on the findings from this study. First, some of the categories within the forgiveness process were divided and relabeled. The “History” category was divided into two separate categories: “Personal History” and “Relationship History”. This change was made based on results suggesting that the personal history (i.e., trait forgiveness) and relationship history (i.e.,

relationship closeness before the event) impact the forgiveness process in different ways. Also, the three outcome categories from the original version of the model were reintroduced: “Psychological Health,” “Physical Health,” and “Relationship After the Event.” This change was based on results suggesting that categories within the state forgiveness process (e.g., Relationship History, Apology and Amends) are significant predictors of these life outcomes. In addition the “Letting Go and Moving On” category was divided into “Letting Go of Negative” and “Moving On Towards Positive”. This change was based on results suggesting that the letting go component of state forgiveness was more closely related to physical health, while the moving on component of state forgiveness was more closely related to relationship after the event. Finally, the arrows in the model were edited to reflect relationships between variables based on results from Study One and Study Two while taking into consideration past findings on state forgiveness that were relevant to the model (e.g., McCullough, et al., 1998).

CHAPTER 6: GENERAL DISCUSSION

Overview

This dissertation attempted to develop a comprehensive model of the process of state forgiveness. There were a number of reasons why there was a need for such a model. There have been great strides in psychological forgiveness research in recent years. Forgiveness has been shown to be an important topic based on findings suggesting strong relationships between it and physical and mental health (Lawler-Row, 2010; Lawler, Younger, Piferi, Jobe, Edmondson, & Jones, 2005; Witvliet, 2001). However, forgiveness is a complex and nuanced topic, which has made it difficult for researchers to come to consensus on a definition and model of forgiveness (Strelan & Covic, 2006). For the purposes of this dissertation, forgiveness was conceptualized as two separate, but related entities: the construct of trait forgiveness and the process of state forgiveness.

While numerous state forgiveness models were already in existence, they tended to be lacking in one of two ways. Existing models either tended to overly focus on the phases of the forgiveness process while neglecting its association with related constructs or vice versa. Furthermore, most forgiveness models were either developed within the context of therapy (e.g., Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000), a Christian worldview (DiBlasio & Benda, 1991), or intimate relationships (e.g., McCullough et al., 1997, 1998, 2000). This limited the scope of past models and contributed to a lack of cohesion among psychological forgiveness research. There have been a number of contradictory findings

on forgiveness with little consensus on how to theoretically interpret them. For example, some studies have found state forgiveness to be a significant predictor of life satisfaction (e.g., Toussaint & Friedman, 2009), while others have not (e.g., McCullough et al., 2001). Given these circumstances, the psychological research on forgiveness was not in need of another model with similar shortcomings as the rest. Rather, a comprehensive model was needed that was grounded in data collection, outlined the process of forgiveness, described its relationship to life outcomes, and was applicable to different types of wrongdoings within different types of relationships.

This dissertation attempted to develop such a model. The initial version of the proposed model attempted to maximize the strengths of the models already in existence. One goal was to strike a balance between a model that described the actual process of forgiveness and one that described the associations between forgiveness and related constructs. Existing forgiveness theories were used to develop an initial model of the forgiveness process (see Figure 1). Enright and Fitzgibbons's (2000) model, McCullough and colleagues' model (1997, 1998, 2000), McCullough and Worthington's (1994) review, and Strelan and Covic's (2006) review were all influential in the developing the initial version of the model. After the initial version of the model was developed, it was refined further through a series of two studies.

In Study One, a constructivist grounded theory approach was used in order to ground the model in data collected from people who were currently or recently engaged in the forgiveness process. Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with 13 people who had been wronged recently in order to further refine the model. Results from

this study yielded seven major categories in the forgiveness process. The model was modified in order to reflect the findings from this study (Figure 2).

In Study Two, quantitative data collection tested how useful the model was in guiding hypothesis testing and results interpretation. Hypotheses were made regarding the predictors and outcomes of forgiveness. These hypotheses fell under two over-arching aims: identifying predictors of forgiveness and identifying important life outcomes predicted by forgiveness. All hypotheses, with the exception of one, regarding main effects were fully or partially supported; however, those involving interaction effects were not supported. The model was revised a final time to reflect results from Studies 1 and 2 within the context of past findings (Figure 3).

Support for the Proposed Model

Overall, the model performed well under scrutiny. Findings from this dissertation offered support for the proposed model's fit (Glaser, 1978) and credibility (Charmaz, 2010). Efforts were taken to ensure the rigor of data collection and analysis in Study One. Researchers completed practice exercises prior to data collection to become familiarized with the constant comparative method. Research assistants and participants completed reliability checks throughout data collection and analysis. During data analysis, data and categories were systematically compared with one another. These efforts increased the likelihood that the resulting model fit the data rather than forcing them into preconceived ideas of the forgiveness process. Study Two offered further support for the model's fit and credibility by testing it against a broader pool of data.

Findings also offered support for the model's relevance (Glaser, 1978), resonance, and usefulness (Charmaz, 2010). As the model evolved, its language became more simple

and less academic. During the data collection process in Study One, the primary researcher allowed each consecutive interview to be more unstructured than the last. Furthermore, during data analysis in Study One, researchers attempted to use language as similar to participant language as possible. During reliability checks, one of the participants (who had granted permission previously) was asked to provide feedback on her coded interview and she indicated that she agreed with the coding of the interview. These efforts increased the likelihood that the model would be easy for laypersons to relate to, understand, and apply to their everyday lives.

Study Two offered support for how well the model works (Glaser, 1978). The model proved helpful in developing testable hypotheses regarding the state forgiveness process. Furthermore, it not only helped the interpretation of results that were supportive of hypotheses, but returning to the model after null findings also proved helpful. For example, when there was no support for state forgiveness predicting life satisfaction, the findings from Studies 1 and 2 were reviewed within the context of the proposed model. This led to post hoc analyses testing trait forgiveness and apology as predictors of life satisfaction. Results showed that trait forgiveness and apology significantly predicted life satisfaction, when controlling for age, gender, and state forgiveness.

There was also support for the model's originality. Despite the number of existing models of state forgiveness, this was the first model to be developed using a constructivist grounded theory approach. Furthermore, the proposed model was developed outside the context of therapy or a single religious worldview. These unique approaches helped to set this model apart from existing forgiveness models.

Finally, there was support for the model's modifiability (Glaser, 1978). After both studies the proposed model was modified to reflect the new data collected. This demonstrated the ongoing process of revising the model to fit new data that is inherent in a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2010).

Per Bacharach's (1989) suggestion, the proposed model was strategically presented in such a way that researchers might easily test its assumptions. Furthermore, the proposed model met McCullough and Worthington's (1994) criterion of including antecedents (e.g., personal history), outcomes (e.g., fewer physical symptoms), and moderating characteristics (e.g., apology) of forgiveness (McCullough & Worthington, 1994). It also considered individual and contextual differences (e.g., level of state forgiveness) that can influence the forgiveness process (Klatt & Enright, 2011; McCullough & Worthington, 2004). Also, the proposed model included predictions and explanations about relationships between variables (Bacharach, 1989). For example, it was predicted that higher levels of deliberate rumination soon after the event would predict higher levels of state forgiveness. These variables were chosen to represent the categories of immediate aftermath and letting go and moving on that were uncovered during Study One. The proposed model also included factors that facilitate (e.g., close preexisting relationship with the wrongdoer) or complicate (e.g., very severe wrongdoings) forgiveness (McCullough & Worthington, 2004).

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the strengths of the proposed model, this dissertation was not without its limitations. However, future studies could overcome these limitations and thereby maximize the contribution of the proposed model to forgiveness theory and research.

Sampling was one area in which there were limitations. The majority of participants in both samples were young, Caucasian women within a university setting. There were also similar limitations in the types of relationships represented, the closeness of preexisting relationships, and perceived severity of the wrongdoing. These limitations raise concerns as to whether people who were not represented in this sample would report similar experiences. In the future, researchers could minimize these limitations by choosing samples different from those used in the present studies. For example, older adults and males could be targeted in future studies. Also, people whose wrongdoers were colleagues, acquaintances, or strangers would be of interest given they were not well represented in this sample.

While Study Two tested six hypotheses, a number of assumptions from Study One remain untested. For example, while predictions regarding the severity of the event were tested in Study Two, there was no testing of hypotheses regarding timing or type of event. Furthermore, the measures of physical and mental health were very narrow in scope. Also, the impact of religious background on the forgiveness process was not tested in either study. Future studies could test the model's assumptions regarding timing and type of event. Other measures of physical (e.g., blood pressure) and mental (e.g., symptom inventories) health could also be used in an attempt to replicate the present findings. Finally, future studies could test for differences based on religious orientation.

There were also limits based on the type of data collected. Both studies relied heavily on self-report. Although this is a very common form of measurement, people tend to overestimate their own favorable behaviors and outcomes in self-reports (Dunning, Heath, & Suls, 2004). This is of particular relevance given that forgiveness is often

viewed in a favorable light. The use of self-report raises questions as to whether participants overestimated their levels of forgiveness and life outcomes. One possible way around this issue would be to have the wrongdoer or a loved one provide their estimates of the extent to which the person had forgiven. Future studies could attempt to supplement the present findings by using these alternative methods of data collection.

In addition to self-report, a limitation of both studies was the use of cross-sectional data collection. Furthermore, Study Two in particular focused on a single wrongdoing without considering the possible impact of past wrongdoings. These limitations raise concerns as to the model's accuracy in representing the passage of time. Longitudinal data collection would be of particular use in future research. If participants could be tracked as they progress through the forgiveness process, it would shed light onto how closely the model parallels the passage of time.

The decision to develop an initial version of the proposed model a priori also imposed limitations on the proposed model. While this seemed the most appropriate course of action given the number of models already in existence (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Birks & Mills, 2011), there was a cost to taking this approach. It is likely that this preconception of the model increased the primary researcher's bias during data collection and analysis. Numerous steps were taken to acknowledge and minimize the impact of this bias. These steps likely buffered some of the limitations of a preconceived model. However, it is likely that the use of a preconceived model put limitations on the level of fit and credibility. However, by following the future directions described above it is likely that more evidence will be collected in support of the model's credibility and fit in the future.

Another consideration in moving forward is the number of past findings on forgiveness already in existence. Rather than collecting new data, it might be more pragmatic and useful to revisit some of these past findings (particularly those that were inconclusive or contradictory) within the context of the proposed model.

Implications and Conclusion

The proposed model has implications for theory, therapeutic practice, and empirical research. One of the most important implications regards the definition of forgiveness. The proposed model offers support for the two-component conceptualization of forgiveness. This conceptualization suggests that forgiveness consists of letting go of negative thoughts, feelings, and actions as well as moving on towards positive thinking, emotions, and behaviors. The proposed model also speaks to the disagreement among researchers as to whether letting go of negative is enough to constitute forgiveness or if there must also be moving on towards positive as well. According to the proposed model, the presence of either letting go of negative *or* moving on towards positive can constitute forgiveness; however, it is likely that the two will occur together. Furthermore, the proposed model suggests, there are different implications for letting go of negative versus moving on towards positive. Letting go of negative has a small, but significant, effect on physical health in the form of absence of physical symptoms, while moving on towards positive has a large effect on relationship closeness after the wrongdoing.

The present findings also have implications for forgiveness interventions within a therapeutic context. Past forgiveness research in the therapeutic context has tended to be more prescriptive in nature. A better understanding of how people tend to naturally progress through the forgiveness process could help therapists better understand this

process within the therapeutic context. For example, if "Ashley" presented for therapy with concerns about her breakup with her ex-boyfriend, her therapist could use the proposed model to inform his/her case conceptualization. The therapist could collect information on Ashley's personality; the relationship before the event; how the breakup unfolded; whether or not an apology had been given; her current relationship with her ex-boyfriend; and Ashley's current thoughts and feelings regarding the breakup. This information would help guide therapist's hypotheses about Ashley's current standing in the forgiveness process and how this might impact her functioning.

Finally, the proposed model could provide a stronger theoretical foundation for future forgiveness research. This model could be used to improve interpretation of past findings and provide a more cohesive portrait of the current state of psychological forgiveness research. In doing so, it would help to fill a gap that has long existed in this body of literature. This would also help to give future forgiveness research a more focused direction.

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APPENDIX A: FIGURES

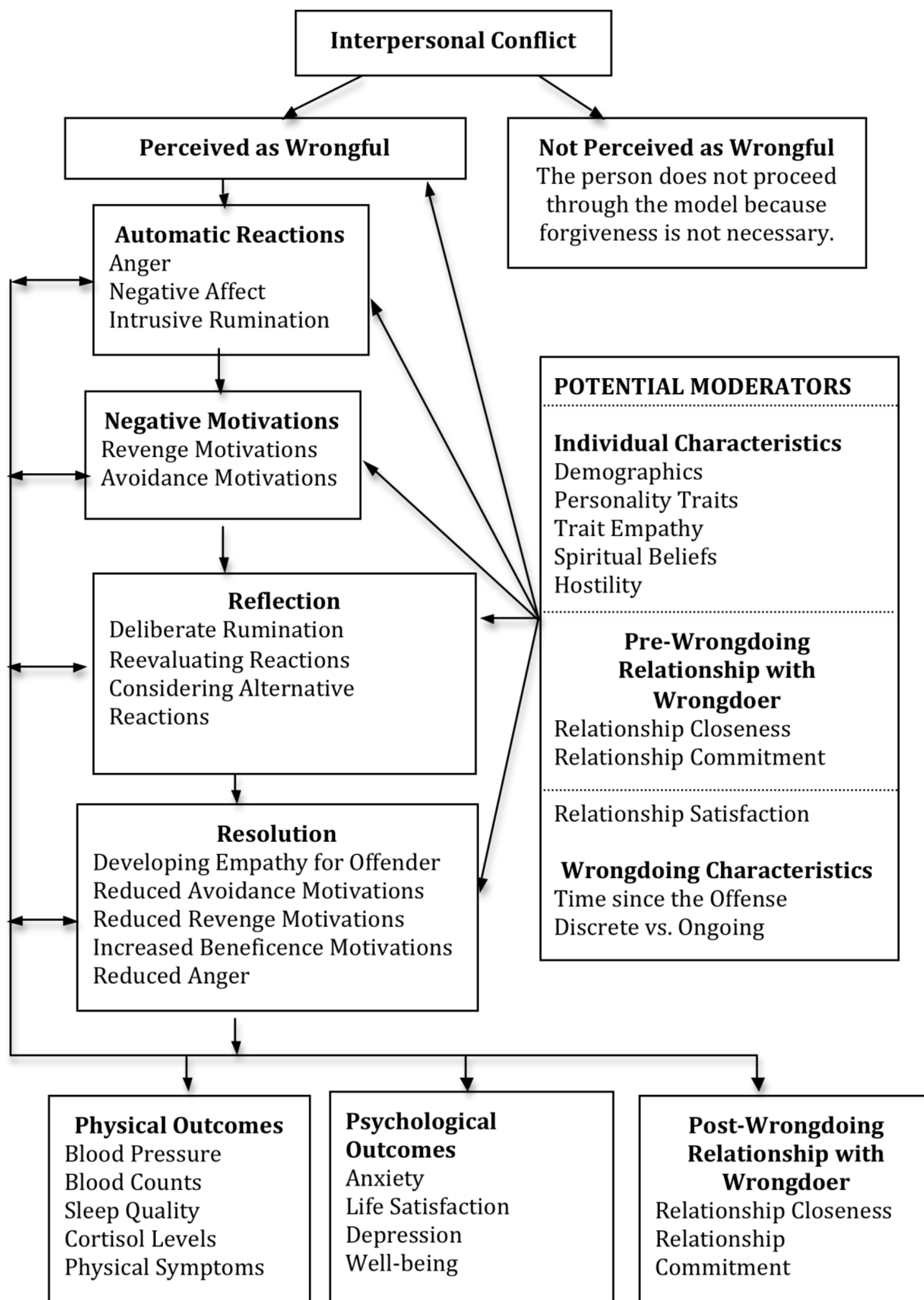


Figure 1: Initial version of proposed forgiveness model.

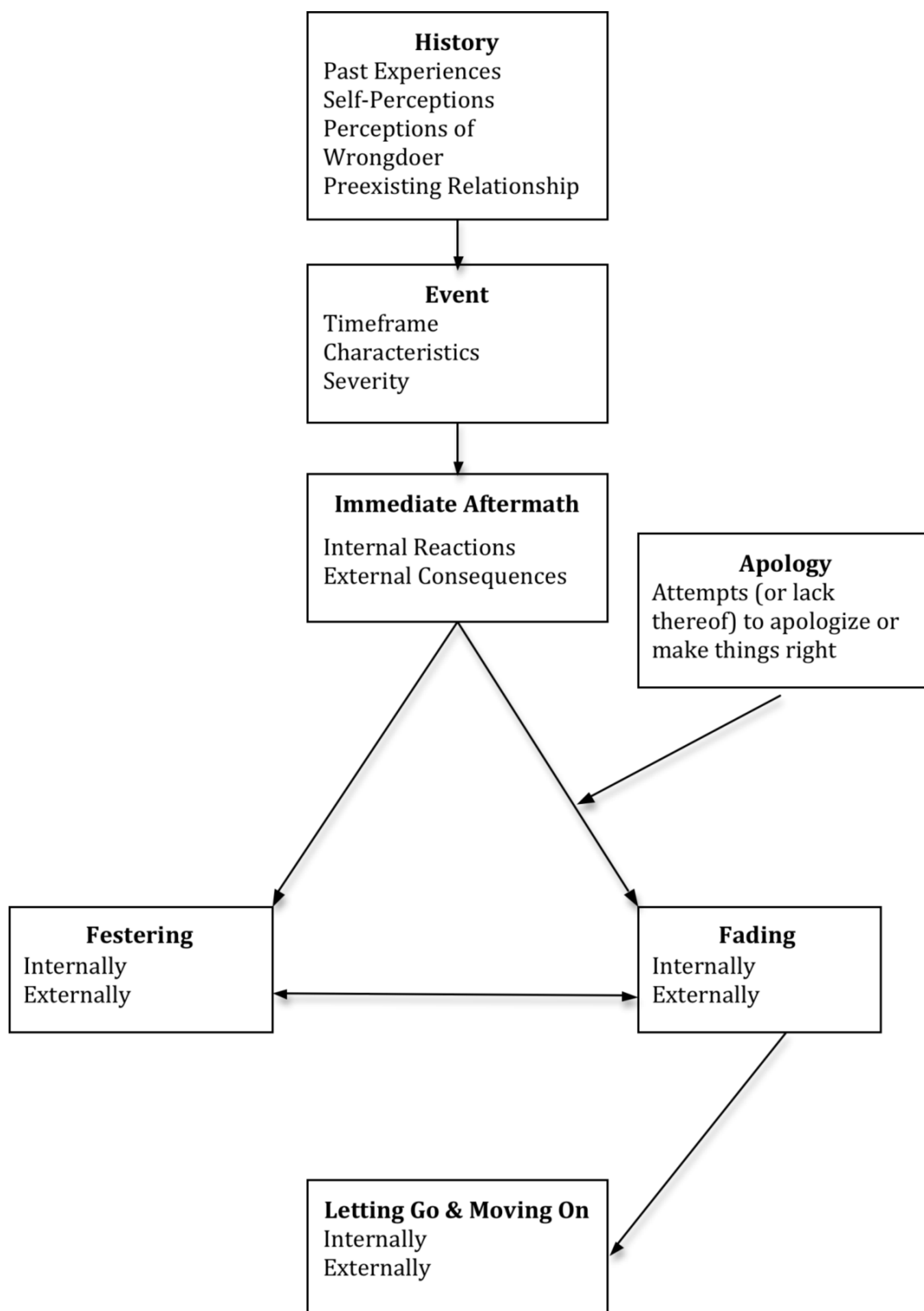


Figure 2: Second version of proposed forgiveness model.

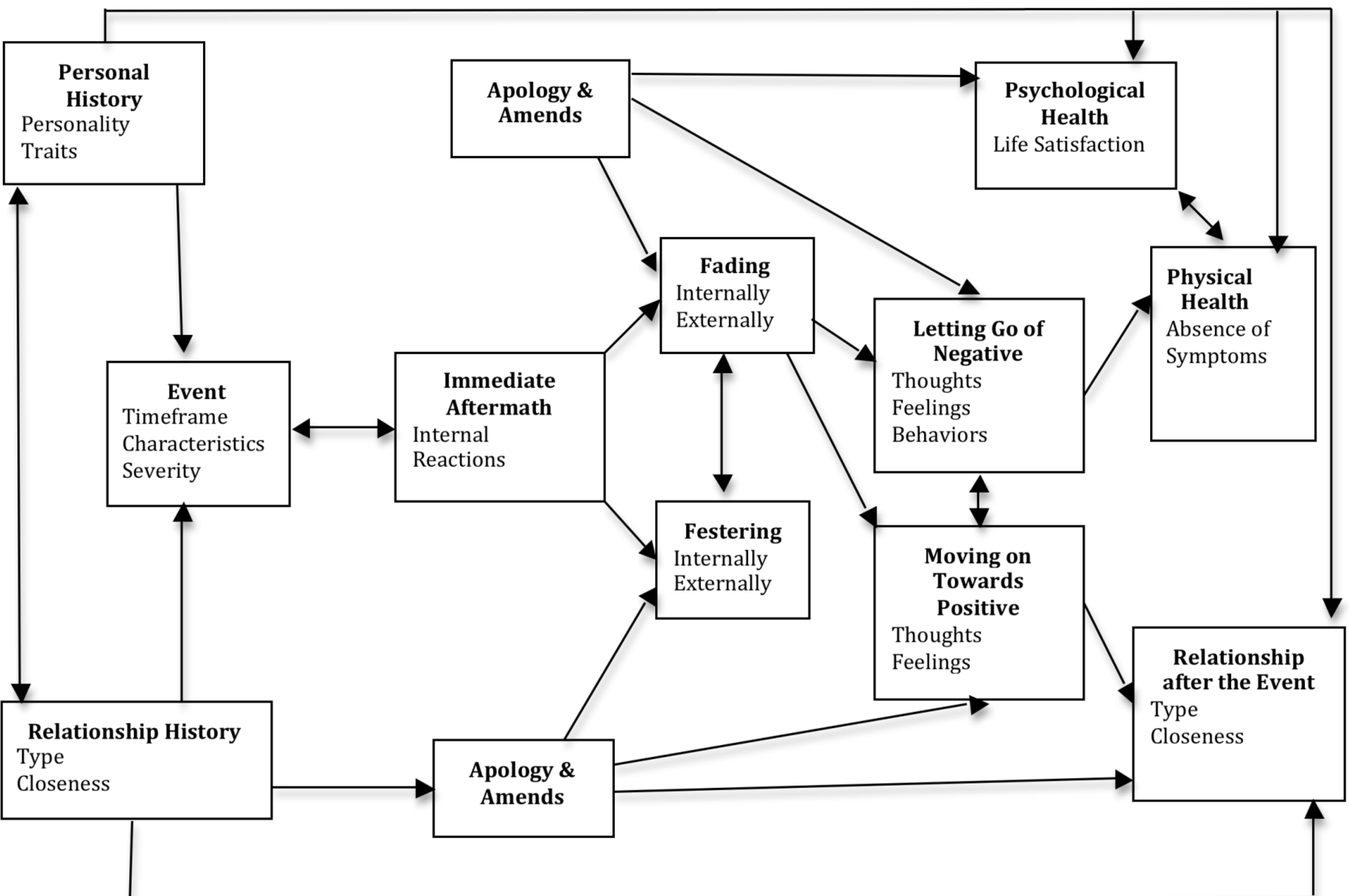


Figure 3. Final version of proposed forgiveness model. *The two Apology & Amends boxes are referring to the same category.

APPENDIX B: TABLES

Table 1. Study 1 Demographics.

Variables	Number (Percentage)	Mean	SD	Range
Age		24	5.90	18-37
Weeks since Event		49.38	35.09	4-104
Gender				
Male	2 (15.38)			
Female	11 (84.62)			
Ethnicity				
African American	3 (23.08)			
Asian	2 (15.38)			
Caucasian	7 (53.84			
Hispanic	1 (7.69)			
Native American	0 (0)			
Other	0 (0)			
Student/Faculty Status				
Undergraduate	10 (76.92)			
Graduate	2 (15.38)			
Faculty/Staff	1 (7.69)			
Religion				
Protestant	3 (23.08)			
Catholic	1 (7.69)			
Jewish	0 (0)			
Islamic	1 (7.69)			
Buddhist	0 (0)			
Hindu	0 (0)			
None	2 (15.38)			
Other	6 (46.15)			

Note. *N* =13; SD = Standard Deviation.

Table 2. Study 1 Questionnaire Scores.

	TFS-Abs. of Neg.[a]	TFS-Pres. Of Pos.[b]	TRIM-18-Avoid[c]	TRIM-18-Revenge[d]	TRIM-18 Benev[e]	SWLS[f]	ERRI-Intrusive[g]	ERRI-Deliberate[h]
Seth	45	15	13	7	18	23	1.00	1.20
Mary	48	25	8	5	30	28	2.40	2.50
Dean	44	20	21	7	18	30	2.50	2.40
Elaine	38	21	21	5	23	25	1.50	2.40
Kate	38	16	16	10	21	26	1.50	2.30
Trish	44	11	31	14	10	27	1.20	0.60
Nicky	31	14	23	7	20	30	1.90	2.10
Gabby	35	17	28	6	15	11	2.60	2.70
Ashley	45	13	25	5	17	31	1.70	-
Rachel	32	14	20	8	21	30	3.90	2.80
Casey	36	11	22	7	17	25	3.00	2.30
Monica	43	24	28	8	14	30	2.10	2.80
Jess	41	14	24	6	18	30	1.90	2.50

Note. TFS = The Forgiveness Scale; TRIM = Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory; SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale; ERRI= Event-Related Rumination Inventory; [a] possible range: 10 – 50; [b] possible range: 5 – 25; [c] possible range: 7 – 35 with higher scores indicating *lower* state forgiveness; [d] possible range: 5 – 25 with higher scores indicating *lower* state forgiveness; [e] possible range: 6 – 30; [f] possible range: 5-30; [g] possible range: 0 – 3; [h] possible range: 0 – 3.

Table 3. Study 2 Demographics

Variables	Percentage	Mean	SD	Range
Age		22	6.68	18-55
Weeks since Event		54.89	32.71	2-104
Type of Relationship				
Romantic Partners	46.50			
Family Members	18.40			
Platonic Friends	20.00			
Work/School Colleague	8.10			
Acquaintance	2.70			
No relationship	4.30			
Gender				
Male	21.60			
Female	78.40			
Ethnicity				
African American	18.40			
Asian	4.30			
Caucasian	63.20			
Hispanic	7.60			
Native American	1.10			
Other	5.40			
Highest Level of Parent Education				
Some high school	1.60			
Completed High school	11.40			
Some College	41.60			
Bachelor's Degree	24.30			
Master's Degree	15.70			
Doctoral Degree	3.80			
Other	1.60			
Religion				
Protestant	21.60			
Catholic	17.90			
Jewish	0			
Islamic	1.10			
Buddhist	1.10			
Hindu	.50			
None	24.90			
Other	33.00			

Note. *N* =185; SD = Standard Deviation.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations for Study 2 variables.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. TFS-Absence of Negative	37.02	8.02	1												
2. TFS- Presence of Positive	16.43	4.65	**.49****	1											
3. TRIM-Avoidance	40.52	13.71	**-.43****	**-.66****	1										
4. TRIM-Revenge	8.80	4.30	**-.56****	**-.55****	**.53****	1									
5. HFS-Other	86.44	12.94	**.44****	**.39****	**-.28****	**-.41****	1								
6. Severity	4.89	1.13	-.13	-.15	**.24****	.16	.01	1							
7. Rel. Before	4.35	1.38	.01	**.24****	**-.19***	**-.19****	.02	.04	1						
8. Rel. After	1.45	1.75	**.20****	**.49****	**-.77****	**-.32****	.06	**-.18***	**.19****	1					
9. ERRI-Intrusive	2.05	.84	**-.34****	.06	.14	.01	-.12	**.22****	**.21****	-.05	1				
10. ERRI-Deliberate	1.90	.61	-.06	**.17***	.00	-.05	-.06	.11	.14	-.05	**.41****	1			
11. SWLS	23.09	6.39	**.29****	**.15***	**-.19***	**-.21****	**.29****	-.14	.13	.06	**-.16***	-.01	1		
12. CHIPS	24.08	19.89	**-.33****	-.10	.12	.10	**-.23****	-.05	-.13	.04	**.23****	**.19***	**-.28****	1	
13. Apology/Amends	2.21	1.92	**.22****	**.29****	**-.43****	**-.23****	.06	-.06	**.31****	**.49****	-.04	.06	**.23****	-.13	1

Note. For Severity N=148; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$ for CHIPS N = 181; for deliberate rumination N = 184; for TRIM scales, HFS, intrusive rumination and SWLS N = 183; for all other measures N = 185; TFS = The Forgiveness Scale; TRIM = Transgression Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory; HFS-Other = Heartland Forgiveness Scale-Forgiveness of Others subscale; Rel. = Relationship; ERRI = Event Related Rumination Inventory; SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale. CHIPS = Cohen – Hoberman Inventory of Physical Symptoms.

Table 5. Hypotheses 1a and 1b: Multiple regression testing interaction between trait forgiveness and perceived severity in predicting state forgiveness. 1st column: Absence of Negative; 2nd Column: Presence of Positive.

	TFS-Absence of Negative					TFS-Presence of Positive				
Model	*b*	*S.E.*	*β*	R^2	ΔR^2	*b*	*S.E.*	*β*	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				**.19****	**.19****				**.18****	**.18****
(Intercept)	**36.76****	.60				**16.40****	.36			
Severity	-.94	.53	-.13			**-.65***	.32	**-.16***		
HFS-Other	**.47****	.09	**.42****			**.26****	.05	**.39****		
Step 2				**.20****	.01				**.19****	.01
(Intercept)	**36.76****	.59				**16.40****	.35			
Severity	-.81	.54				-.56	.32			
HFS-Other	**.48****	.09				**.26****	.05			
Severity x HFS-Other	.09	.07				.06	.04			

Note. $N = 148$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; b = unstandardized beta weight; *S.E.* = standard error; TFS = The Forgiveness Scale measuring state forgiveness; HFS = Heartland Forgiveness Scale-Others subscale measuring trait forgiveness of others.

Table 6. Hypotheses 1a and 1b: Multiple regression measuring interaction between trait forgiveness and perceived severity in predicting state forgiveness. 1st column: Avoidance; 2nd Column: Revenge.

	TRIM-18-Avoidance					TRIM-18-Revenge				
Model	*b*	*S.E.*	*β*	R^2	ΔR^2	*b*	*S.E.*	*β*	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				**.12****	**.12****				**.21****	**.21****
(Intercept)	**41.38****	1.06				**8.86****	.33			
Severity	**2.83****	.94	**.24****			**.65***	.30	**.16***		
HFS	**-.49****	.15	**-.26****			**-.27****	.05	**-.43****		
Step 2				**.12****	.00				**.22****	.01
(Intercept)	**41.38****	1.07				**8.87****	.33			
Severity	**2.79****	.96				**.60***	.30			
HFS	**-.49****	.15				**-.27****	.05			
Severity x HFS	-.02	.12				-.03	.04			

Note. $N = 148$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; b = unstandardized beta weight; *S.E.* = standard error; TFS = The Forgiveness Scale measuring state forgiveness; HFS = Heartland Forgiveness Scale-Others subscale measuring trait forgiveness of others.

Table 7. Hypotheses 2a and 2b: Multiple regression measuring interaction between perceived severity and relationship before in predicting state forgiveness. 1st column: Absence of Negative; 2nd Column: Presence of Positive.

	TFS-Absence of Negative					TFS-Presence of Positive				
Model	*b*	*S.E.*	*β*	R^2	ΔR^2	*b*	*S.E.*	*β*	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				.02	.02				**.07****	**.07****
(Intercept)	**36.73****	.66				**16.28****	.38			
Severity	-.91	.58	-.13			**-.65***	**.33**	**-.16***		
Relationship before	.08	.49	.01			**.76****	.28	**.22****		
Step 2				.02	.00				**.09****	.02
(Intercept)	**36.74****	.66				**16.29****	.38			
Severity	-.89	.58				-.63	.33			
Relationship before	.14	.50				**.84****	.28			
Sev. x Rel.bef.	-.27	.44				-.40	.25			

Note. N = 148; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *b* = unstandardized beta weight; *S.E.* = standard error; β = standardized beta weight; TFS = The Forgiveness Scale measuring state forgiveness; HFS = Heartland Forgiveness Scale measuring trait forgiveness.

Table 8. Hypotheses 2a and 2b: Multiple regression measuring interaction between perceived severity and relationship before in predicting state forgiveness. 1st column: Avoidance; 2nd Column: Revenge.

	TRIM-18-Avoidance					TRIM-18-Revenge				
Model	*b*	*S.E.*	β	R^2	ΔR^2	*b*	*S.E.*	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				**.11****	**.11****				**.06****	**.06****
(Intercept)	**41.49****	1.08				**8.97****	.36			
Severity	**3.02****	.95	**.25****			**.66***	.32	**.17***		
Relationship Before	**-2.29****	.80	**-.23****			**-.64***	.27	**-.19***		
Step 2				**.12****	.01				**.06***	.00
(Intercept)	**41.48****	1.08				**8.97****	.36			
Severity	**2.99****	.95				**.66***	.32			
Relationship Before	**-2.44****	.81				**-.65***	.27			
Severity x Rel. Bef.	.76	.71				.05	.24			

Note. $N = 148$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *b* = unstandardized beta weight; *S.E.* = standard error; β = standardized beta weight; TFS = The Forgiveness Scale measuring state forgiveness; HFS = Heartland Forgiveness Scale measuring trait forgiveness.

Table 9. Hypotheses 3a and 3b: Multiple regression predicting TFS scores with ERRI Scores. 1st column: Absence of Negative; 2nd Column: Presence of Positive.

	TFS-Absence of Negative					TFS-Presence of Positive				
Model	*b*	*S.E.*	β	R^2	ΔR^2	*b*	*S.E.*	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				**.19****	**.19****				**.22****	**.22****
(Intercept)	**27.29****	4.07				**8.96****	2.37			
Severity	-.94	.53	-.13			**-.68***	.31	**-.16***		
Relationship Before	-.01	.45	-.00			**.73****	.26	**.21****		
HFS-Other	**.47****	.09	**.42****			**.25****	.05	**.37****		
Step 2				**.29****	**.10****				**.24****	.02
Intercept	**28.10****	4.14				**7.09****	2.54			
Severity	-.53	.51	-.08			**-.76***	.31	**-.18***		
Relationship Before	.24	.43	.04			**.67***	.26	**.19***		
HFS-Other	**.44****	.08	**.39****			**.26****	.05	**.38****		
ERRI-Intrusive	**-3.35****	.77	**-.35****			.25	.47	.04		
ERRI-Deliberate	**2.20***	1.02	**.17***			.96	.63	.13		

Note. $N = 148$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *b* = unstandardized beta weight; *S.E.* = standard error; β = standardized beta weight; ERRI = Event Related Rumination Inventory; TFS = The Forgiveness Scale measuring state forgiveness; HFS = Heartland Forgiveness Scale measuring trait forgiveness.

Table 10. Hypotheses 3a and 3b: Multiple regression predicting TRIM scores with ERRI Scores. 1st column: Avoidance; 2nd Column: Revenge.

	TRIM-18-Avoidance					TRIM-18-Revenge				
Model	*b*	*S.E.*	β	R^2	ΔR^2	*b*	*S.E.*	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				**.17****	**.17****				**.24****	**.24****
(Intercept)	**51.18****	7.01				**16.03****	2.21			
Severity	**2.90****	.92	**.21****			**.67****	.29	**.17****		
Relationship Before	**-1.10***	.77	**-.19***			**-.60***	.24	**-.18***		
HFS-Other	**-.25****	.15	**-.22****			**-.26****	.05	**-.41****		
Step 2				**.19****	.02				**.24****	.01
(Intercept)	**28.19****	7.53				**16.82****	2.40			
Severity	**1.32***	.94	**.19***			**.71***	.30	**.18***		
Relationship Before	**-1.17***	.78	**-.20***			**-.57***	.25	**-.18***		
HFS-Other	**-.24***	.15	**-.21***			**-.26****	.05	**-.42****		
ERRI-Intrusive	1.17	1.41	.12			-.17	.45	-.03		
ERRI-Deliberate	-.98	1.86	-.08			-.36	.59	-.05		

Note. $N = 148$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *b* = unstandardized beta weight; *S.E.* = standard error; β = standardized beta weight; TFS = The Forgiveness Scale measuring state forgiveness; HFS = Heartland Forgiveness Scale measuring trait forgiveness.

Table 11. Hypothesis 4: Multiple regression predicting satisfaction with life using TFS scores.

			SWLS		
Model	*b*	*S.E.*	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				**.16****	**.16****
(Intercept)	**19.44****	2.38			
HFS-Other	**.28****	.07	**.30****		
Age	**-.24****	.066	**-.25****		
Gender	1.71	1.06	.11		
Step 2				**.19****	.03
(Intercept)	**16.27****	2.75			
HFS-Other	**.21****	.07	**.22***		
Age	**-.23****	.07	**-.24***		
Gender	1.62	1.06	.11		
TFS-Absence of Negative	**.14***	.07	**.18***		
TFS-Presence of Positive	-.01	.11	-.01		

Note. $N = 148$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$ *b* = unstandardized beta weight; *S.E.* = standard error; β = standardized beta weight; TFS = The Forgiveness Scale measuring state forgiveness; HFS = Heartland Forgiveness Scale measuring trait forgiveness.

Table 12. Hypothesis 4: Multiple regression predicting satisfaction with life using TRIM scores.

			SWLS		
Model	*b*	*S.E.*	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				**.17****	**.17****
(Intercept)	**19.52****	2.37			
HFS-Other	**.28****	.06	**.30****		
Age	**-.24****	.07	**-.25****		
Gender	1.65	1.06	.11		
Step 2				**.17****	.01
(Intercept)	**21.91****	3.10			
HFS-Other	**.24****	.07	**.26****		
Age	**-.22****	.07	**-.24****		
Gender	1.83	1.09	.12		
TRIM-18-Avoidance	-.02	.04	-.03		
TRIM-18-Revenge	-.11	.13	-.08		

Note. $N = 148$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *B* = unstandardized beta weight; *S.E.* = standard error; β = standardized beta weight; TFS = The Forgiveness Scale measuring state forgiveness; HFS = Heartland Forgiveness Scale measuring trait forgiveness.

Table 13. Hypothesis 5: Multiple regression predicting physical symptoms using TFS scores.

		CHIPS			
Model	*b*	*S.E.*	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				**.08****	**.08****
(Intercept)	**41.46****	7.82			
HFS-Other	**-.66****	.21	**-.23****		
Age	.18	.23	.06		
Gender	**-7.59***	3.47	**-.16***		
Step 2				**.15****	**.06****
(Intercept)	**55.50****	8.83			
HFS-Other	-.35	.24	-.12		
Age	.14	.22	.04		
Gender	**-6.78***	3.40	**-.14***		
TFS-Absence of Negative	**-.75****	.21	**-.30****		
TFS-Presence of Positive	.33	.35	.08		

Note. N = 148; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; B = unstandardized beta weight; *S.E.* = standard error; β = standardized beta weight; TFS = The Forgiveness Scale measuring state forgiveness; HFS = Heartland Forgiveness Scale measuring trait forgiveness; CHIPS = Cohen-Hoberman Inventory of Physical Symptoms.

Table 14. Hypothesis 5: Multiple regression predicting physical symptoms using TRIM scores.

		CHIPS			
Model	*b*	*S.E.*	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				**.08****	**.08****
(Intercept)	**41.76****	7.81			
HFS-Other	**-.66****	.21	**-.23****		
Age	.18	.23	.06		
Gender	**-7.78***	3.46	**-.16***		
Step 2				**.09****	.00
(Intercept)	**37.64****	10.21			
HFS-Other	**-.60***	.24	**-.21***		
Age	.15	.23	.05		
Gender	**-7.78***	3.59	**-.16***		
TRIM-18-Avoidance	.06	.13	.04		
TRIM-18-Revenge	.06	.43	.01		

Note. $N = 148$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *b* = unstandardized beta weight; *S.E.* = standard error; β = standardized beta weight; TFS = The Forgiveness Scale measuring state forgiveness.

Table 15. Hypotheses 6a & 6b: Multiple regression measuring interaction between TFS and perceived severity in predicting relationship after the wrongdoing.

	Relationship After				
Model	*b*	*S.E.*	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				**.25****	**.25****
(Intercept)	**1.43****	.13			
TFS-Absence of Negative	-.03	.02	-.12		
TFS-Presence of Positive	**.19****	.03	**.52****		
Severity	-.19	.11	-.12		
Step 2				**.25****	.00
(Intercept)	**1.42****	.13			
TFS-Absence of Negative	-.02	.02			
TFS-Presence of Positive	**.20****	.03			
Severity	-.19	.12			
Absence of Negative x Severity	-.01	.02			
Presence of Positive x Severity	-.04	.03		**.26****	.01

Note. This table represents two separate equations; the Absence of Negative x Severity interaction term was entered into the first equation; the Presence of Positive x Severity interaction term was entered into the second equation; $N = 148$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *b* = unstandardized beta weight; *S.E.* = standard error; β = standardized beta weight; TFS = The Forgiveness Scale measuring state forgiveness.

Table 16. Hypotheses 6a & 6b: Multiple regression measuring interaction between TRIM & perceived severity in predicting relationship after wrongdoing.

	Relationship After				
Model	*b*	*S.E.*	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				**.58****	**.58****
(Intercept)	**1.46****	.09			
TRIM-18-Avoidance	**-.10****	.01	**-.81****		
TRIM-18-Revenge	.05	.03	.12		
Severity	-.04	.09	-.03		
Step 2				**.59****	.01
(Intercept)	**1.42****	.10			
TRIM-18-Avoidance	**-.10****	.01			
TRIM-18-Revenge	.04	.03			
Severity	-.04	.09			
TRIM-18Avoidance x Severity	.01	.01			
TRIM-18 Revenge x Severity	.03	.02		**.59****	.01

Note. Table represents three separate equations; Avoidance x Severity interaction term entered into first equation; Revenge x Severity interaction term entered into second equation; the Benevolence x Severity interaction term was entered into third equation $N = 148$; * = $p = .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *b* = unstandardized beta weight; *S.E.* = standard error; β = standardized beta weight; TFS = The Forgiveness Scale measuring state forgiveness.

Table 17. Post Hoc: Multiple regression predicting satisfaction with life using HFS-Other scores and apology/amends scores.

	SWLS				
Model	*b*	*S.E.*	*β*	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				**.15****	**.15****
(Intercept)	**18.82****	2.66			
Age	**-.21****	.07	**-.22****		
Gender	1.83	1.08	.12		
TFS-Absence of Negative	**.20****	.06	**.25****		
TFS-Presence of Positive	.06	.11	.05		
Step 2				**.21****	**.06****
(Intercept)	**15.57****	2.74			
Age	**-.20****	.07	**-.21****		
Gender	1.74	1.05	.11		
TFS-Absence of Negative	**.13***	.07	**.16***		
TFS-Presence of Positive	-.07	.11	-.05		
Apology/Amends	**.53***	.24	**.16***		
HFS-Other	**.22****	.07	**.24****		

Note. $N = 148$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$ b = unstandardized beta weight; *S.E.* = standard error; β = standardized beta weight; TFS = The Forgiveness Scale measuring state forgiveness; HFS = Heartland Forgiveness Scale measuring trait forgiveness.

Table 18. Post Hoc: Multiple regression predicting satisfaction with life using HFS-Other scores and apology/amends scores.

		SWLS			
Model	*b*	*S.E.*	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1				**.12****	**.12****
(Intercept)	**30.12****	1.99			
Age	**-.19****	.069	-.20**		
Gender	**2.27***	1.12	.15*		
TRIM-18-Avoidance	-.02	.04	-.05		
TRIM-18-Revenge	**-.27***	.13	-.18*		
Step 2				**.21****	**.09****
(Intercept)	**17.99****	3.38			
Age	**-.20****	.07	**-.21****		
Gender	2.10	1.08	.14		
TRIM-18-Avoidance	.03	.04	.05		
TRIM-18-Revenge	-.12	.13	-.08		
Apology/Amends	**.69****	.26	**.20****		
HFS-Other	**.25****	.07	**.27****		

Note. $N = 148$; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *B* = unstandardized beta weight; *S.E.* = standard error; β = standardized beta weight; TFS = The Forgiveness Scale measuring state forgiveness; HFS = Heartland Forgiveness Scale measuring trait forgiveness.

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRES

Study 1 demographics and prescreen

1. What is your age _______?

2. Are you: **(choose one)**
   a. male
   b. female

3. Ethnicity: (**choose one**)
   a. African American
   b. Asian
   c. Caucasian
   d. Hispanic
   e. Native American
   f. Other (please specify) ______________

4. Are you: **(choose one)**
   a. Undergraduate Student
   b. Graduate Student
   c. Faculty
   d. Staff

5. What is the highest level of education completed by either of your parents? (**choose one**)
   a. Some high school
   b. High school
   c. Some college
   d. Undergraduate degree
   e. Master's degree
   f. Doctoral degree
   g. Other _______________ (please explain)

6. Religion: (**choose one**)
   a. Protestantism
   b. Catholicism
   c. Judaism
   d. Islam
   e. Buddhism
   f. Hinduism
   g. None (Not religious)
   h. Other ___________ (Please explain)

7. Have you been significantly hurt or wronged by another person within the past two years?
8. If you answered yes to #7, when did the wrongdoing take place?
9. If you answered yes to #7, please briefly describe the wrongdoing here:

10. Please record your email address here so that you can be contacted if you are eligible to participate in the study: ___________________________

Study 1 email invitation

Hello,

My name is Amanda D'Angelo. Thank you for completing the screening questionnaire for my research study on (date). You have received .5 research credits for your participation. Based on your responses to the questionnaire, you qualify to participate in the next part of the study. It should last about one and a half to two hours. It will include a face-to-face interview with me and a few computerized questionnaires. If you decide to participate, you will receive an additional 3 research credits. Your participation in this part of the study is entirely voluntary and you will not be penalized if you decide not to participate.

If you ARE willing to participate please reply to this email and indicate which of the times below would work for you to meet for the next part of the study.

Date and time:

Date and time:

Date and time:

If you ARE NOT interested in participating or if none of these times work for you please let me know by replying to this email.

Thanks again for completing the prescreen questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Amanda D'Angelo

ahardy17@uncc.edu

Study 1 interview schedule

Instructions for Part I: "Thank you for volunteering for this study. You were chosen based on the event you described in the online prescreen questionnaire. I have your response from the questionnaire here. I will read it aloud to help refresh your memory."

Read response aloud.

"In a moment I would like to give you an opportunity to talk about the event in detail. Please discuss what you think are the most important things that happened before, during, and after the event. I will ask clarifying questions along the way to make sure I am following you. Before we begin, do you have any questions for me? You may begin whenever you are ready."

Allow participant to tell his/her story. Use summary statements such as "you found out your best friend went on a date with your ex-boyfriend." *Use prompts such as* "can you tell me more about that." *Use reflection statements such as* "that sounds like it was a difficult experience for you."

"Thank you for sharing your story. Now I have some follow-up questions for you."

1. "How serious would you say this event was?"
2. "After the event did you feel you had been wronged?" "Why" or "why not?"
3. "Did X (e.g., your friend, your mother) apologize?"
4. "How close were you with X (e.g., your friend, your mother) before the event? How about now?"
5. "Would you say you have forgiven X (e.g., your friend, your mother)?"
6. "What does forgiveness mean to you?"
7. Assuming that this is not the only time you have been wronged in the past two years, what made you choose to discuss this situation?
8. If he/she were here in this room right now, what would you do?
9. "Before we move on, is there anything important that we have not discussed so far?"

Instructions for Part II: "People deal with events like the one you described in different ways. We are trying to understand how people react to being hurt or wronged and how their feelings towards the person who hurt them might change over time. In particular, we are interesting in knowing if and how those feelings change over time due to specific events or what some people call "turning points." Let me give you a couple of examples."

First draw and label x and y axes. "This vertical line represents your feelings towards the person. The mid-point is a neutral feeling; a feeling of indifference. Above that would reflect increasingly positive or warm feelings and below the mid-point would be increasingly negative feelings. This horizontal line represents time from the day of the event until today. As an example, imagine I had a casual friend towards whom I generally had mildly positive feelings; so I'd start the line just above the mid-point. Next, imagine this friend spread a rumor about me to other friends. This offense might make me initially upset" (*start drawing the line, sharp increase downward but not too far*). "After some time goes by, I may have thought more about it and realized they were not trying to be mean, but were just caught up in the conversation, so my feelings start to improve (*start gradual increase upward*). Perhaps after a week, the person apologies for doing that. That might mean a lot to me, so my attitude or feeling towards them increased quickly (*sharp increase upward*)."

Draw another set of x and y axes. "For another example imagine I had a sister with whom I was very close and had strong positive feelings. I would start the line far above the mid-point. Next imagine I found out that my sister lied to me. It might reduce my positive feelings towards her" (*start gradual increase downward*). "Then, let's say when I confronted her about it, she denied it and we got into a big argument. This would likely lead me to have some negative feelings towards her" (*continue downward with a drop below midpoint*). "Imagine that we had not spoken since the argument and my feelings towards her remained negative, but sort of leveled off "(*keep line below midpoint, but flatten slope*).

"Do you have any questions about how to draw a line representing your feelings towards X (e.g., your friend, your mother)? I have a space for you to draw your own line representing your feelings. Remember, this vertical line represents your feelings towards the person and this horizontal line represents time from the day of the event until today."

Thank you, now we can talk about the line you drew. *Ask about the shape (e.g., curved or angular), any changes in trajectory, and slope. Once it appears there is no new information to be gathered, ask the following:* "Before we move on, is there anything important that we have not discussed?"

Study 2 demographics, apology, and relationship questionnaire

Thank you for volunteering for this study. Please answer questions as openly and honestly as possibl Before you begin please enter your ID number in the space provided. Your ID number can be found on the top right corner of your informed consent document. If you have any questions, you may ask the research assistant.

1. What is your age _______?
2. Are you: **(choose one)**
    a. male
    b. female
3. Ethnicity: **(choose one)**
    a. African American
    b. Asian
    c. Caucasian
    d. Hispanic
    e. Native American
    f. Other (please specify) ______________
4. What is the highest level of education completed by either of your parents? **(choose one)**
    a. Some high school
    b. High school
    c. Some college
    d. Undergraduate degree
    e. Master's degree
    f. Doctoral degree
    g. Other ______________ (please explain)
5. Religion: **(choose one)**
    a. Protestantism
    b. Catholicism
    c. Judaism
    d. Islam
    e. Buddhism
    f. Hinduism
    g. None (Not religious)
    h. Other ___________ (Please explain)
6. Have you been significantly hurt or wronged by another person within the past two years?
7. If you answered yes to #6, when did the wrongdoing take place?
8. If you answered yes to #6, please briefly describe the wrongdoing here:

9. How would you classify the nature of your relationship with the wrongdoer?

Pick one:
Romantic partners

Family members

Platonic (nonromantic) friends

Work/school colleague

Acquaintance

No relationship

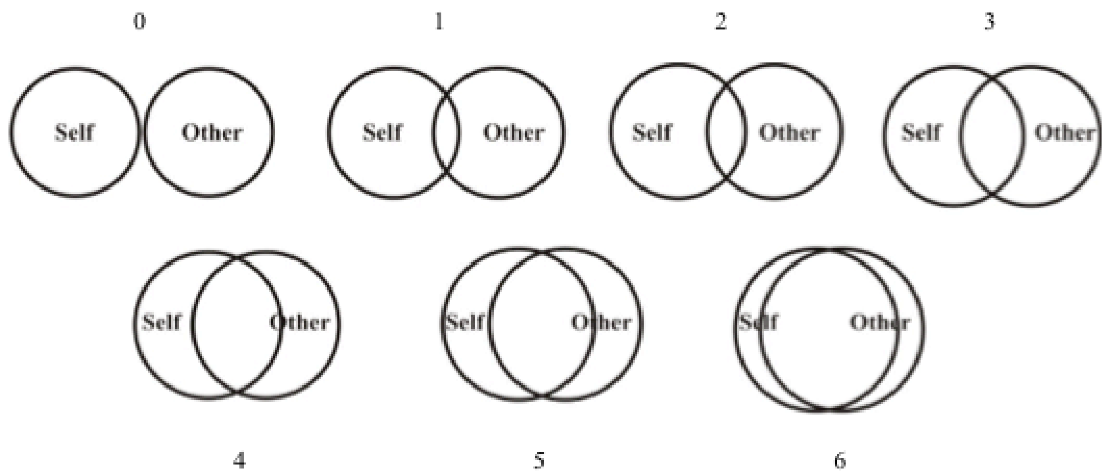
10. How close were you to the person who wronged you *before* the wrongdoing?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Not at all						Completely

11. How committed were you to the person who wronged you *before* the wrongdoing?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Not at all						Completely

12. Please choose the picture that best describes your relationship with the wrongdoer *before* the wrongdoing:



13. How apologetic was the wrongdoer toward you?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Not at all						Completely

12. To what extent did he or she make amends for what he/she did to you?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Not at all Completely

13. How severe do you think the wrongdoing was?
0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Not at all Extremely

14. How close are you to the person who wronged you *after* the wrongdoing?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Not at all Completely

15. How committed are you to the person who wronged you *after* the wrongdoing?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Not at all Completely

16. Please choose the picture that best describes your relationship with the wrongdoer *after* the wrongdoing:

0 1 2 3

4 5 6

Trim-18
(McCullough, Root, & Cohen, 2006)

For the following questions, please indicate your current thoughts and feelings about the person who hurt you; that is, we want to know how you feel about that person right now. Next to each item, circle the number that best describes your current thoughts and feelings.

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. I'll make him/her pay.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am trying to keep as much distance between us as possible.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Even though his/her actions hurt me, I have goodwill for him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I wish that something bad would happen to him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am living as if he/she doesn't exist, isn't around.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I want us to bury the hatchet and move forward with our relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I don't trust him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Despite what he/she did, I want us to have a positive relationship again.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I want him/her to get what he/she deserves.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am finding it difficult to act warmly toward him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am avoiding him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Although he/she hurt me, I am putting the hurts aside so we can resume our relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I'm going to get even.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I have given up my hurt and resentment.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I cut off the relationship with him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I have released my anger so I can work on restoring our relationship to health.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I want to see him/her hurt and miserable.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I withdraw from him/her.	1	2	3	4	5

THE FORGIVENESS SCALE

Think of how you have responded to the person who has wronged or mistreated you. Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I can't stop thinking about how I was wronged by this person.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I wish for good things to happen to the person who wronged me.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I spend time thinking about ways to get back at the person who wronged me.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I feel resentful toward the person who wronged me.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I avoid certain people and/or places because they remind me of the person who wronged me.	5	4	3	2	1
6. I pray for the person who wronged me.	5	4	3	2	1
7. If I encountered the person who wronged me I would feel at peace.	5	4	3	2	1
8. This person's wrongful actions have kept me from enjoying life.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I have been able to let go of my anger toward the person who wronged me.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I become depressed when I think of how I was mistreated by this person.	5	4	3	2	1
11. I think that many of the emotional wounds related to this person's wrongful actions have healed.	5	4	3	2	1
12. I feel hatred whenever I think about the person who wronged me.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I have compassion for the person who wronged me.	5	4	3	2	1

ERRI-Intrusive Rumination Items

After an experience like the one you reported, people sometimes, but not always, find themselves having thoughts about their experience even though they don't try to think about it. Indicate for the following items how often, if at all, you had the experiences described during the weeks *immediately after the event*.

0	**1**	**2**	**3**
Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Often

I thought about the event when I did not mean to.
0 1 2 3

Thoughts about the event came to mind and I could not stop thinking about them.
0 1 2 3

Thoughts about the event distracted me or kept me from being able to concentrate.
0 1 2 3

I could not keep images or thoughts about the event from entering my mind.
0 1 2 3

Thoughts, memories, or images of the event came to mind even when I did not want them.
0 1 2 3

Thoughts about the event caused me to relive my experience.
0 1 2 3

Reminders of the event brought back thoughts about my experience.
0 1 2 3

I found myself automatically thinking about what had happened.
0 1 2 3

Other things kept leading me to think about my experience.
0 1 2 3

I tried not to think about the event, but could not keep the thoughts from my mind.
0 1 2 3

ERRI-Deliberate Rumination Items

After an experience like the one you reported, people sometimes, but not always, deliberately and intentionally spend time thinking about their experience. Indicate for the following items how often, if at all, you deliberately spent time thinking the issues indicated during the weeks *immediately after the event*.

0	**1**	**2**	**3**
Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Often

I thought about whether I could find meaning from my experience.
0 1 2 3

I thought about whether changes in my life have come from dealing with my experience.
0 1 2 3

I forced myself to think about my feelings about my experience.
0 1 2 3

I thought about whether I have learned anything as a result of my experience.
0 1 2 3

I thought about whether the experience has changed my beliefs about the world.
0 1 2 3

I thought about what the experience might mean for my future.
0 1 2 3

I thought about whether my relationships with others have changed following my experience.
0 1 2 3

I forced myself to deal with my feelings about the event.
0 1 2 3

I deliberately thought about how the event had affected me.
0 1 2 3

I thought about the event and tried to understand what happened.
0 1 2 3

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The conditions of my life are excellent.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I am satisfied with my life.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS)

Directions: In the course of our lives negative things may occur because of our own actions, the actions of others, or circumstances beyond our control. For some time after these events, we may have negative thoughts or feelings about ourselves, others, or the situation. Think about how you **typically** respond to such negative events. Next to each of the following items write the number (from the 7-point scale below) that best describes how you **typically** respond to the type of negative situation described. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as open as possible in your answers.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Almost Always False of Me		More Often False of Me		More Often True of Me		Almost Always True of Me

____ 1. Although I feel bad at first when I mess up, over time I can give myself some slack.

____ 2. I hold grudges against myself for negative things I've done.

____ 3. Learning from bad things that I've done helps me get over them.

____ 4. It is really hard for me to accept myself once I've messed up.

____ 5. With time I am understanding of myself for mistakes I've made.

____ 6. I don't stop criticizing myself for negative things I've felt, thought, said, or done.

____ 7. I continue to punish a person who has done something that I think is wrong.

____ 8. With time I am understanding of others for the mistakes they've made.

____ 9. I continue to be hard on others who have hurt me.

____ 10. Although others have hurt me in the past, I have eventually been able to see them as good people.

____ 11. If others mistreat me, I continue to think badly of them.

____ 12. When someone disappoints me, I can eventually move past it.

____ 13. When things go wrong for reasons that can't be controlled, I get stuck in negative thoughts about it.

____ 14. With time I can be understanding of bad circumstances in my life.

____ 15. If I am disappointed by uncontrollable circumstances in my life, I continue to think negatively about them.

____ 16. I eventually make peace with bad situations in my life.

____ 17. It's really hard for me to accept negative situations that aren't anybody's fault.

____ 18. Eventually I let go of negative thoughts about bad circumstances that are beyond anyone's control.

CHIPS

Mark the number for each statement that best describes HOW MUCH THAT PROBLEM HAS BOTHERED OR DISTRESSED YOU IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS. Mark only one number for each item. At one extreme, **0 means that you have not been bothered by the problem**. At the other extreme, **4 means that the problem has been an extreme bother**.

HOW MUCH WERE YOU BOTHERED BY:					
1. Sleep problems (can't fall asleep, wake up in middle of night or early in morning)	0	1	2	3	4
2. Weight change (gain or loss of 5 libs. or more)	0	1	2	3	4
3. Back pain	0	1	2	3	4
4. Constipation	0	1	2	3	4
5. Dizziness	0	1	2	3	4
6. Diarrhea	0	1	2	3	4
7. Faintness	0	1	2	3	4
8. Constant fatigue	0	1	2	3	4
9. Headache	0	1	2	3	4
10. Migraine headache	0	1	2	3	4
11. Nausea and/or vomiting	0	1	2	3	4
12. Acid stomach or indigestion	0	1	2	3	4
13. Stomach pain (e.g., cramps)	0	1	2	3	4
14. Hot or cold spells	0	1	2	3	4
15. Hands trembling	0	1	2	3	4
16. Heart pounding or racing	0	1	2	3	4
17. Poor appetite	0	1	2	3	4
18. Shortness of breath when not exercising or working hard	0	1	2	3	4
19. Numbness or tingling in parts of your body	0	1	2	3	4
20. Felt weak all over	0	1	2	3	4
21. Pains in heart or chest	0	1	2	3	4
22. Feeling low in energy	0	1	2	3	4
23. Stuffy head or nose	0	1	2	3	4
24. Blurred vision	0	1	2	3	4
25. Muscle tension or soreness	0	1	2	3	4
26. Muscle cramps	0	1	2	3	4
27. Severe aches and pains	0	1	2	3	4
28. Acne	0	1	2	3	4
29. Bruises	0	1	2	3	4
30. Nosebleed	0	1	2	3	4

31. Pulled (strained) muscles	0	1	2	3	4
32. Pulled (strained) ligaments	0	1	2	3	4
33. Cold or cough	0	1	2	3	4

Study 1 consent form

Informed Consent for

Development and Initial Validation of a Comprehensive Model of Forgiveness Following Interpersonal Conflict

Thank you for your interest in this research study. It is designed to provide information to help us understand how people respond when others have wronged them. The study is being conducted by Amanda D'Angelo and Professors Amy Peterman and Charlie Reeve of the Psychology Department at UNC Charlotte and it has been approved by the University Institutional Review Board.

After you have read and signed this consent form you will be asked a few questions that should take about 10 minutes to complete. To compensate for your time completing these questions you will be entered in a drawing to win a $50 Target gift card. You must be at least 18 years of age to be eligible to participate in this study. You also must have been wronged by another person no less than two weeks ago and no more than two years ago. The questions you complete today will assess background information about you (such as age and gender) and your experience of the wrongdoing. If you believe that being asked about the wrongdoing may be upsetting for you, you should not continue.

If you are eligible to participate in the study, you will be contacted by one of the researchers and invited to complete a face-to-face interview and computerized questionnaires that should take a total of no more than 135 minutes. Your interview will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. You will be assigned a unique identification number, and the audio file and resulting transcript will not contain any identifying information. Furthermore, the audio files will be stored on the university network drive and protected by a password that will be known by the primary researcher and responsible faculty. The transcription of the interview will be stored on the university network drive in an encrypted, password-protected Microsoft Word file. The information obtained from the prescreen questionnaire will be stored on the university network drive in an encrypted, password-protected Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. This consent form will be stored in a locked file cabinet located in the primary investigator's office.

You are a volunteer. The decision to participate in this research is completely up to you. To compensate for your time completing the interview and questionnaires you will be given a $10 Target gift card. If you decide not to be in the study, you may stop at

any time. You will not be treated any differently if you decide not to participate in the study or if you stop once you have started. Although unlikely, participating in this research, or any research, may involve risks that are currently unforeseeable. Due to the topics addressed in the study, it is possible that you might experience some emotional discomfort. If so, you can disclose this to the researcher who will assist you in contacting available resources. You can also contact the UNCC Counseling Center at 704-687-0311 or UNC Student Health Services at 704-687-7400 for support.

If you have any questions after the research is completed, or if you want information about the results, contact the primary researcher, Amanda D'Angelo in the Psychology Department by email (ahardy17@uncc.edu), Professor Amy Peterman (amy.peterman@uncc.edu), or Professor Charlie Reeve (clreeve@uncc.edu). If you have further questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, contact the Compliance Office at UNC Charlotte (704) 687-3309.

By signing below, I am indicating the following:

- I am 18 years or older
- I have read the informed consent document
- I understand that my responses will remain confidential
- I understand that my participation is voluntary

____
Participant Name (PLEASE PRINT)

____
Participant Signature and Date

____
Investigator Signature and Date

Study 2 consent form

Informed Consent for

Study II: Development and Initial Validation of a Comprehensive Model of Forgiveness

Following Interpersonal Conflict

Thank you for your interest in this research study. It is designed to provide information to help us understand how people respond when others have wronged them. The study is being conducted by Amanda D'Angelo and Professors Amy Peterman and Charlie Reeve of the Psychology Department at UNC Charlotte and it has been approved by the University Institutional Review Board.

You were chosen for this study based on the wrongdoing you described in the prescreen questionnaire. The information obtained from the prescreen questionnaire will be stored on the university network drive in an encrypted, password-protected Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

Your participation in this study should take about 45-60 minutes. You will be asked to complete online questionnaires on computers provided in the research lab. You will be assigned a unique identification number and will not be asked any identifiable information in the online questionnaires. The information that you provide in the questionnaires will be stored on a password protected computer in a locked office. The hard copy of this consent form containing your name and signature will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked office.

You are a volunteer. The decision to participate in this research is completely up to you. To compensate for your time completing the interview and questionnaires you will be given 2 research credits. If you decide not to be in the study, you may stop at any time. You will not be treated any differently if you decide not to participate in the study or if you stop once you have started. Although unlikely, participating in this research, or any research, may involve risks that are currently unforeseeable. Due to the topics addressed in the study, it is possible that you might experience some emotional discomfort. If so, you can disclose this to the researcher who will assist you in contacting available resources. You can also contact the UNCC Counseling Center at 704-687-0311 or UNC Student Health Services at 704-687-7400 for support.

If you have any questions after the research is completed, or if you want information about the results, contact the primary researcher, Amanda D'Angelo in the Psychology Department by email (ahardy17@uncc.edu), Professor Amy Peterman (amy.peterman@uncc.edu), or Professor Charlie Reeve (clreeve@uncc.edu). If you have

further questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, contact the Compliance Office at UNC Charlotte (704) 687-3309.

By signing below, I am indicating the following:

- I am 18 years or older
- I have read the informed consent document
- I understand that my responses will remain confidential
- I understand that my participation is voluntary

____
Participant Name (PLEASE PRINT)

____
Participant Signature and Date

____
Investigator Signature and Date

Debriefing form

Thank you for your participation in this study. Due to the topics addressed in the study, it is possible that you might experience some emotional discomfort. If so, you can disclose this to the researcher who will assist you in contacting available resources. You can also contact the UNCC Counseling Center at 704-687-0311 or http://counselingcenter.uncc.edu. The Counseling Center is located on the first floor of the Atkins building near the Belk Tower. The researcher can walk with you to the Counseling Center if needed.