

Forgiveness, Humility, and Hope

Everett L. Worthington, Jr.

Virginia Commonwealth University

Saturday, November 21st at 9am

Forgiveness,
Humility
& Hope

PROFESSOR
EVERETT
WORTHINGTON

Presented at Hope4LifeMiami
November 21, 2020

ZOOM ID# 308-537-814 OR
IN-PERSON RSVP HOPE4LIFEMIAMI.ORG/RSVP

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Living life well can sometimes be a challenge. With excitement, I look at what science and traditional religion tells us about living a more virtuous life. We cover forgiveness in detail and also spend some time on humility and a particular type of Hope--persevering hope. Not surprisingly, all of these are related. You'll be challenged and I hope you'll laugh.

Objectives for the Talk

- By the end of the talk, I hope you can
- Build More Virtue into Your Life
 - Describe the role of reasoning versus the role of intuitive, non-rational cognition in life
 - Name four ways that we can build more virtue into life
- Forgive Better
 - Differentiate two types of forgiveness—decisional and emotional
 - Practice the REACH Forgiveness model of forgiving
 - Name four necessary and sufficient conditions of humility
- Be More Humble
 - Define political humility and have practical suggestions for discussing political issues without losing friends (and close family relations) at Thanksgiving.
- Be More Hopeful
 - Differentiate two types of hope—Snyder’s willpower and waypower to change and persevering hope.

What Is Positive Psychology?

Everett L. Worthington, Jr.
Virginia Commonwealth University

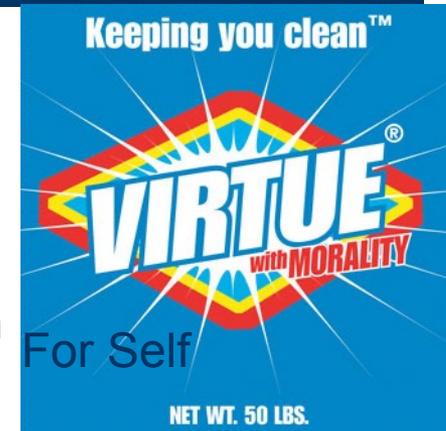


What Is Positive Psychology?

- Psychological science of
 - Happiness or subjective well-being (Hedonic approach)
 - Character Strength or Virtue (Eudaimonic approach)
- Happiness and Positive Emotion are end states or products—and ephemeral ones at that.
- It is difficult to have any control over such end states or get any stability in one's life if this is what life is about, so...

What Is Positive Psychology?

- I prefer Positive Psychology as the Psychological Science of Virtue.
- Therefore, I define positive psychology as **the psychological science of *eudaimonia***, a Greek term for *virtue for self and others*.
 - Note: This modern use of *eudaimonia* is different from classical Greek use.



For Other

For Self



How we want to acquire virtue



Like Neo in the Matrix.

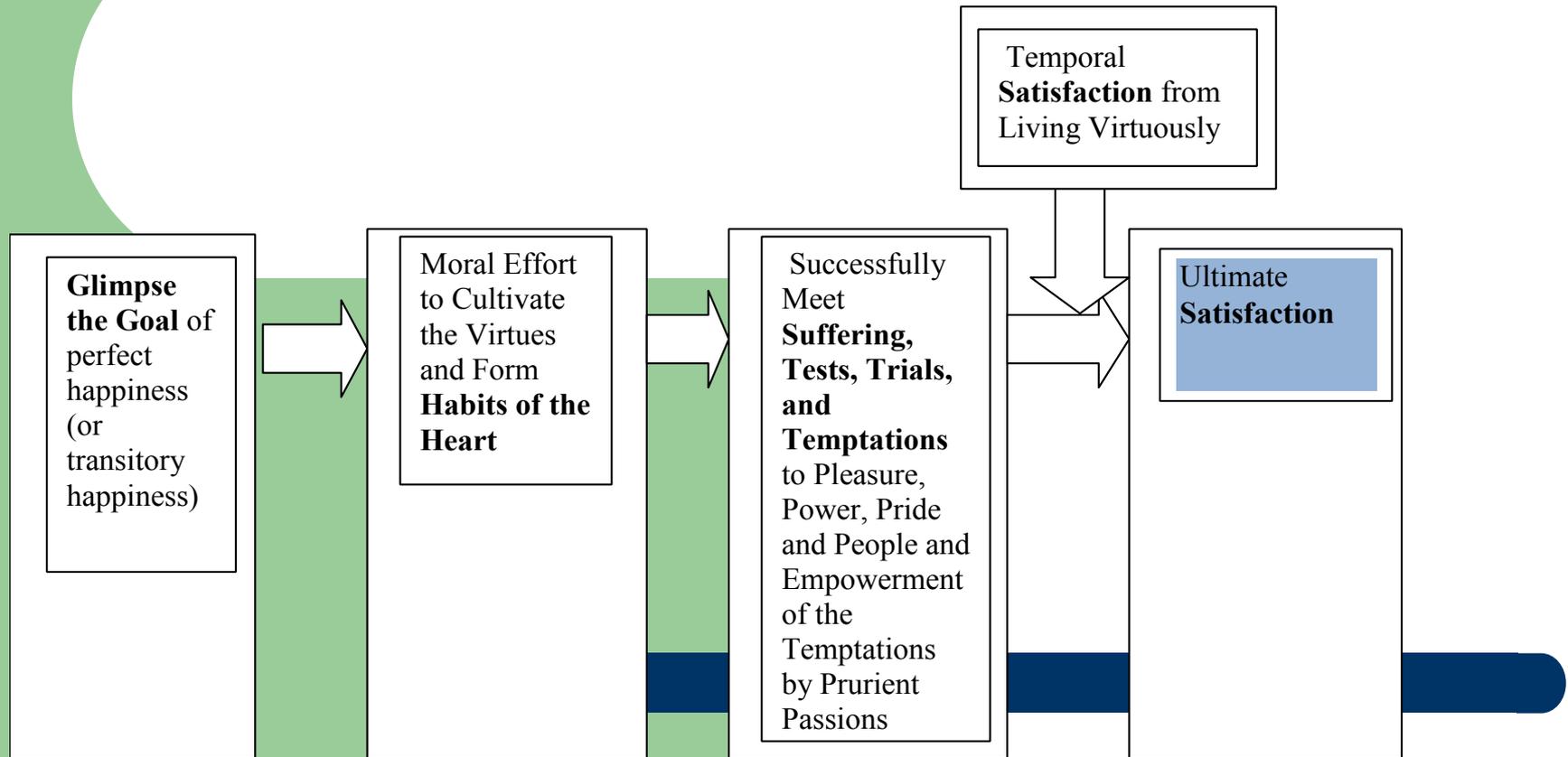
Isn't there some way we can just upload virtue into our being?

How We Have to Acquire Virtue

- It's a little more work than Neo had to endure



Character Formation: Helping People (and Ourselves) Be More Virtuous People



How We Have to Acquire Virtue

1. Glimpse the Goal



3. Meet tests, trials, temptations and suffering, and test ourselves.

Practice until it becomes a habit of the heart. "Practice doesn't make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect."

—Vince Lombardi →



Not always victory, but ultimate satisfaction

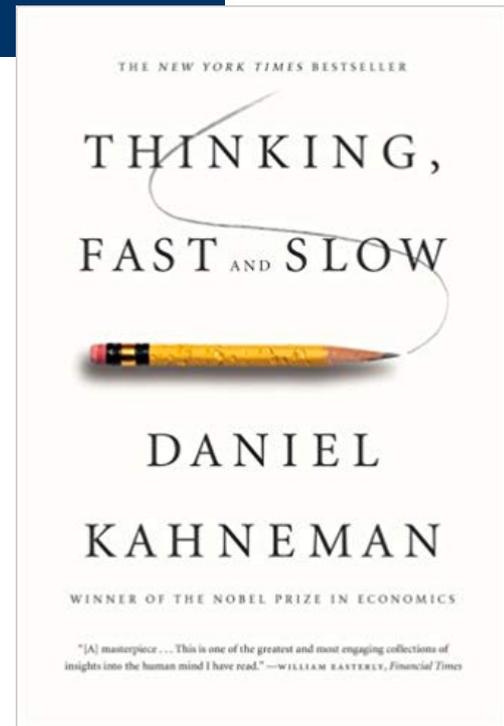
What Can Cognitive Psychology Tell Us?

Everett L. Worthington, Jr.
Virginia Commonwealth University



It might seem that virtue is a matter of rational identification of goals plus willpower

- Modern cognitive psychology has something to say about how we become a more virtuous person.
- Cognitive psychology says: most thinking is fast, automatic, intuitive, unconscious and non-rational (about 90%). About 10% is slow, logical, and rational (and half of that is driven by fast cognition).



Implications

- We are not at the mercy of non-rationality.
- We just need to use rationality and willpower strategically—to set up our world so we don't have to use willpower often.

How Can We Use Rationality Strategically to Build More Virtue?

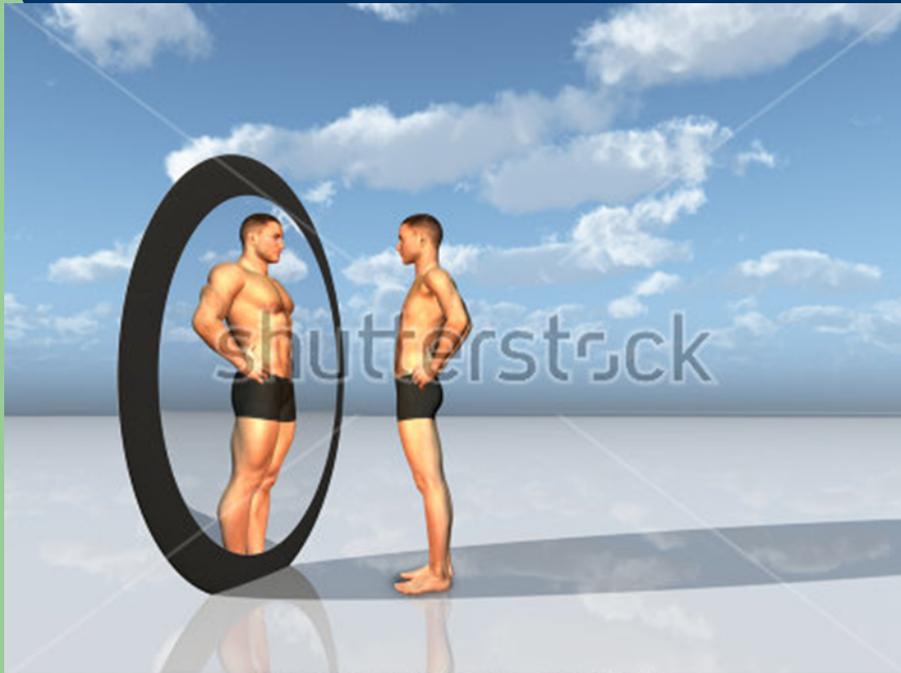
- Choose our models and heroes to inspire (and instruct) us.
- Set up our environment to promote virtue (e.g., choice of mate, friends, job to promote virtue not lead us into temptation)
- Choose situations wisely (avoid tempting moral situations just like avoiding a fast food place if on a diet; choose good situations like stocking the refrigerator with healthy foods)
- Train ourselves in healthy, positive coping strategies

Humility

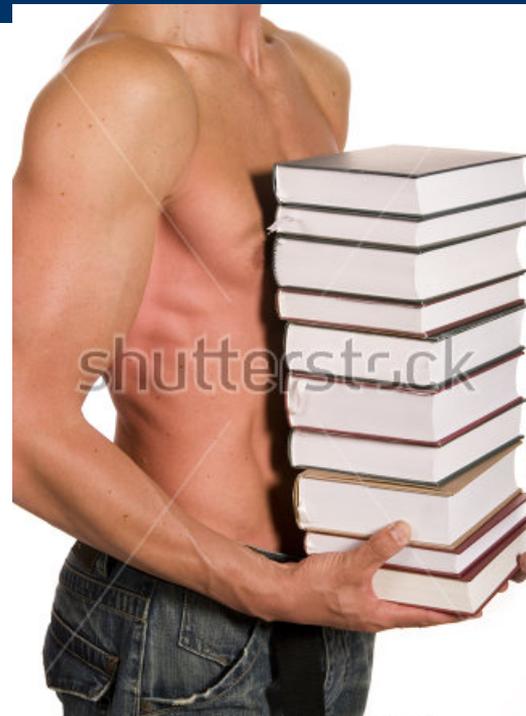
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Humility is Not Just Getting Our Arrogance Savaged



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www.shutterstock.com · 17169130

Pride goes before a fall.



This required creative posturing



And it was a little
harder to hear me from
the back of the room

Humility is Not Just Humiliation

- But humiliation can set off the quest for humility

Humility is not just absence of pride or of self-esteem; it is about having something positive!



Accurate self-knowledge, recognizing and *owning* strengths and limitations plus a willingness to be teachable



We might call “willingness to be teachable” a *growth mindset* (Dweck, 2006), which has an entire literature supporting it



MODESTY

Has its advantages

Demofusion.us

Davis, D. E., McElroy, S. E., Rice, K. G., Choe, E., Westbrook, C. Hook, J. N., Van Tongeren, D. R., DeBlaere, C., Hill, P. C., Placeres, V., & Worthington, E. L., Jr. (2016). Is modesty a subdomain of humility? *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 11*(4), 439-446.

Other-oriented to lift others up and not put them down



Humility Defined

- Accurate view of self, including awareness and acceptance of one's strengths and limitations
- Teachability
- Modest self-presentation
- Orientation toward others shown as power under control to lift others up and not squash them down



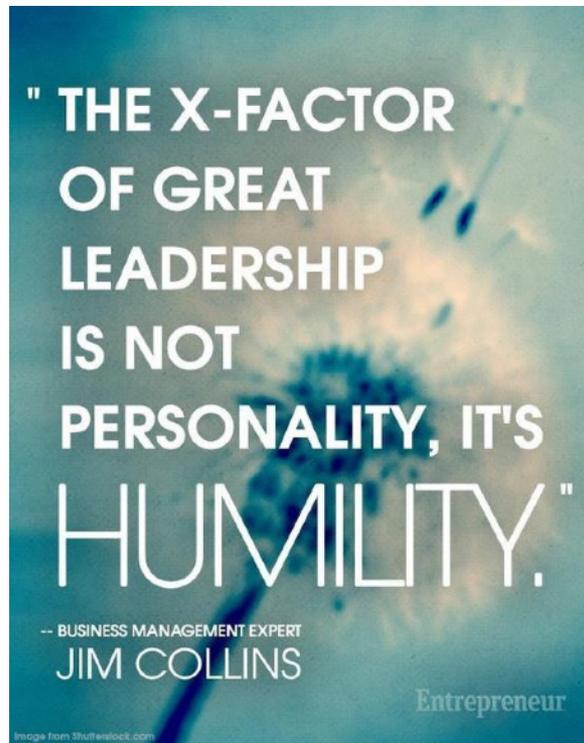
Davis, D. E., Hook, J. N., Worthington, E. L., Jr., Van Tongeren, D. R., Gartner, A. L., Jennings, D. J., II, & Emmons, R. A. (2011). Relational humility: Conceptualizing and measuring humility as a personality judgment. *Journal for Personality Assessment, 93*, 225-234.

Davis, D. E., Worthington, E. L., Jr., & Hook, J. N. (2010). Humility: Review of measurement strategies and conceptualization as personality judgment. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 5*(4), 243-252.



Types of Humility

- *General humility* is a summary self- or other-evaluation—a disposition—that describes a person who meets the definition of humility in virtually all situations and relationships.



Spiritual Humility

- Humility in the face of the Sacred

- God
- Nature
- Humanity
- Transcendent

Davis, D. E., Hook, J. N., Worthington, E. L., Jr., Van Tongeren, D. R., Gartner, A. L., & Jennings, D. J., II (2010). Relational spirituality and forgiveness: Development of the Spiritual Humility Scale (SHS). *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 38(2), 91-100.

Types of Humility (cont.)

- *Relational humility* is humility within a particular relationship.

- *Humility as spouse, parent, employee, student are different.*

- *Cultural humility*

Davis, D. E., Hook, J. N., Worthington, E. L., Jr., Van Tongeren, D. R., Gartner, A. L., Jennings, D. J., II, & Emmons, R. A. (2011). Relational humility: Conceptualizing and measuring humility as a personality judgment. *Journal for Personality Assessment, 93*, 225-234.

Hook, J. N., Davis, D. E., Owen, J., Worthington, E. L., Jr., & Utsey, S. O. (2013). Cultural humility: Acknowledging limitations in one's multicultural competencies. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 60*(2), 252-266.



Types of Humility (cont.)

- *Intellectual humility* involves the way people related to each other when sharing ideas.
 - Political humility (more on this one later)
 - Religious humility
 - Racial/ethnic humility

Worthington, E. L., Jr., (2017). Political humility. In Everett L. Worthington, Jr., Don E. Davis, & Joshua N. Hook (Eds.), *Handbook of humility: Theory, research, and application* (pp. 76-90). New York: Routledge.

Hook, J. N., Davis, D. E., Van Tongeren, D. R., Hill, P. C., & Worthington, E. L., Jr., Farrell, J. E., & Dieke, P. (2015). Intellectual humility and forgiveness of religious leaders. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 10(6), 499-506.

Forgiveness

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Four Types of Forgiveness

- Divine forgiveness
- Self-forgiveness
- Human-to-human forgiveness (our focus)
- Societal and social forgiveness

Need for Forgiveness

- In what areas, do you see the need for forgiveness? E.g., (just to get you started) troubled couples, family-of-origin issues, congregational issues, workplace relationships with bosses or colleagues

Do People in Local Communities Need More Attention to Forgiveness?

- In What Areas Does Unforgiveness Show Up?
 - Marriages
 - Families
 - Workplace or school
 - Families of origin
 - Self-forgiveness
 - Political differences
 - Social issues (race relations, diversity, LGBTQ, civic discussions)

Where Does Unforgiveness Happen?

- **Conflict**
- Past conflicts within your congregation or group (i.e., past church splits, community housing decisions required of all condo owners; differences of opinions on theology or policy)
- Current (hot topic) differences where hurts have occurred
- People take sides in disagreements and resent the other side
- Political or theological differences

Where Does Unforgiveness Happen?

- **Leaders**
- Leadership who have moral failures (with affairs, alcohol, cruel treatment of loved ones, sexual misconduct)
- Leadership decisions about the direction of the organization
- Choice of leaders
- Leaders' rejections of people's ideas of activities that the organization can endorse, leaving people feeling that they are not valued.

Where Does Unforgiveness Happen?

- **Interpersonal Interactions**
- People say things hurtfully to each other
- Someone feels that Pride goes before a fall leaders or others are “playing favorites”
- Hurtful gossip
- A person feels that the organization did not support him or her as much or in the way that should have happened.

Personal Experiences with Forgiveness

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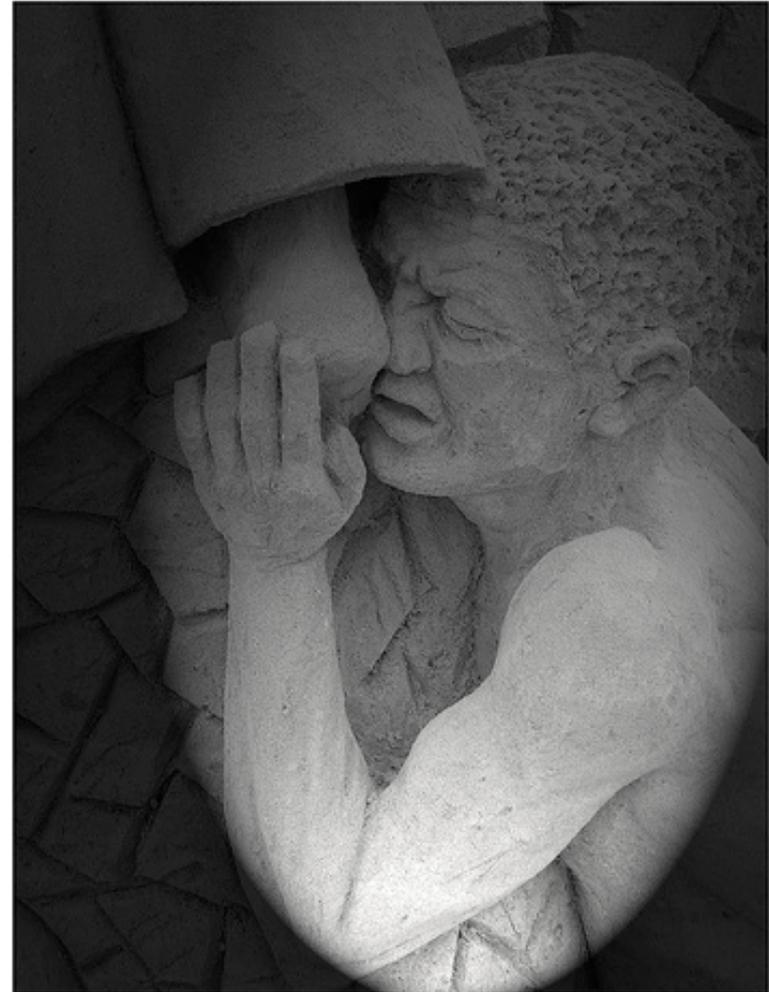
Forgiveness Can Be a Dramatic Turning Point in Life

- If we are in Atlanta, and our relationship is headed for Las Vegas, forgiveness as a dramatic change will put us in Norfolk. Forgiveness as a slight change will put us in Phoenix.



Forgiveness: The Hard Virtue

- Note: Forgiveness occurs within our skins



Forgiveness is hard because life is hard



- Yes, that's me in the para-military costume (aka band uniform), with the sharp, clip-on, and oh-so-well-coiffed tie canted at a jaunty angle.

I Know that Forgiveness Is Very Difficult

- I lost my mother to murder.



This resulted in a new life mission

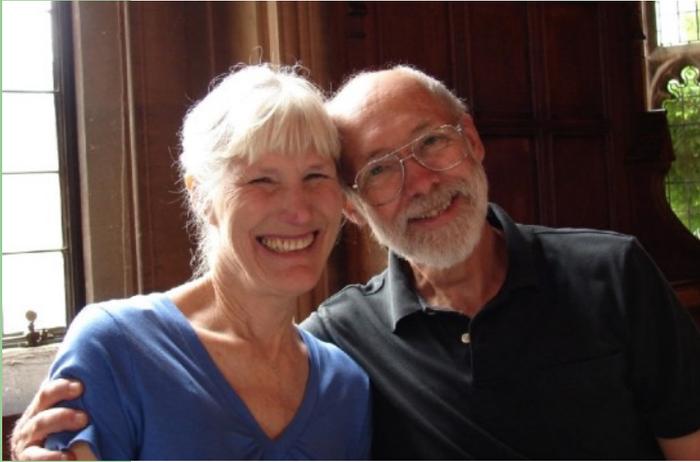
- My life mission is to do all I can to promote forgiveness in every *willing* heart, home, and homeland.

My Brother Mike's Suicide in 2005

- Lest you mistakenly think the road of character formation and the development of Christian virtue, is straight, it has not been all that straight for me (and I suspect also not for people who have lived any amount of time) ...



A Redemptive Relationship, and Support through Suffering, Loss, Death of Dreams



A Redemptive Relationship,
married 1970

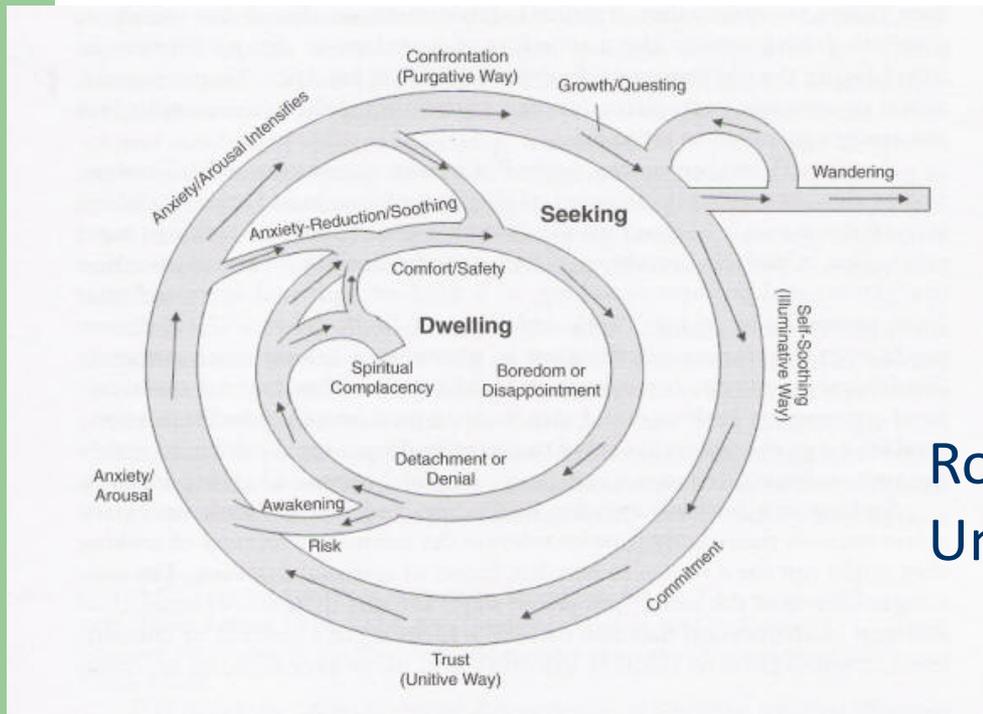
Couldn't have handled things
without a loving wife.

Times of Dwelling versus Seeking



Maureen Miner, University of Western Sydney Psychologist

Robert Wuthnow, Princeton University Sociologist



What Is Forgiveness?

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Injustice Gap

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

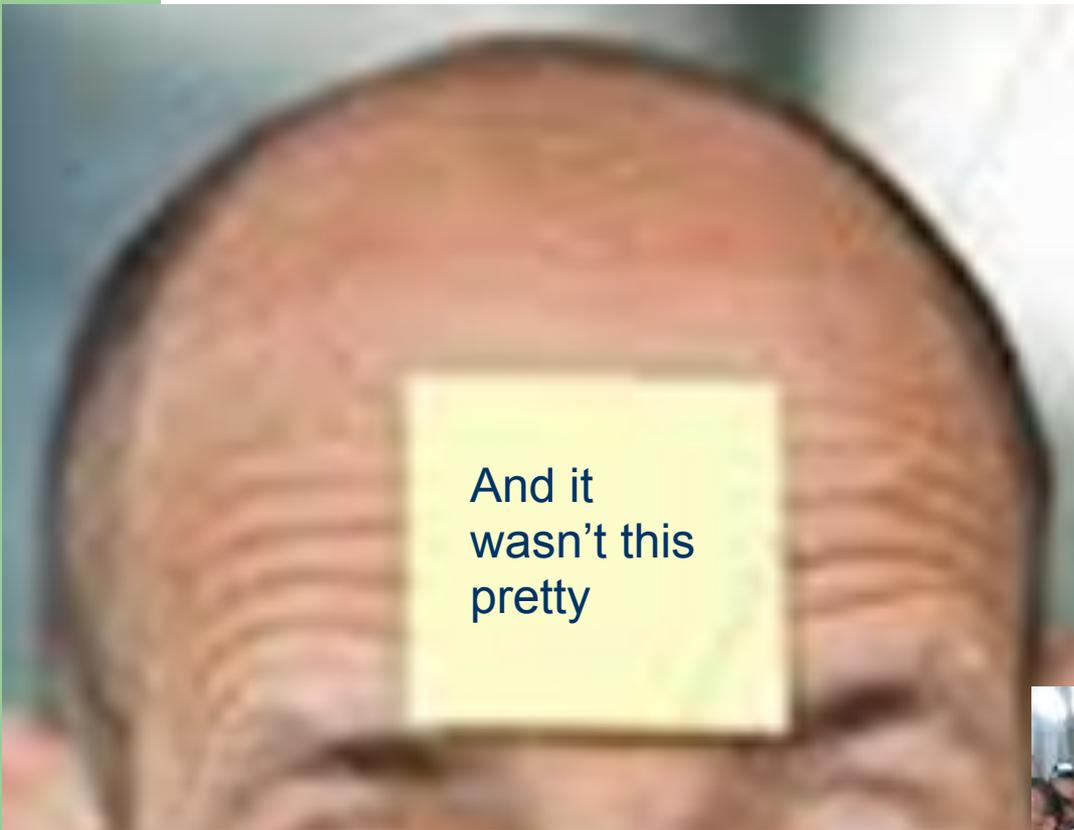
Davis, D. E., Yang, X., DeBlaere, C., McElroy, S. E., Van Tongeren, D. R., Hook, J. N., Worthington, E. L., Jr. (2016). The injustice gap. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 8(3), 175-184.

Candid action shot of me drinking my cup of coffee in the morning. (I only have a few cups.)





What I anticipated was about to happen.



And it
wasn't this
pretty



We Have Options

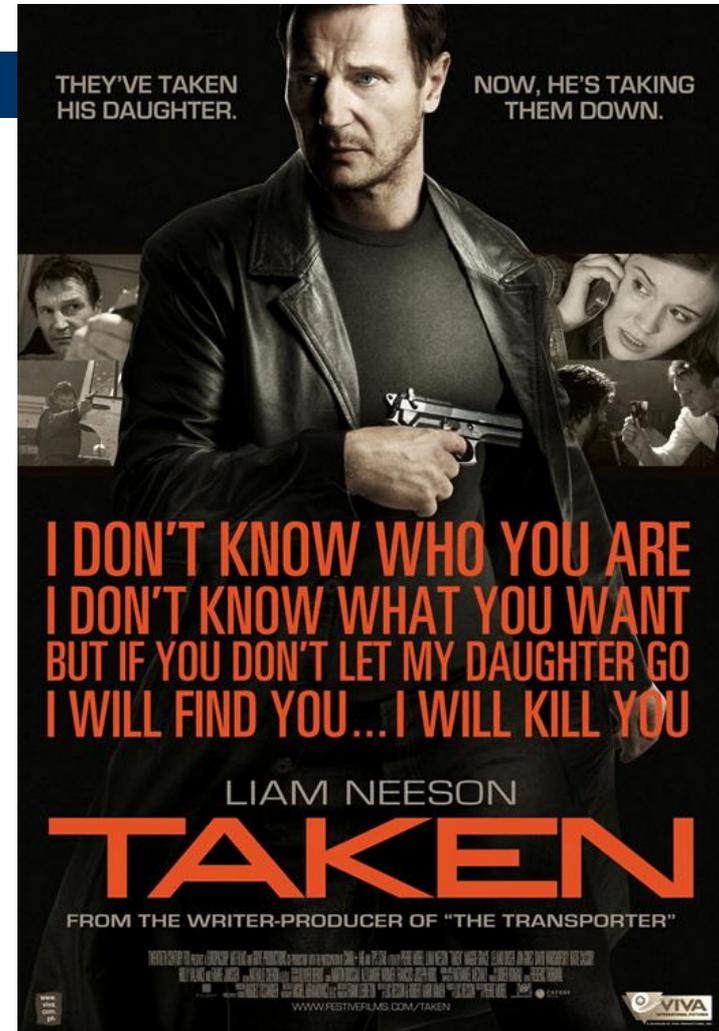
- There are many ways to deal with injustice

Revenge



HELLO. MY NAME IS INIGO MONTOYA

You killed me father.
Prepare to die.

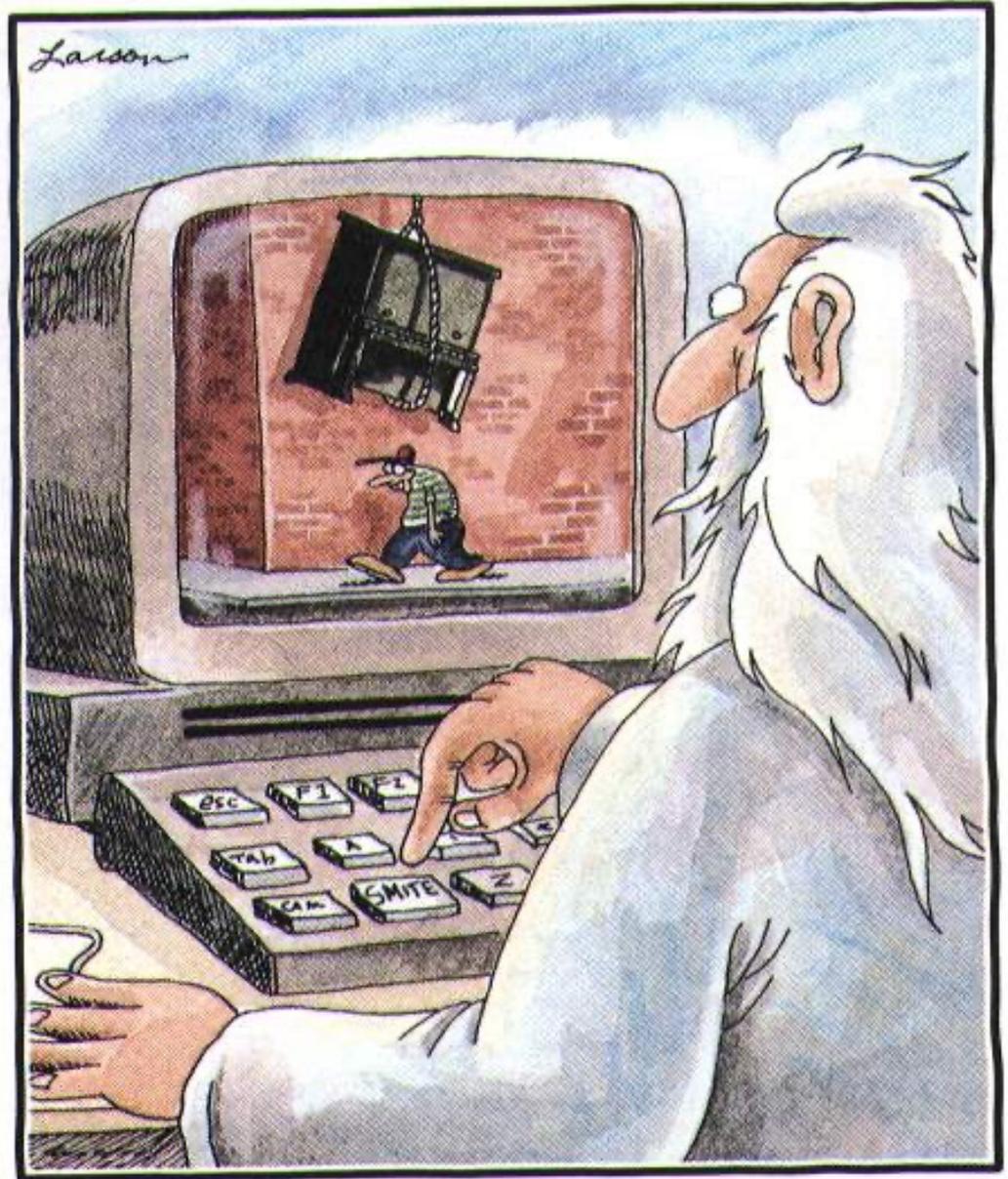


See Justice Done

- ******Worthington, E. L., Jr. (2009). *A just forgiveness: Responsible healing without excusing injustice*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.



Turn it
over to
God—Who
will enact
Divine
Justice



God at His computer

Relinquish it to God



Forbear

Lin, Y., Worthington, E. L., Jr., & Wertheim, E. (2017). Forbearance: Creation of a brief measure and evidence of psychometric support. Unpublished manuscript, in preparation.

- Effortful attempts to suppress showing that one is upset over a transgression
- Effects vary by culture
- It works in cultures in which forbearance is expected and valued.



Thor: We fought recently.
Bannan: Did I win?
Thor: No, I did. Easily.
Bannan: Hmm. That doesn't seem right.



You know him, we love him:
Mr. Forbearance (Bruce Banner)

Accept and move on



We Have Options for Dealing with Injustice (Summary)

- There are many ways to deal with injustice.
 - a. See Justice done**
 - b. Turn it over to God**
 - c. Forbear**
 - d. Accept and Move on**
 - e. Forgive**



Hard to forgive offenses. The injustice gap is so large that the person believes he or she cannot get over the barrier.

Good news! Forgiveness does not have to do ALL the heavy lifting.

Mix and match to lower the size of the injustice gap until forgiveness IS possible.

Forgive

F  R G I V E

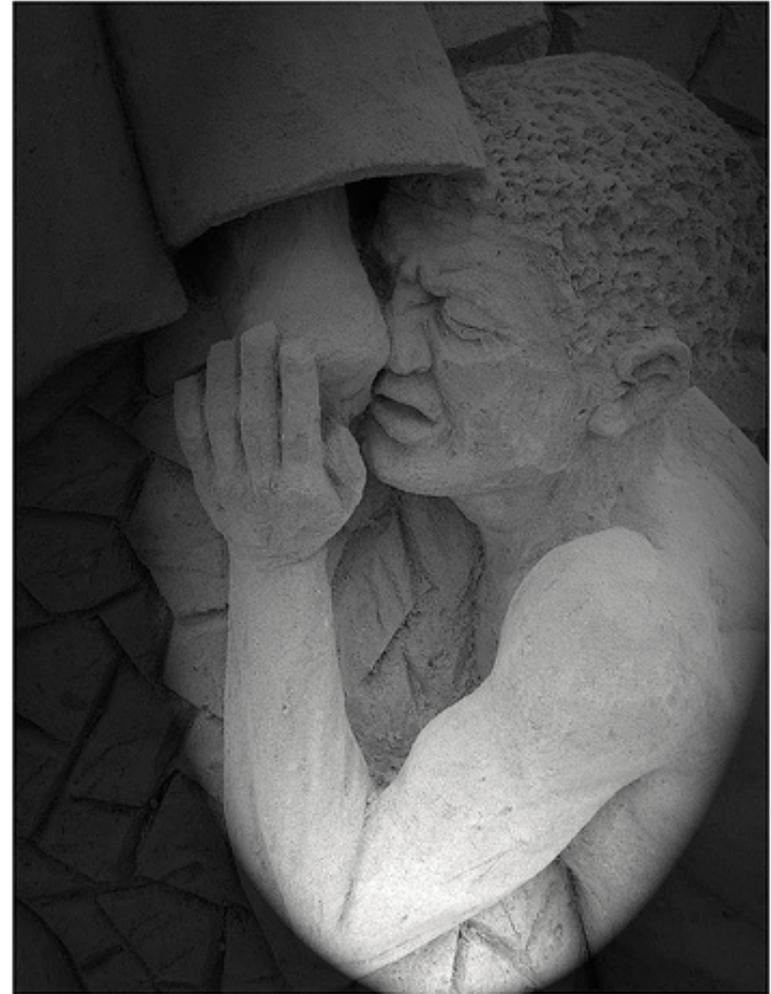
What Forgiveness Is NOT

- **Not Forbearance**
- **Not Condoning**
- **Not Reconciling**
- **Not Forgetting**
- **Not Justifying**
- **Not Getting Justice**
- **Not Excusing**



What forgiveness IS

- Two SEPARATE things:



Decisional Forgiveness

An intention statement stating one's intent to forswear revenge and treat the person as a valuable and valued person—or, if the person is not available, this is how we *would* treat them.

We might decide to forgive and still feel Emotional Unforgiveness

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

- (1) that is experienced at some time after a transgression is perceived,**
- (2) that occurs after ruminating about the event and its consequences, and**
- (3) that motivates attempts to reduce the negative emotions**

Emotional Forgiveness

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

Emotional Forgiveness

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

At first negative emotions are neutralized. We feel less and less negative unforgiveness. Eventually, there is total replacement. Complete forgiveness:

- for strangers and people we don't want to keep interacting with is neutrality.**
- For valued relationships, we keep adding positive other-oriented emotions until there is a net positive (forgiving) emotion.**

What are the Positive other-oriented emotions?

- **Empathy**
- **Sympathy**
- **Compassion**
- **Agape (altruistic) love**
- **Romantic love**



Facilitated by Positive Non-Self-focused Emotions

- Gratitude (for having been forgiven)
- Humility (recognition that I, too, have erred)
- Hope (toward the future)



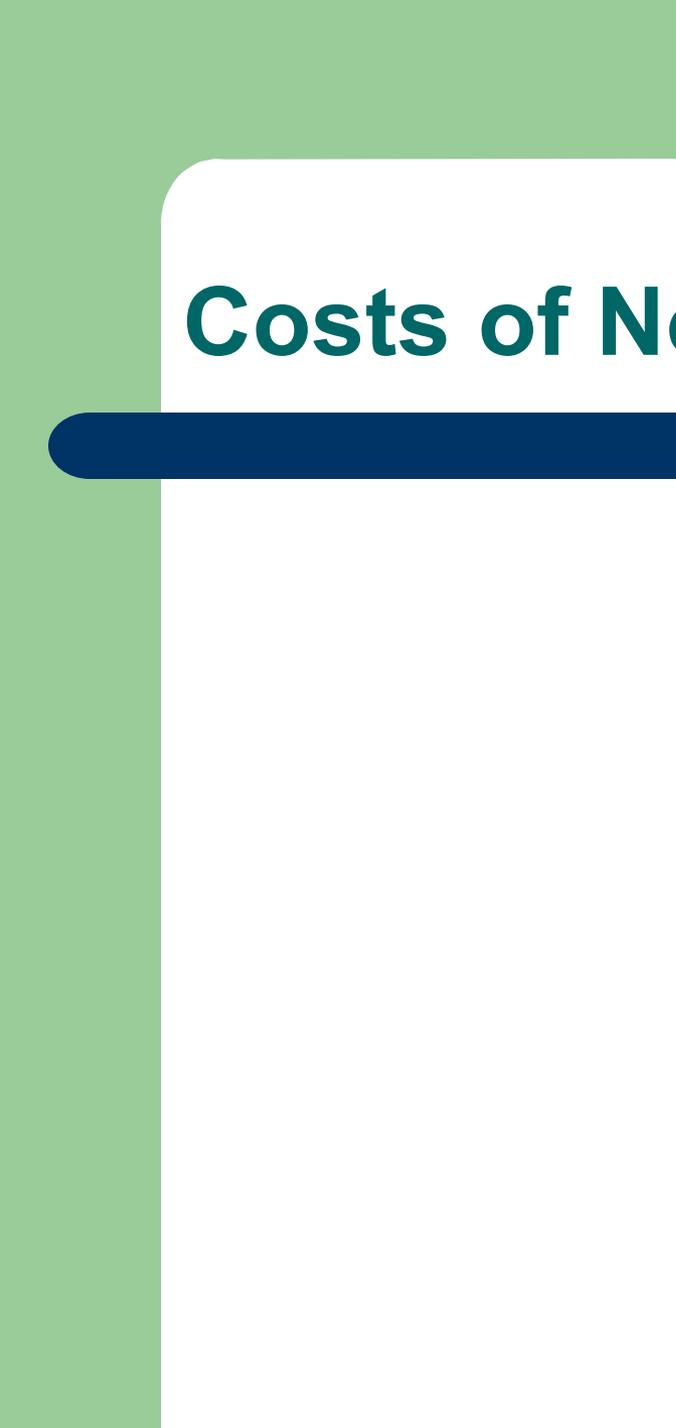
Two Types of Human-to-Human Forgiveness (Summary)

- Decisional Forgiveness
- Emotional Forgiveness



Why Should We Forgive?

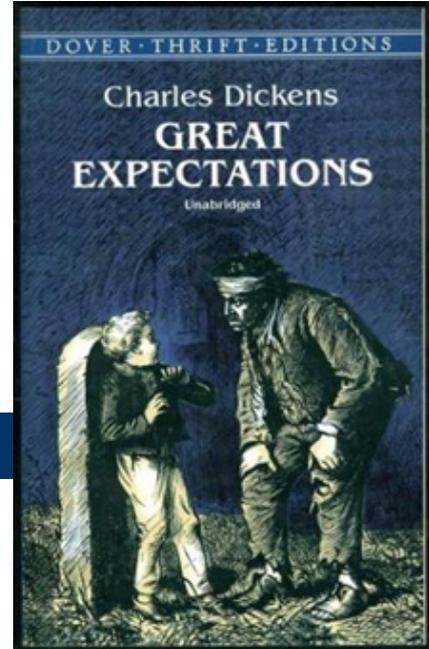
Costs of Not Forgiving



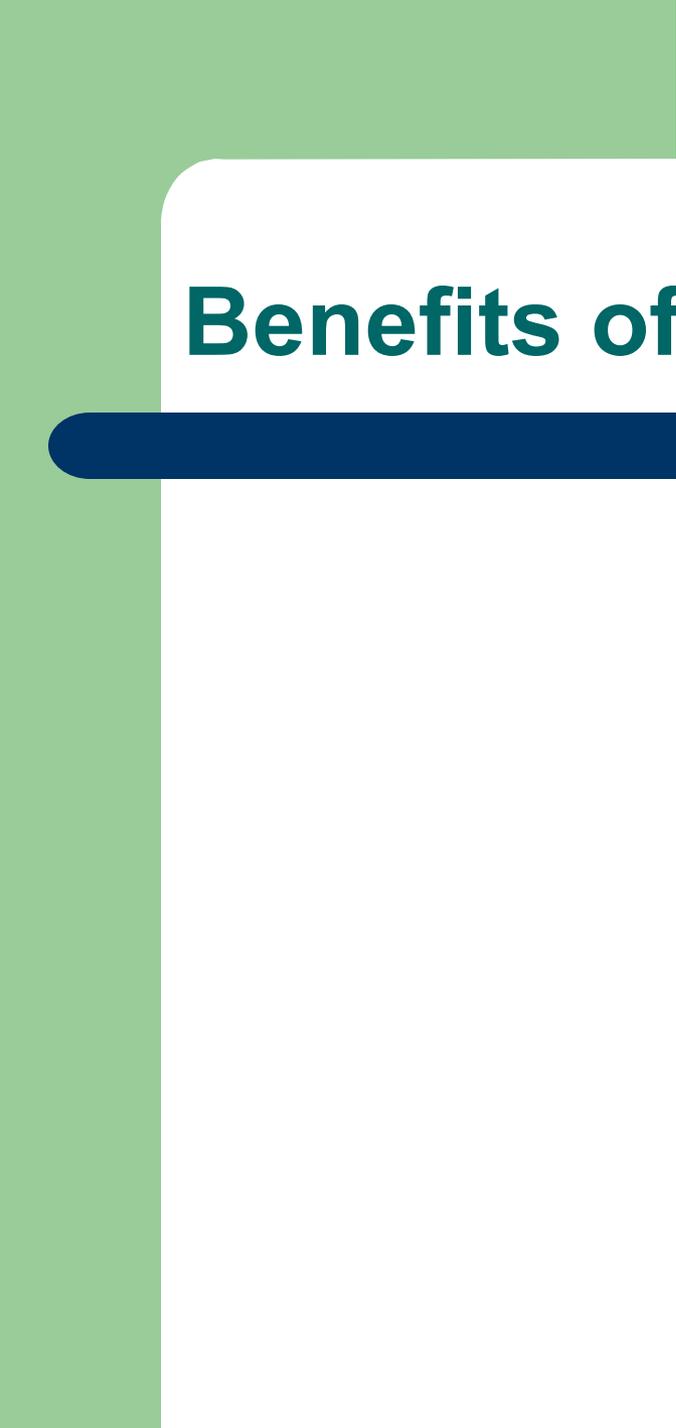
Great Expectations: Miss Havisham

- “Do you know what I touch here?” ... (Miss Havisham)
- “Yes, Ma’am.” (Pip)
- “What do I touch?”
- “Your heart.”
- “Broken!”

It’s not good for us when we can’t let something in the past go.”



Benefits of Forgiving

The slide features a decorative design on the left side. It includes a light green rectangular area at the top left, a white rounded rectangular area below it, and a dark blue horizontal bar extending across the width of the slide. The title 'Benefits of Forgiving' is centered within the white area.

Better Relationships



Better Spiritual Well-Being

- Our religion or spirituality encourages or requires it.

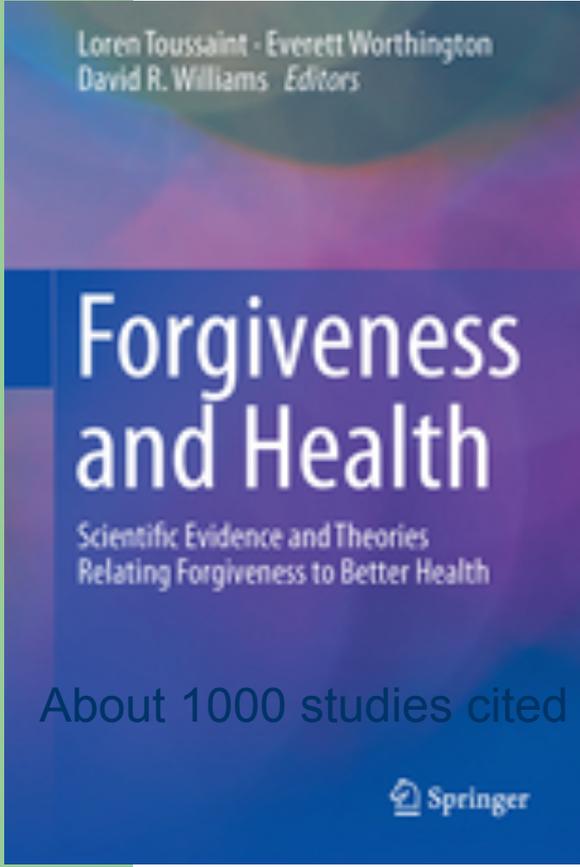


Better Mental Health

- Less Ruminatation



alth



Benefits of Forgiving (Summary)

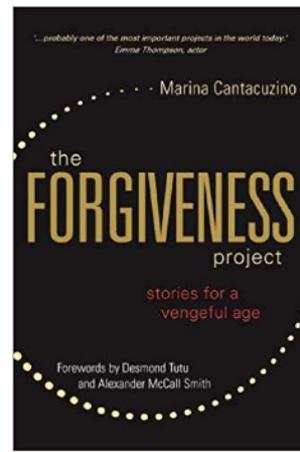
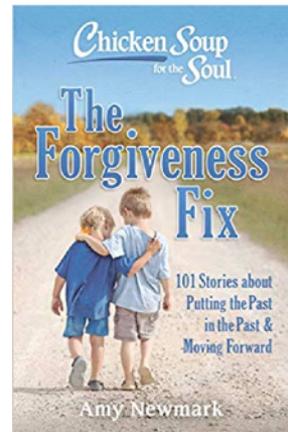
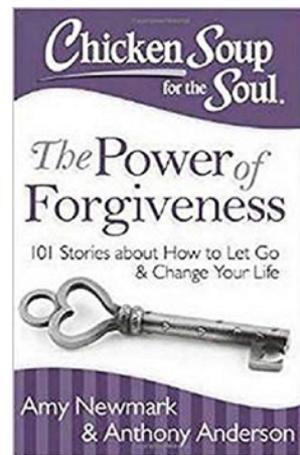
- Good for us to forgive; bad for us to hold grudges
 - Relationship
 - Spiritual
 - Mental health
 - Physical health (cardiovascular; immune system; stress reactions)
- Forgiveness is a virtue—it's a good thing to do
- Can uniquely bless the person who harmed us
- God has forgiven us

A Closer Look at Decisional Forgiveness



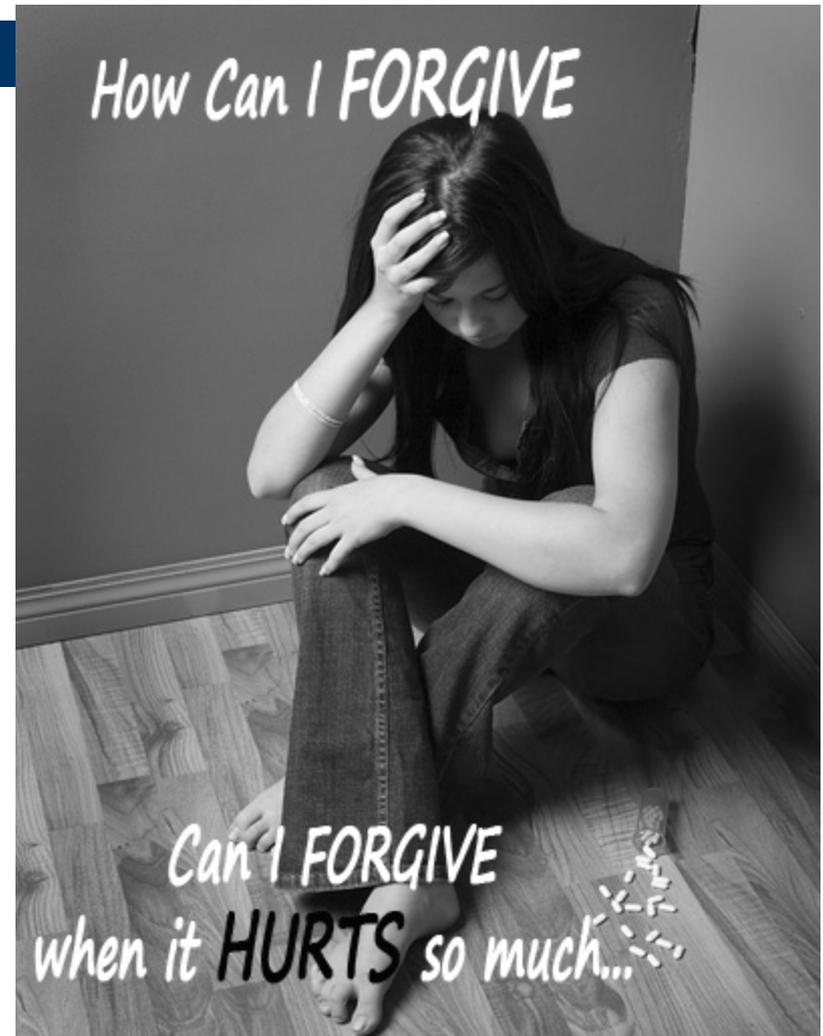
The Motivation for Decisional Forgiveness: What Makes People Decide to Forgive?

- Method:
 - I read all stories for supportive examples of how people decide to forgive.
 - Amy Newmark & Anthony Anderson (Eds.), *The power of forgiveness: 101 stories about how to let go & change your life*. New York, NY: Chicken Soup for the Soul Publishing.
 - Marina Cantacuzino, *The Forgiveness Project*.



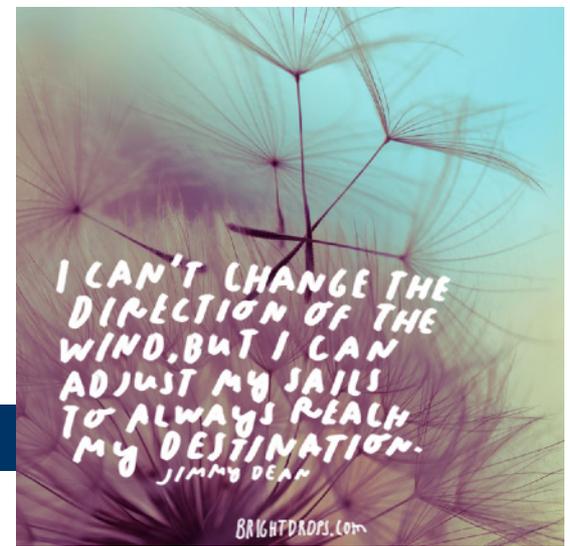
I decide I don't have the power to forgive.

- But I give it over to God, who does have the power.



I give up expectations. (This is the center.)

- Changed experience of the offender.
(These make it more likely to give up my expectations.)



Consider how hard it is to change yourself and you'll realize what little chance you have in trying to change others.



At the center: We must give up unlikely-to-occur expectations (and replace by a decision to treat the person differently)

- Which expectations might one give up?
 - I can do *something, anything*, to earn the person's love
 - I will recover all that was lost or taken from me by the offender's acts
 - The offender will change and be as I would like them to be
 - The person will come to justice
 - The person will grovel before me, vindicating me

What makes it more likely that I can give up those expectations and replace them by a decision to forgive?

- Offender shows evidence of change
 - Offender accepts responsibility for wrongs done, conveys understanding that he or she has hurt me, gives a good apology, and perhaps makes amends, and convinces me that hurting me in the future is unlikely.
- I see and understand the offender through the eyes of someone who loves him or her.
- Empathy for the offender.
- Generous imagined empathy (even if we do not know for sure that the offender is likely to experience what we are crediting to him or her)

But it isn't just about looking at the offender differently.

- We need to focus on what we know about ourselves also.

I realize two things

- First, we are all broken.

Bryan Stevenson

Bryan Stevenson. Just Mercy.



- I understand that no one (not even me) is as bad as the worst things we've done—or as good as the best things we've done.

“Each of us is more than the worst thing we’ve ever done.”

Bryan Stevenson



I realize two things

- 1. We are all broken.
- Second, we cannot fix ourselves.

HOPE HAS A NAME...

JOSHUA

TONY GOLOWYN

F. MURRAY ABRAHAM

MET HUZEL VAN
MICHAEL W. SMITH,
JACI VELASQUEZ
EN VOLGENDE
GASTGASTHELEN

STORY: ARIANNE COHEN. WRITING: MICHAEL SHAPIRO. DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES L. BRADY. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: JEFFREY BROWN, JEFFREY BROWN, JEFFREY BROWN. PRODUCED BY: JEFFREY BROWN. WRITTEN BY: JEFFREY BROWN. DIRECTED BY: JEFFREY BROWN. CASTING BY: JEFFREY BROWN. COSTUME DESIGNER: JEFFREY BROWN. HAIR AND MAKEUP: JEFFREY BROWN. PRODUCTION DESIGNER: JEFFREY BROWN. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: JEFFREY BROWN, JEFFREY BROWN, JEFFREY BROWN. PRODUCED BY: JEFFREY BROWN. WRITTEN BY: JEFFREY BROWN. DIRECTED BY: JEFFREY BROWN. CASTING BY: JEFFREY BROWN. COSTUME DESIGNER: JEFFREY BROWN. HAIR AND MAKEUP: JEFFREY BROWN. PRODUCTION DESIGNER: JEFFREY BROWN.

AL

DVD

Joshua (Jon Purdy, Director; Crusader Entertainment) stars Tony Goldwyn as Joshua

“Not bad, huh?
The guy takes a million pieces of broken glass and makes something beautiful out of it.”
He handed it to Maggie.
“Something whole!” she said.

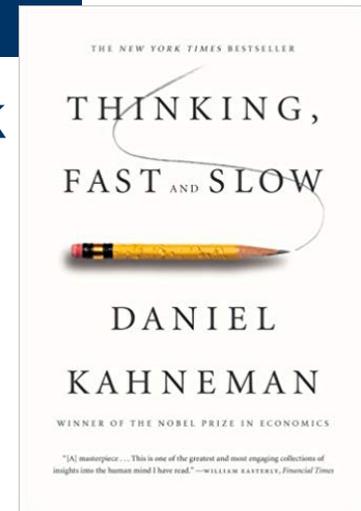


What makes it more likely that I can give up those expectations and replace them by a decision to forgive? (cont.)

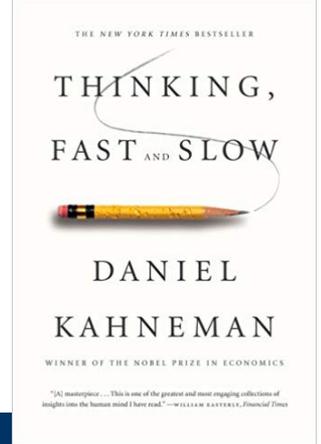
- I observe the offender's vulnerability
 - I see their pain and suffering and remorse (i.e., find evidence of their humanness and weakness), and find sympathy and compassion (and perhaps even love) for the person within me.
 - I understand that they cannot give what they don't have (e.g., Some people just cannot give love.).

Now comes reasons that I forgave

- This draws on modern cognitive psychology. I think fast through intuition, non-rational processes, unconscious motives, prior programmed learning, etc. THEN by the slow, rational thinking ...
- I justify my decision to forgive for some good reason. (Few people ever **reason** their way to forgiveness. They usually experience forgiveness and then find good reasons that justify that their experience is worth holding onto.)



I justify my decision to forgive for some good reason. Here are a few.



- The offender is suffering a life of shame and guilt and I can give them what they need (i.e., some sense of freedom from that suffering).
- I'm making space in my heart for more positive experiences.
- If I hold onto the resentment, I'm making myself miserable and not affecting the offender.
- Forgiveness has physical health, mental health, relationship, and spiritual benefits.

Practical Advice on How to “Just Do It”—that is, how to make a decision to forgive (Summary)

- Seek help from God.
- Seek support from people (especially within the community of faith).
- Seek to develop empathy (even generous imagined empathy) for the offender as a vulnerable, fallible, person (like yourself) who is more than the worst things he or she has ever done.
- Give up the expectations that seem like they will never happen (they probably won't, and if they do, then count it grace!)
- Bolster your decision with knowledge that you are helping the offender and also yourself in many seen and unseen ways.
- Realize: we are all broken, and we cannot fix ourselves.

A Couple of Stories of Deciding to Forgive

- Remember from our lesson of cognitive psychology and the implication for becoming more virtuous.
- Choose models and heroes carefully to inspire and instruct ourselves.

Chris Carrier's Story

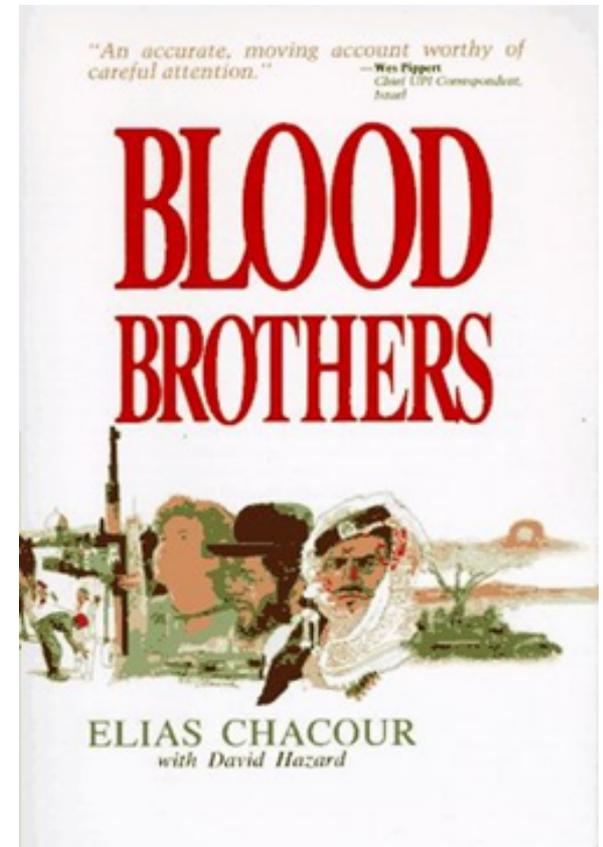


We can forgive even the hardest transgressions and lasting damage to our body or psyche.

Elias Chacour



Actions
showing that
we have
forgiven can
change lives.



Some Science Behind Two Types of Forgiveness

- For scientific answer, see: Greene, J.D., Sommerville, R.B., Nystrom, L.E., Darley, J.M., & Cohen, J.D. (2001). An fMRI investigation of emotional engagement in moral judgment. *Science*, 293, 2105-2108.



Emotional Forgiveness



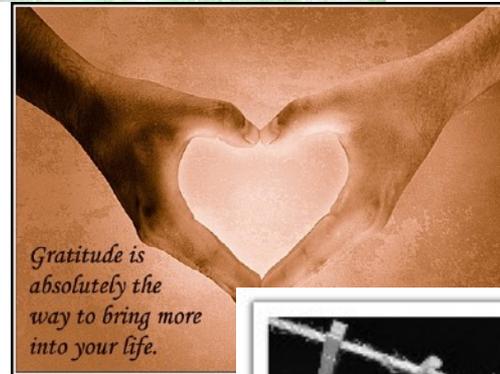
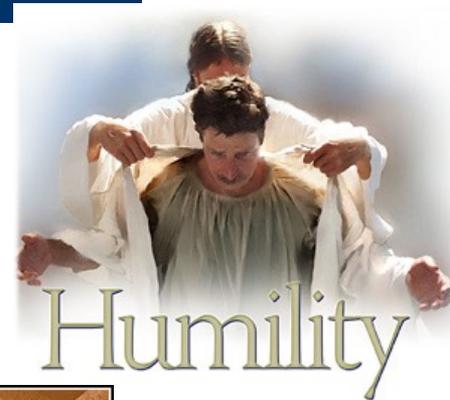
Five Steps to REACH Forgiveness

- **www.EvWorthington-forgiveness.com**
- Free Leader Manual and Free Participant Manuals that you can download and use in small groups.
- Free DIY workbooks.
- The REACH Forgiveness method involves
 - describing a success at forgiving,
 - defining two types,
 - a lectio divina type experience
 - inviting decisional forgiveness,
 - working through the five steps (REACH),
 - re-inviting decisional forgiveness, and
 - building a disposition of forgiveness.

Five Steps to REACH Emotional Forgiveness (I think Bob Emmons Covered these)

www.EvWorthington-forgiveness.com

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



Keys from Our Research

- The more time you spend trying to forgive, the more forgiveness you'll experience
- As forgiveness increases, hope builds.
- As hope builds, depression and anxiety decrease.

Don't Confuse DF, EF, and Reconciliation

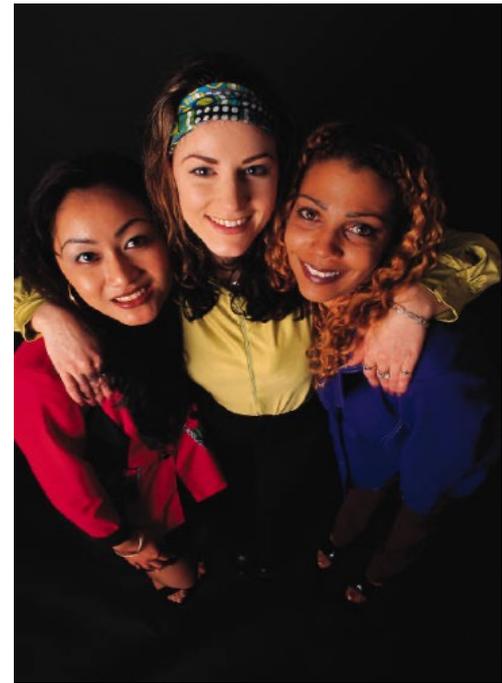
Reconciliation: restoration of trust in a relationship where trust has been violated

DF=decision

EF=emotional experience

Both occur within our skin

Forgiveness can promote reconciliation



God requires (Decisional) Forgiveness, desires (Emotional) Forgiveness and wants reconciliation under conditions of safety.

Summary of points on forgiveness

- Defined injustice gap.
- Identified alternatives to forgiving.
- Identified two types of forgiveness—decisional forgiveness and emotional forgiveness.
- Forgiveness is different from reconciliation.
- REACH Forgiveness, a method of forgiving.



If Chris Carrier can forgive what he went through, what is so hard to forgive I cannot make a decision and move toward more emotional forgiving?

Questions and Answers



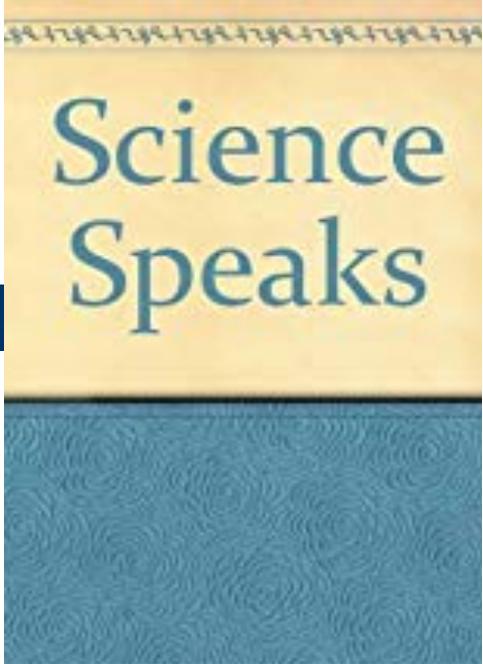
Political Humility—Having Good Conversations around the “Eating” Holidays

Everett L. Worthington, Jr.
Virginia Commonwealth University



Goals of This Section

- A survey showed that fully one-sixth of the people in the USA reported losing a relationship with a close friend or family member as a result of political conversations after the 2016 election.
- My theme of this section of the talk is that we can have a discussion, fully committed to our political values and opinions, without losing friends.
 - Various sciences have things to say about how to have such conversations.
 - My goals: (1) Show you how much sciences have to say and (2) derive some practical advice about discussing hot topics with friends and family without damaging those relationships.



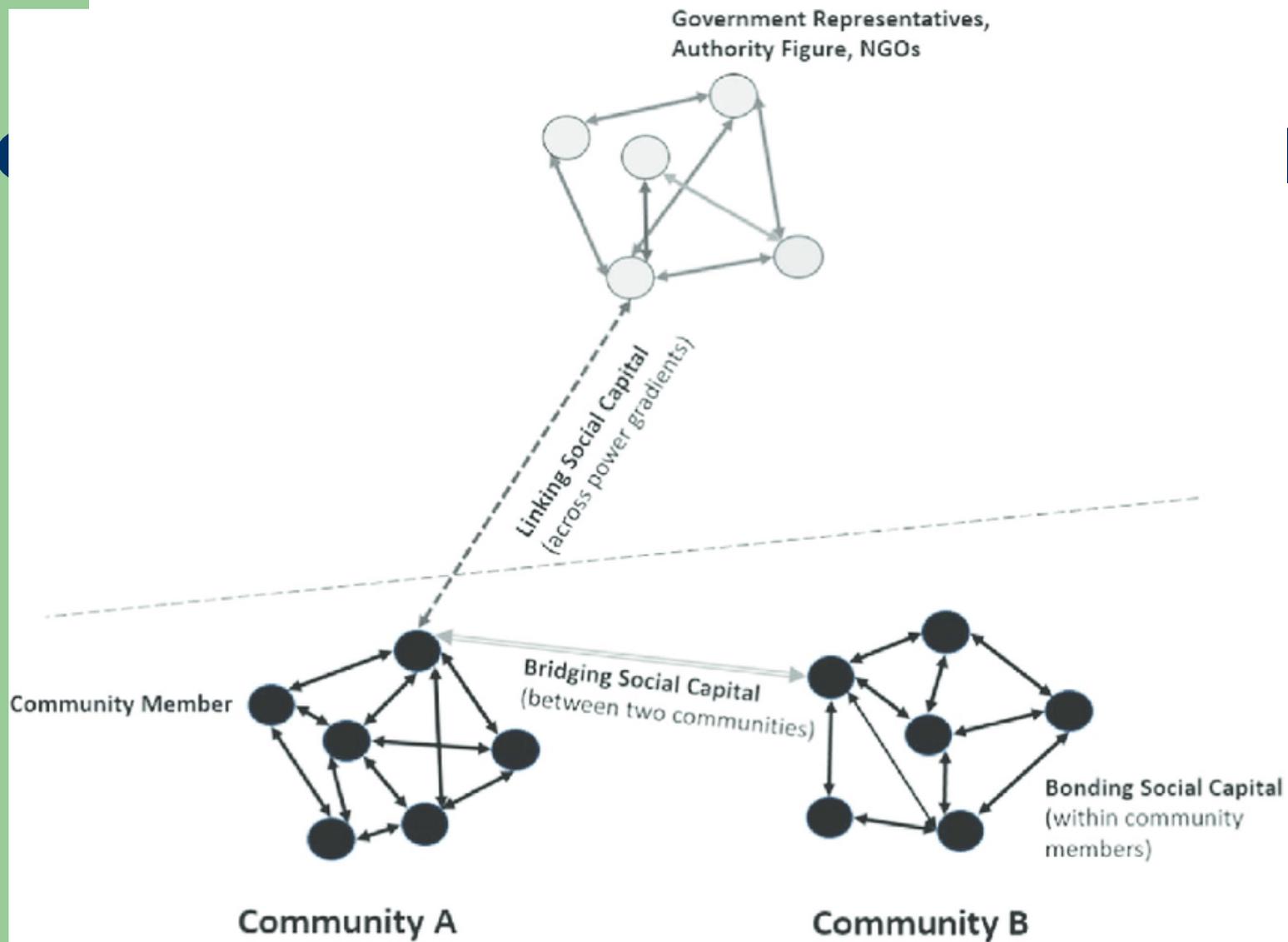
Science
Speaks

Sociology Speaks

- (1) Robert Putnam (sociologist) discusses social capital, defining two types as [far as this talk is concerned] –bonding capital and bridging capital).
 - “Capital” is a resource that can be invested and a return expected.
 - In this case, social capital is investing in relationships and expecting some return.



Robert D. Putnam



Bonding Social Capital

- Bonding social capital is an identity that we stamp ourselves with. **We invest in others** with similar identities (i.e., labels) for ease of integration into social groups.
 - Positive payouts: Bonding social capital (i.e., in-group identification) helps in
 - solidifying groups (making them more long-lasting and satisfying and effective at meeting their goals), and
 - caring for members, and
 - contributing to our identities (which depend on the groups to which we attach).
 - BUT it could also have negative “costs.”

Bonding Social Capital—Costs

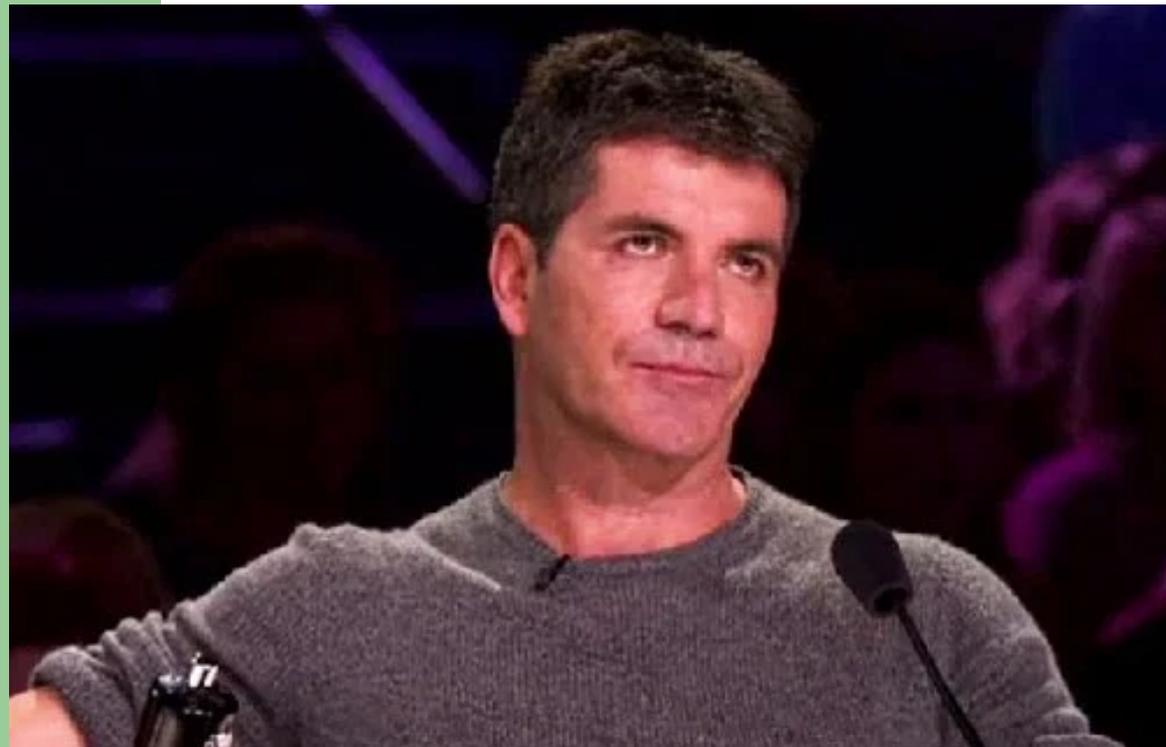
- Costs:
 - Labels → Divisions
 - The way we label ourselves (and other in-group members) and the way we label people in our out-groups (different and usually inferior) can lead to broad lines of division if we emphasize those in-group vs out-group differences.
 - Ex: a strong Republican feels strong affinity to other Republicans and antipathy for Democrats.

Bonding Social Capital –Costs: “tribal superiority”

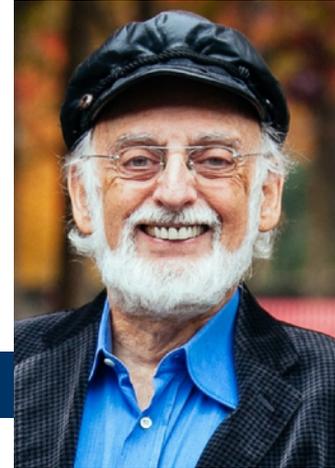
- Positive Psychology speaks: When we invest in a political ingroup, we risk losing political humility and developing tribal superiority
- An attitude of “tribal superiority” can develop (i.e., our in-group is better than other groups), which leads to several things.



Another Cost of “tribal superiority”— the Psychology of Emotion Speaks Emotions—Anger and Contempt



- People don't like to be thought of contemptuously.
- The object of contempt tends to retaliate.
- Contempt is not pleasant and not healthful for the one who experiences it.
- This is the onset of death in many relationships.

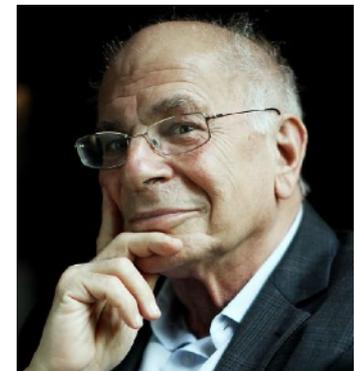
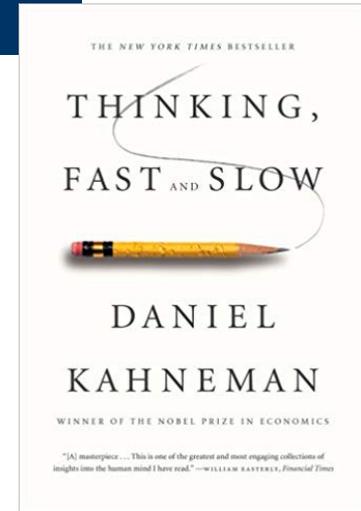


Emotions—Contempt

- We feel contempt for the other side due to their stupidity, evilness, or ignorance—or mere inferiority to our “tribe.”
- Contempt isn’t about issues; it’s about feelings toward people. Personalize with *ad hominem* arguments.
- A culture of contempt (drawing on Gottman’s couple work), contempt is the turning point of relational dissolution.
- criticism → defense →] [contempt
→ war or stonewalling
- Once we characterize our out-group rivals with contempt, other things happen.

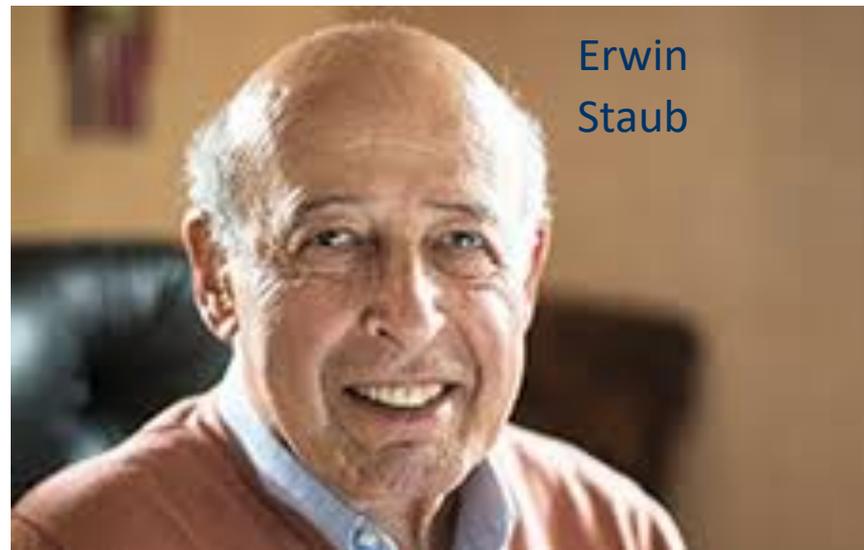
Another Cost of “tribal superiority”— Cognitive Psychology Speaks: Cognitive Distortions

- Cognitive psychology says: most thinking is fast, automatic, intuitive, unconscious and non-rational (about 90%). About 10% is slow, logical, and rational (and half of that is driven by fast cognition).
- Cognitive distortions:
 - ***Presumptive rightness*** (We presume our in-group is right. The opposing out-group is not only wrong, but stupid, evil, and at best ignorant.
 - ***Eating our own*** (Even in-group members can be judged and found wanting for not being extreme enough in antagonism against out-group members)



Another Cost of “tribal superiority”— Group Dynamics Speaks: People Can Be Harmed Physically

- If distortions continue, they can lead to **dehumanization** of out-group members, as has been found in a lifetime of research by social psychologist Erwin Staub.
- Dehumanization can lead to
 - prejudice,
 - discrimination,
 - hate crimes,
 - mass killing, and even
 - genocide.

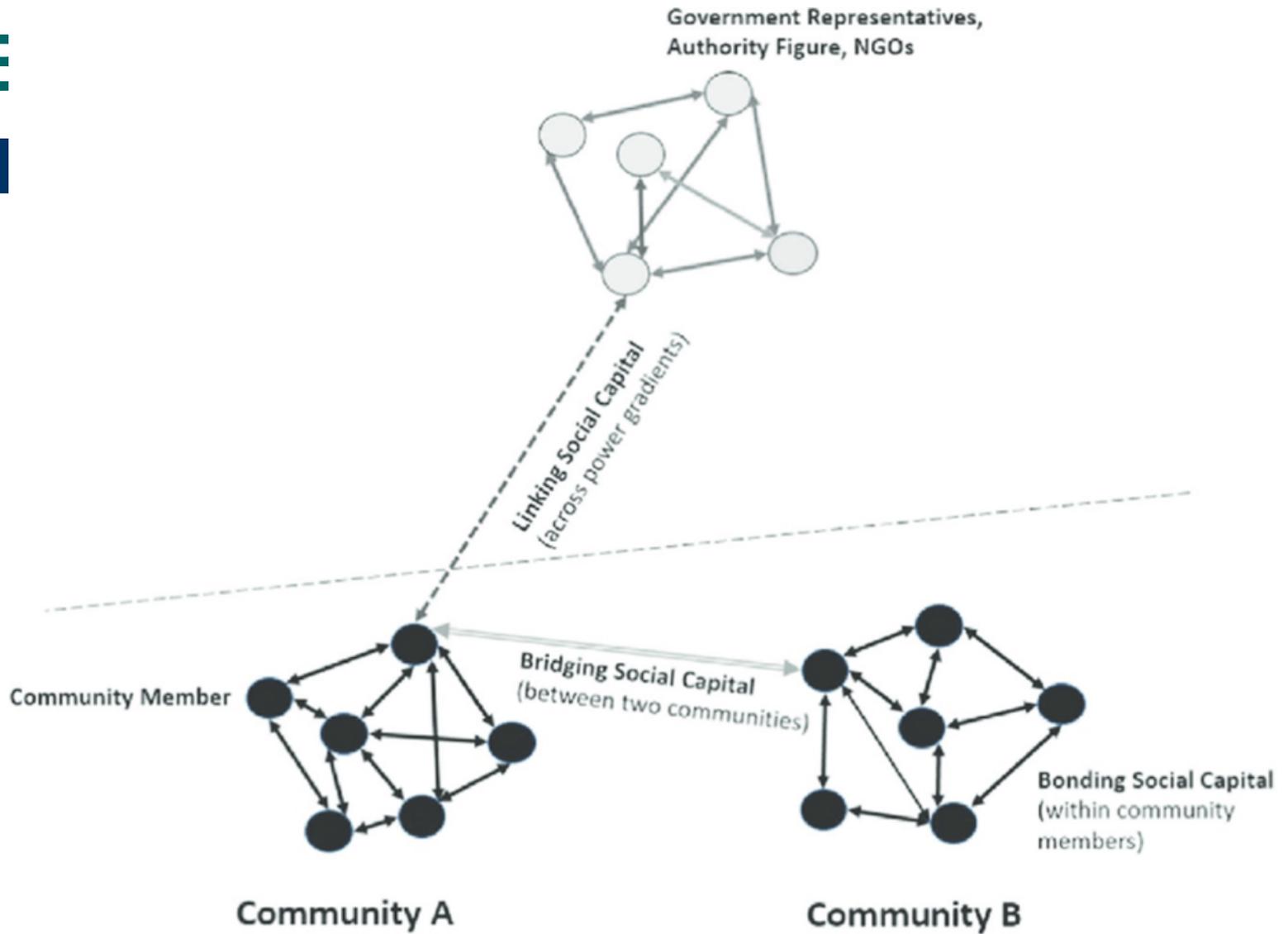


Erwin
Staub

Summary: Bonding Social Capital is often good at integrating strangers and solidifying identities, but...

- **A deep adherence to “tribal superiority”** (which is certainly a lack of political humility and perhaps general humility and other types of intellectual humility)
- **Negative social emotions** (e.g., Anger, Contempt)
- **Harmful beliefs and values** (e.g., Presumptive rightness, in-group biases, prejudices, and other cognitive distortions about ourselves and out-groups, judgmental attitudes toward others and even in-group members not radical enough)
- **Relationships that fall apart**
- **Harmful social actions** (e.g., prejudice, discrimination, polarization, social disintegration, and dehumanization of others, which can lead to mass killing and genocide.

E



“Bridging Social Capital” Helps

- The key to successful in-group and out-group relationships is *bridging social capital*.
- Bridging social capital is investing in, by interacting with, people NOT in our in-group BUT finding ways to enrich the in-group by while respecting the outgroup.
- **Deep polarization and contempt make this unlikely. But enormous advantages to people who can work with the other group.**

A Virtue We Can Build: Political Humility

- **Political humility** is an internal attitude that reflects one's personal approach to promoting bridging capital. It is a virtue.
- An attitude of political humility can lead to
 - manifestations of that attitude by a strategy of **"committed civility"** (Richard Mouw, philosopher, former President of Fuller Theological Seminary) or
 - **Tolerance of differences.**
- Let me encourage something far more radical: **"love your enemies"** (Arthur Brooks; former CEO of American Enterprise Institute, a conservative political think-tank, and now at Harvard).
 - Enemies might actually be real enemies, OR
 - "Enemies" as a temporary antagonist.
 - Arthur Brooks anecdote.



Paradoxically...

- **DEFINING HUMILITY (4 necessary and sufficient conditions)**
 - **Accept your strengths and weaknesses** (without tooting your own horn, being self-effacing, and being aw-shucks falsely modest)
 - **Be teachable** (instead of know-it-all)
 - **Act modestly** (not arrogantly)
 - **Build others up** (instead of self-promote)
- Political humility is talking about politics while remaining humble.

The Path to PROVE Political Humility

Six Practical DIY Sections for Doing Your Part for Political Civility by Becoming a More Humble Person as You Deal with Modern Politics



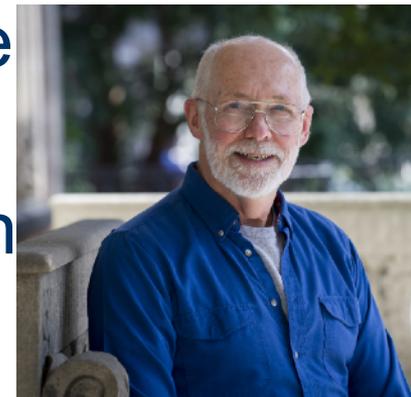
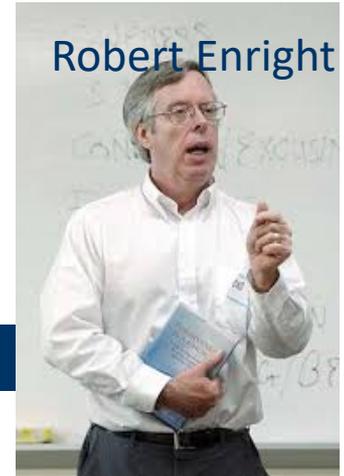
Self-Directed Learning Workbook
To Help You Increase Your Political Humility and
Convicted Civility

Everett L. Worthington, Jr., PhD
Virginia Commonwealth University

Adapted from Caroline R. Lavcock, Everett L. Worthington, Jr., & Don E. Davis (The Path to PROVE Humility: Six Practical Sessions for Becoming a More Humble Person)
Created for a grant funded by the Self, Virtue, and Public Life, by the University of Oklahoma (from the Teagarden Religion Trust) to Kristin N. Garrett, Ph.D., Principal Investigator, Wheaton College, "The Mitigating Effects of Humility and Social Identity on Hostility and Stress across Political Differences"

The Psychology of Forgiveness Speaks:

- Forgive people who have offended you rather than treat with contempt, build walls, cut off, or dehumanize.
- Forgiveness requires that we think of the offender with empathy, sympathy, compassion, or love—and it replaces negative unforgiving emotions with positive emotions toward the offender.
- It also makes a decision to treat the person as a valued and valuable person.



REACH Forgiveness (www.EvWorthington-forgiveness.com)

Your Path to REACH Forgiveness

Become a More Forgiving Person in Less Than Two Hours

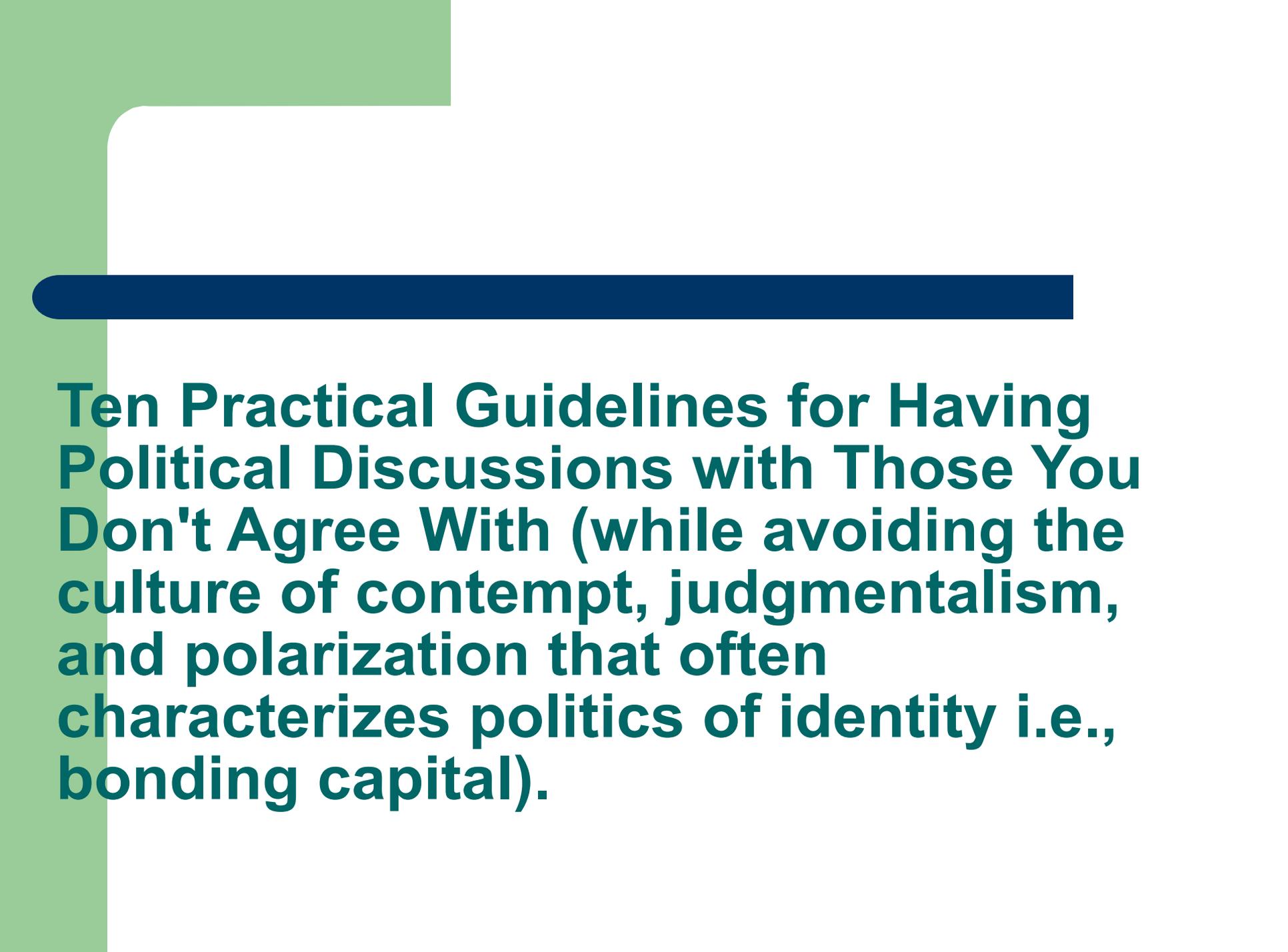


Self-Directed Learning Exercises to Build Forgiveness

Everett L. Worthington, Jr., PhD
Virginia Commonwealth University

Recommended Uses: (1) Use this workbook to forgive a hurt that you have been struggling with. (2) Try out this brief version of REACH Forgiveness to see if you like it before doing the 6-hour version. (3) Once you've worked through the full version, this short version is also perfect for hurts and offenses incurred later.

For other resources for REACH Forgiveness, see
www.Ev-Worthington-forgiveness.com



Ten Practical Guidelines for Having Political Discussions with Those You Don't Agree With (while avoiding the culture of contempt, judgmentalism, and polarization that often characterizes politics of identity i.e., bonding capital).

General Guidelines

1. Don't **presume you are right** and **feel (and especially express) contempt** for the other side. They are not ignorant, stupid, or evil.
2. Emphasize agreed-upon moral foundations—fairness and compassion. We value the same things even though we disagree on how to bring them about.
3. Control your anger. Breathe out.
4. Use coping strategies that work for you.

General Guidelines

5. If a person treats you as ignorant, stupid, or evil, don't lower yourself to that level in your responses.
6. Build political humility—discuss political issues while remaining (a) accepting of your own strengths and weaknesses; (b) teachable; (c) modest; and (d) oriented to lift others up, not put them down.
7. Pursue win-win thinking. Get at the interests (the “Why”) behind their position. Emphasize the values behind social policies, not the policy differences.

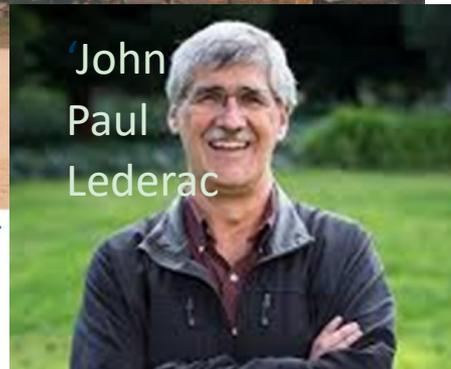
General Guidelines

8. Forgive wrongs done to you.
9. Seek reconciliation, *as much as it is up to you*. Don't wait until the other person gets to the middle. Start from your position and work toward the middle.
10. Love your enemy, and if you cannot do that, at least practice “committed civility.”

Practical Suggestions for Specific Things to Do Before, During, and After Conflicts



Bridge being constructed over the Irrawaddy River



“You can’t build a bridge by starting from the middle.”
--John Paul Lederac (Peace Worker)

Corollaries: (1) Start at each end and build towards the middle. (2) Don’t worry about whether you are each building “equally.” (3) You see your own effort more than the effort of the other person.

5 Specific Things to Do Ahead of Time

- (1) Pre-emptive forgiveness
 - Empathy (I might get triggered. It's happened before. I don't want to lose this close relationship. She (he) doesn't either. Empathize with where she (he) is coming from.)
 - Be Altruistic (Give her (him) the benefit of the doubt.)
 - Be Grateful (Can I be thankful for this friend?)
- (2) Plan positive topics.
- (3) Plan ways to cope with any provocation and reduce your anger.
- (4) Realize: It isn't ***fair*** that you are expecting all the effort to avoid toxic arguments. It's because you care. In family and friends, **let care outweigh fair.**
- (5) Understand that reactions are complex. The person responds to you out of human nature, moral foundations, beliefs about religion and philosophy, community norms, and specific beliefs.

6 Specific Things to Do If You Start to Get Wound Up

- (1) Realize: Beliefs are not causing their attacking reaction. It's THREAT to my friend's ego, values, or existential belief system, or it's THREAT of loss of love (defined as being willing to value and not devalue). They are not evil. They are afraid.
- (2) Look at the other side of the threat. We might believe we are merely making logical arguments. We aren't. We are threatening the other person with damage to their ego, values, beliefs, and with loss of love.
- (3) And we might also be ego-threatened.) So take personal responsibility for our part. Remember the parable of the publican and the sinner. Publican says, "Thank you, God, I'm not like the sinner." Sinner says, "Have mercy on me a sinner." Jesus exposes that we are all too often publican—judgmental, biased, prejudiced.

Specific Things to Do If You Start to Get Wound Up (cont.)

- (4) How to reduce our threat.
 - Love your enemies. Value and don't devalue.
 - Affirm in humility that well-meaning people can have different beliefs and values.
 - Think, *I cannot **win** this argument. Am I really going to persuade the person to change his or her values or fundamental beliefs? Or am I more likely to entrench highly emotionally charged values and mobilize the person to recruit like-minded voters to their side?*
- (5) Consider peacemaking. Ask yourself, Am I being a peacemaker, or am I driving a wedge even further between the sides and pushing them to further extremes?
- (6) Say to yourself, I don't have to be "defender of the truth."

2 Specific Things to Do If the “Worst” Happens

- Examples of the “worst”:
 - Angry arguments,
 - Person gets personal in insults,
 - Person won’t let go of a topic when others want to drop it.
- (1) First cope with it.
 - Reduce the injustice gap: turn it over to God, forbear, accept and move on.
- (2) Forgive
 - Decision to forgive
 - Emotional forgiveness

I am not advocating...

- **That you avoid all conflict:** Conflict is needed at times to find the best solution.
- **That you MUST get along with everyone:** There are toxic people that it would not be wise to continue to related to.
- **That you disengage either socially or emotionally.** Instead, engage positively and be resilient to perceived attacks.

Just the Opposite



- I am advocating that we engage through positive bridges by treating others (even those we disagree with) with love and respect.

Let me leave you with this one thought (from Cognitive psychology)

- Chances are, we will think we are doing more than the other person.
- One common belief is that WE put more into any relationship than our partner. Ask a romantic couple, how much do you put into the relationship. Add up their percents. It always equals more than 100%. We see what we do more than we see what the partner does.
- We see how much effort we put into NOT reacting in anger or contempt. But the partner cannot see what we did NOT do. Same for us. We cannot see what the partner did NOT do.

Let's have a good time with friends and family through civil—even loving—conversations over the “eating” holidays

Hope

Everett L. Worthington, Jr.
Virginia Commonwealth University



Two Complementary Approaches

- Snyder's Adult Hope Scales (Goal-oriented hope) Young people, attainable goals
- Persevering Hope Scale (When goals seem unlikely or even impossible to obtain) Older people who have encountered or are encountering many unattainable goals; people who have disabilities, chronic pain, divorces, etc.

Snyder's Adult Hope Scale

The State Hope Scale (Snyder et al.)

Directions: Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select the number that best describes YOU and put an X in the blank provided.

- 1=Definitely False
- 2=Mostly False
- 3=Mostly True
- 4=Definitely True

Item	1= <u>Definitely False</u>	2= <u>Mostly False</u>	3= <u>Mostly True</u>	4= <u>Definitely True</u>
1. I energetically pursue my goals.				
2. My past experiences have prepared me well for my future.				
3. I've been pretty successful in life.				
4. I will still meet the goals that I set for myself.				
5. I can think of many ways to get out of this jam.				
6. There are lots of ways around these problems.				
7. I can still think of many ways to get the things in life that are most important to me.				
8. Even though others might get discouraged, I know I can find a way to solve the problem.				

1-4 Agency (Willpower to change)
5-8 Pathways (Waypower to change)

Persevering Hope

PHS (Persevering Hope Scale)

How descriptive of you is each of the following items?

1=*not at all*

2=*a little*

3=*somewhat*

4=*mostly*

5=*very*

When an outcome I desire seems unlikely or even impossible, I....

		Not at All (1)	A Little (2)	Somewhat (3)	Mostly (4)	Very (5)
1	Am determined to see things through to the end					
2	Will keep trying					
3	<u>Won't</u> give up					
4	Am motivated to wait for a successful outcome					

How Do Forgiveness, Humility, and Hope Fit Together?

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They are all virtues

- Virtues tend to be interrelated.
- There are three fundamental virtues
- **Humility**: Essential attitude for knowing that we need to build more virtue.
- **Self-Control or Self-Regulation**: Essential methods
 - Self-monitoring (Paying attention to what we need and how we're doing in getting there)
 - Stimulus control (environmental control—providing internal models and arranging environments and situations)
 - Behavioral programming (planning coping behaviors, rewarding successful use of coping strategies)
- **Wisdom**: Practical ways of making the right decisions (depends on discernment, practical experience, and learning from mistakes)

Time Sequence That Keeps Us Searching for Solutions or Persevering When We Don't See Solutions

- Humility (first)
 - Encounter relational troubles (couple, family, church, community, workplace, avocation, country)
- Hope (goal-oriented v persevering (history and severity))
- Forgiveness (creates a *yearning* for reconciliation)
- Reconciliation attempts + humility (intellectual, religious, political; relational humility)
 - Potential failures
- Hope (finding new will and ways in face of failures)
 - More failures
- Persevering hope (persevering in face of failures)

Humility, Forgiveness, and Hope Are All Outcomes of Virtue Formation

- Both successes and failures challenge our humility
 - Pride (too many or too easy success)
 - Worthlessness (repeated failures)

Community

Everett L. Worthington, Jr.
Virginia Commonwealth University



While I have at times treated these as individual virtues, they are actually not.

- Modern Cognitive Psychology (again)
- **Extended cognition:** Otto and his notebook, Ev and his cell phone, Ev and his wife and kids and grandkids, Ev and his work colleagues and research teams, Ev and his church. The things that I'm connected to extend my cognition beyond my boundaries.
- We accomplish little on our own. We independently “choose” our environments (marriage, family, workplace, church).
- Really?
- Our DNA, which we got from generations of family, and the ways we were raised, and the experiences we have had all set us up for our individual “choices.”
- They guide us to value certain heroes or models, engage environments, select situations, and choose coping strategies.

Questions and Answers

