The Future of Forgiveness Interventions

Everett L. Worthington, Jr.
Virginia Commonwealth University
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Ev is Commonwealth Professor Emeritus within the Department of Psychology at VCU. When he isn’t off speaking, he’s in his sensory deprivation chamber aka office (mailing address: Box 842018, 806 West Franklin Street, 23284; office 918 W. Franklin) and is reachable by email (eworth@vcu.edu) and phone (804-828-1150). Visit his website for free material on promoting forgiveness, humility, patience, of other virtues (www.EvWorthington-forgiveness.com)
Learning Objectives

- By the end of this one-hour presentation, the participant will be able to
  - Explain the status of intervention clinical science as of 2013.
  - Note changes since 2013 to 2018
  - Identify possible future directions that intervention clinical science might grow into*

*This is admittedly going to be biased toward things I’m doing, but nonetheless, I hope it will stimulate ideas that might take you in new directions as well.
Theme

- We have come a long way in forgiveness practice and research, but the journey is just beginning.
History of Publications per year with forgiv* in the article (Total: 58 good studies in 1997; 1100 in 2005; 2500+ in 2016)—Publications on interventions (fewer) have mirrored the growth.

Big picture: Forgiveness research is a growth industry and it is continuing to grow.
What Do We Know about Interventions?
Meta-Analysis of RCT studies 2013

- Meta-Analysis of Interventions

Findings:
1. REACH Forgiveness and Enright Process model equal in use;
2. All are equally effective per hour;
3. Linear dose-response relationship: The more time spent trying, the more you forgive $d=0.1$/hour);
4. Interventions not only increase forgiveness, but also increase hope, and decrease both depression and anxiety.
5. Efficacy of psychoeducational groups, couple interventions, and psychotherapy were established.

What Innovations Have Occurred Since 2013

- Head-to-head comparisons
What Innovations Have Occurred Since 2013?

- **Online interactive forgiveness programs**—The most difficult challenges seem to be lowering attrition, adapting for cultures when anyone from any culture can use it.

What Innovations Have Occurred Since 2013?

- **Cultural adaptations**

  
  
What Innovations Have Occurred Since 2013?

- Evidence-based do-it-yourself workbooks (Can these be tailored to individuals? How do we ensure quality control if people select the exercises they choose to do?)


What Continued Innovations Are Needed for the Future?
Can we design a brief intervention that consistently gets above the dose-response regression line?

- Efficacy research
With this as the status in 2018, what changes are needed?

- Different type of research, yielding new strategic directions: *Effectiveness* and *Dissemination* research.
Can Direct Applications Be Expanded? To What Populations and Problems?

- Enright has mostly aimed interventions at specific problems—psychotherapy-worthy problems, medical issues, other.
  - How widely can interventions be applied / tailored to individual problems?
Can Direct Applications Be Expanded? To What Populations and Problems?

- Can interventions (like process model and REACH Forgiveness) be integrated into existing evidence-based protocols?
  - See Sandage et al. integrated REACH Forgiveness into the Minnesota Linehan DBT for borderline personality disorder.
Are There Ways We Can Treat More People Effectively?

- Group Process models (Nathaniel Wade)
Delivery Systems

- Related (but really where forgiveness is just part of dealing with other problems):
  - **Self-Forgiveness** (one step of Six Steps to Forgive Yourself and Break Free from the Past)
  - **Couples therapy or enrichment** (as FREE [Forgiveness and Reconciliation through Experiencing Empathy]—half of the Hope-Focused Approach)
  - **Psychotherapy** (Bob Enright’s Forgiveness Therapy is unquestioned leader in long treatment of severe psychological forgiveness-related problems. REACH Forgiveness is for bothersome forgiveness issues when you don’t want to or have resources to invest in weekly long-term forgiveness therapy.)
Perhaps Some Standard Ways of Doing Things Might Need Rethinking?

- Use in Psychotherapy
- Forgiveness Therapy (long-term treatment, like incest survivors; Freedman & Enright; men with post-abortion issues with partners; Coyle & Enright); Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2015

Versus

- Adjunctive Psychoeducation (with use of Psychotherapy to deal with difficult problems)

- Obviously, both will always be needed
What New Uses Are Needed?

- Workplace interventions have not been developed, though much study has involved forgiveness in the workplace.

- Family therapy interventions are sparse (only one I know is Hargrave)
What New Delivery Systems Can Be Employed?

- Phone apps (Because of the strong dose-response relationship, a phone app is unlikely, by itself, to be effective. But, how do we employ these to support other interventions? Reminders to return to workbook or internet?).

- Game-based forgiveness practice (Can engaging games be developed that keep people participating?)
Can Mental Health Delivery Be Transformed?

- The PROBLEM
  - The demand for mental health services is growing quickly.
  - The supply of providers of mental health services is growing less quickly.
  - Forgiveness issues are involved in mental health disorders (see Enright & Fitzgibbons)

- Solution? Can the religious churches in the world (and specifically in the USA) be harnessed to provide mental health services at the lay level?
  - Suppose each congregation had 5 lay people trained to promote forgiveness. (1) Supply of providers would far outstrip demand. Beyond that, (2) the amount of mental illness might be reduced because people who forgive might have less depression and anxiety, and more hope.
  - Integration throughout religious organizations that already value forgiveness. Prevention and enrichment and mass delivery of treatment is attractive to communities that already embrace forgiveness and just need to know more about how to forgive. This is particularly the church.
Can Societies Be Transformed Simply by Public Health Intervention to Raise Awareness about Forgiveness?

Free-sources

Want more about how to do it? www.EvWorthington-forgiveness.com which includes manuals and downloadable training videos.

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
Make Materials Available and Free—
Group Manuals and Workbooks Are Free

Everett Worthington
Professor of Psychology | Virginia Commonwealth University

How can you REACH Forgiveness?

Psychologist Everett Worthington has spent his career studying forgiveness (and other virtues). To help people make a decision to forgive and to reach emotional forgiveness, he has developed a five-step process called REACH that has been tested with positive results in numerous scientific studies.

Learn more »
Interventions Needed To Help Others

If you study it, find a niche and apply REACH Forgiveness (or other intervention) as an EBPP. (Recall, forgiveness does not mean one does not pursue justice.)

- Forgiveness and substance use, misuse, and abuse,
- Self-forgiveness in military,
- Forgiveness and bullying,
- Self-forgiveness and perfectionism,
- Forgiving parents and perfectionism,
- Forgiving people who violate social justice expectations,
- Forgiving people who discriminate or stigmatize (e.g., racial, ethnic, lifestyle, identity, etc.),
- Forgiveness related to disabilities (people perceived to have caused the disability, insensitive or offensive treatment afterwards, etc.) [PLUS many more]
- But, the take-homes are wider…
We have come a long way in forgiveness practice and research. However, the journey is just beginning. We have not even harvested the “low-hanging fruit” yet.
Comparing REACH Forgiveness (Psychoed groups) head to head with Active Alternatives, Not Just No Treatment or Wait Group Process (Yalom) and Wait List for Community Residents (N=162)

  - REACH forgiveness v waiting list: REACH Forgiveness >> Wait on revenge, rumination, benevolence, and empathy, but not on psychological symptoms, $p = .053$.
  - REACH Forgiveness treatment > Process treatment on lowering revenge and symptoms and rumination and on increasing benevolence and empathy. The only significant one is REACH Forgiveness > Process on reductions in rumination.
  - Take home: REACH Forgiveness ~ Yalom Process Groups (REACH is perhaps a little better).
Comparing REACH Forgiveness head to head with Active Alternatives, Not Just No Treatment or Wait List—Forgive for Good (Fred Luskin)


- **Take Home:** REACH Forgiveness better on TRIM (motives) and Emotional forgiveness), but the CBT-strong Luskin FFG better on forgiveness cognition.
Integrate REACH Forgiveness Group Protocol into Established Protocol for Treating Borderline Patients


**Take home:** In a psychotherapy group with borderline patients, REACH Forgiveness helped them forgive.
Adapting Psychoeducational Groups for Culture


- **Take Home:** Foreign students and Virginia-born students (mixed half and half in each group) responded equally to REACH Forgiveness groups.
Adapting Psychoeducational Groups for Culture

- Christian adapted treatments for Christians who had hurt other Christians had dose-response relationship of 0.2 SDs per hour (twice the normal rate).
  - **Take home:** Christian-adapted groups exceed the 0.1SD per hour regression line. Needs replication!!

  - **Take home:** Adapted groups both to Filipino and Christian cultures were effective.
Adapting Psychoeducational Groups for Culture—Adapting Psychoeducational Groups for Culture—Under review


  - **Take home:** Adapt specifically to Indonesian collectivism, not all collectivism is equal.

Decisional Forgiveness Scale**  Decision to Forgive Scale**  Emotional Forgiveness Scale
New Modalities, Not Psychoeducational
REACH Forgiveness Groups: Do-It-Yourself, DIY, Workbooks
Add a Modality—Do-It-Yourself Workbooks

Workbooks

Experiencing Forgiveness:
Six Practical Sections for Becoming a More Forgiving Christian

Self-Directed Learning Workbook

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

Self-Directed Learning Workbook

An Intervention to Promote Forgiveness

Everett L. Worthington, Jr., PhD
Virginia Commonwealth University
(Adapted as a Workbook by Caroline Lavelleck)
November 1, 2011
Christian REACH Workbooks

Efficacy of a Self-Directed Forgiveness Workbook for Christian Victims of Within-Congregation Offenders

Chelsea L. Greer, Everett L. Worthington, Jr., Yin Lin, Caroline R. Lavelock, and Brandon J. Griffin
Virginia Commonwealth University

Multiple psychoeducational and psychotherapeutic interventions are available to aid victims of offense in the arduous process of forgiving wrongdoers. These interventions often require that trained professionals deliver the intervention, which is costly. In the present study, a Christian version of Worthington’s REACH Forgiveness intervention was adapted into a nominally 6-hr self-directed workbook for Christians who experienced an offense within their religious community. College students (N = 52) completed the workbook within a randomized waiting-list design with 3 assessments. A significant multivariate Condition × Time interaction showed that people improved while working on the workbook and maintained gains after completion. The workbooks produced a larger effect size in reducing unforgiveness than benchmarks of previous REACH Forgiveness psychoeducational interventions of comparable duration. Effect size fell within the upper limit of the standard of change. We conclude that workbook treatments may be cost-effective and easily disseminated. Additional workbook intervention studies are warranted.

Keywords: forgiveness, intervention, Christian, offense, self-help

Take home: TWICE as effective as secular.
Secular REACH Forgiveness Workbooks

Efficacy of a Workbook to Promote Forgiveness: A Randomized Controlled Trial With University Students

Quandrea Harper, Everett L. Worthington, Jr., Brandon J. Griffin, Caroline R. Lavelock, Joshua N. Hook, Scott R. Vrana, and Chelsea L. Greer

Virginia Commonwealth University
University of North Texas

Objective: The present study investigated the efficacy of a 6-hour self-directed workbook adapted from the REACH Forgiveness intervention. Method: Undergraduates (N = 41) were randomly assigned to either an immediate treatment or waitlist control condition. Participants were assessed across 3 time periods using a variety of forgiveness outcome measures. Results: The 6-hour workbook intervention increased forgiveness, as indicated by positive changes in participants’ forgiveness ratings that differed by condition. In addition, benchmarking analysis showed that the self-directed workbook intervention is at least as efficacious as the delivery of the REACH Forgiveness model via group therapy. Conclusion: A self-directed workbook intervention adapted from the REACH Forgiveness intervention provides an adjunct to traditional psychotherapy that could assist the mental health community to manage the burden of unforgiveness among victims of interpersonal harm. © 2014 Wiley Periodicals, Inc. J. Clin. Psychol. 70:1158–1169, 2014.

Keywords: forgiveness; intervention; REACH Forgiveness; workbook intervention; benchmarking

Figure 2. Participants’ ratings of unforgiveness and forgiveness over time. TRIM_AR = Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations-Avoidance-Revenge (range, 7–60), RFS = Rye Forgiveness Scale (range, 15–75). Participants forgiveness ratings on other measures (i.e., DFS & EFS) follow a similar pattern.

Take home: Equally effective as group psychoeducation.
Compare REACH Forgiveness 7-hour Workbook with Workbooks to Promote Other Virtues (humility, patience) and Positivity


(Compares Forgiveness, Humility, Patience, and Positivity workbooks)

| Table 1 |
| Study 1 Means and Standard Deviations for Outcome Measures, N = 168 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Forgiveness (n=30)</th>
<th>Humility (n=26)</th>
<th>Patience (n=28)</th>
<th>Self-Control (n=24)</th>
<th>Positivity (n=27)</th>
<th>Control (n=33)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VIA M (SD)</td>
<td>34.73 (6.66)</td>
<td>35.54 (5.40)</td>
<td>32.62 (5.19)</td>
<td>35.19* (6.38)</td>
<td>35.29 (6.73)</td>
<td>34.63 (5.78)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TFS M (SD)</td>
<td>30.90 (7.22)</td>
<td>34.79* (6.72)</td>
<td>32.27 (6.11)</td>
<td>36.23* (7.18)</td>
<td>36.43* (5.51)</td>
<td>35.67 (5.50)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PS M (SD)</td>
<td>34.57 (6.58)</td>
<td>37.43* (6.41)</td>
<td>35.35 (6.57)</td>
<td>38.27* (6.28)</td>
<td>39.21* (5.92)</td>
<td>38.17 (6.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS M (SD)</td>
<td>42.93 (9.18)</td>
<td>42.71 (9.41)</td>
<td>39.27 (9.82)</td>
<td>40.38 (10.12)</td>
<td>41.68 (10.64)</td>
<td>44.36* (8.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neg M (SD)</td>
<td>21.63 (9.11)</td>
<td>19.04 (7.17)</td>
<td>22.85 (6.98)</td>
<td>19.77* (6.35)</td>
<td>19.61 (5.70)</td>
<td>17.36* (6.37)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Possible values for the VIA (Values in Action) measure of humility range from 9-45. Possible values for the TFS ( Trait Forgivingness Scale) measure of forgiveness range from 10-50. Possible values for the PS (Patience Scale) measure of patience range from 10-50. Possible values for the SCS (Self-Control Scale) measure of self-control range from 13-65. Possible values for the Neg (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule) measure of negativity range from 10-50.

* = significantly different from own condition’s Time 1 score
+ = significantly different from positivity condition’s score at the same time

**Take home:** Forgiveness groups changed trait forgivingness and also changed trait patience.
Online REACH Forgiveness Intervention (from Australia)


**Take home:** For online, modifications are needed to keep people persisting through the entire intervention. Felt progress in early modules, cliff-hangers to get people to move from completed module to module (most quit at end of module), questions, self-ratings that keep people engaged.
These Three Areas Include REACH Forgiveness as PART of a more Complex Treatment

- Self-Forgiveness
- Community Awareness-Raising
- Couples Enrichment and Therapy

Following marketing rules (Avoid Product-Line Extension or it dilutes your main line), these use a different name (but all incorporate REACH Forgiveness within).
Adapt REACH Forgiveness Within Six Steps to Self-Forgiveness and Decisional Plus Emotional Self-Forgiveness—Sorry No Time to Go Through This

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

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

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


Workbook to Promote Self-Forgiveness

Moving Forward:
Six Steps to Forgiving Yourself and Breaking Free from the Past

Self-Directed Learning Workbook
An Intervention Designed to Promote Self-Forgiveness

Everett L. Worthington, Jr., PhD
Virginia Commonwealth University
(Adapted as a Workbook by Brendan Griffin & Caroline Lavelle)
Community Awareness-Raising Intervention—Note that REACH Forgiveness groups or workbooks could be used as one way to raise community awareness.


Take home: About 1200 of the 1600 students participated in multiple measurements. Result: you can change entire “societies” by awareness raising and provision of ways to experience forgiveness (i.e., REACH Forgiveness groups).
Comparing FREE (REACH Forgiveness is part of that) vs Communication and Conflict Resolution (HOPE) vs Retesting (N=154 Newly Married Couples) for Enrichment


**Take home:** HOPE and FREE both work, but FREE tends to affect unforgiveness motives and negative affect more, and HOPE with its direct communication training affected communication more.
Comparing HFA Standard (Secular) with HFA (Religiously Accommodated)


N=92 couples

Rel Accom = Standard (all head-to-head)

Treatments (combined) made difference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Religious-accommodative</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>42.70</td>
<td>9.69</td>
<td>42.17</td>
<td>8.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>49.51</td>
<td>7.98</td>
<td>46.87</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up</td>
<td>50.69</td>
<td>8.69</td>
<td>46.98</td>
<td>8.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Relationship Commitment Scale |Baseline | 17.80 | 2.91 | 17.24 | 2.09 |
| Post                           | 18.82    | 1.78 | 18.36 | 2.61 |
| Follow-up                      | 18.59    | 2.34 | 17.85 | 3.03 |

| Gordon Buschom Forgiveness Impact* |Baseline | 17.96 | 6.11 | 18.06 | 6.03 |
| Post                           | 13.46    | 4.96 | 16.77 | 5.65 |
| Follow-up                      | 12.90    | 4.41 | 13.87 | 5.41 |

| Gordon Buschom Forgiveness Meaning |Baseline | 24.31 | 5.54 | 24.54 | 4.97 |
| Post                           | 25.15    | 5.18 | 26.07 | 4.49 |
| Follow-up                      | 22.86    | 5.51 | 23.17 | 4.86 |

| Gordon Buschom Forgiveness Moving On |Baseline | 26.97 | 5.42 | 26.48 | 5.38 |
| Post                           | 30.84    | 3.94 | 28.96 | 3.85 |
| Follow-up                      | 30.92    | 3.23 | 29.70 | 4.44 |

| Spatial Distance* |Baseline | 18.92 | 19.52 | 16.33 | 15.12 |
| Post                           | 8.47    | 13.70 | 8.42 | 14.14 |
| Follow-up                      | 14.30    | 10.00 | 8.76 | 14.72 |

| Video Rating of Self |Baseline | 5.12 | 14.55 | 4.53 | 13.64 |
| Post                           | 15.94    | 9.78 | 11.54 | 11.18 |
| Follow-up                      | 14.63    | 13.24 | 14.17 | 13.09 |

| Video Rating of Partner |Baseline | 4.60 | 15.28 | 3.47 | 14.35 |
| Post                           | 16.81    | 8.82 | 11.12 | 11.33 |
| Follow-up                      | 15.32    | 10.87 | 14.09 | 11.13 |

| IDCS Positive Affect |Baseline | 4.94 | 1.63 | 4.76 | 1.70 |
| Post                           | 6.06    | 1.63 | 5.34 | 1.71 |
| Follow-up                      | 5.43    | 1.48 | 5.50 | 1.69 |

| IDCS Negative Affect* |Baseline | 3.99 | 1.93 | 4.00 | 1.70 |
| Post                           | 2.92    | 1.20 | 3.42 | 1.70 |
| Follow-up                      | 3.99    | 1.54 | 3.15 | 1.56 |

| IDCS Problem-Solving Skills |Baseline | 4.39 | 1.56 | 4.47 | 1.43 |
| Post                           | 3.93    | 2.04 | 3.60 | 1.53 |
| Follow-up                      | 5.71    | 1.27 | 5.44 | 1.41 |

| IDCS Domains* |Baseline | 2.05 | 1.40 | 2.97 | 1.34 |
| Post                           | 2.30    | 1.57 | 2.68 | 0.95 |
| Follow-up                      | 2.96    | 1.92 | 3.47 | 1.13 |

| IDCS Dominance* |Baseline | 3.47 | 1.24 | 3.20 | 1.27 |
| Post                           | 2.80    | 1.17 | 2.76 | 1.19 |
| Follow-up                      | 2.82    | 1.19 | 2.75 | 0.98 |

| IDCS Support Validation |Baseline | 4.35 | 1.55 | 4.60 | 1.87 |
| Post                           | 5.54    | 1.38 | 4.87 | 1.54 |
| Follow-up                      | 5.82    | 1.63 | 4.94 | 1.67 |

| IDCS Conflict* |Baseline | 5.08 | 1.90 | 3.92 | 1.94 |
| Post                           | 5.00    | 1.42 | 3.43 | 1.33 |
| Follow-up                      | 5.77    | 1.55 | 3.35 | 1.46 |

| IDCS Satisfaction* |Baseline | 7.24 | 1.54 | 7.74 | 1.16 |
| Post                           | 7.53    | 0.76 | 7.71 | 1.13 |
| Follow-up                      | 7.21    | 0.92 | 6.69 | 1.19 |

| IDCS Communication Skills |Baseline | 5.65 | 1.52 | 5.86 | 1.52 |
| Post                           | 6.44    | 1.71 | 6.33 | 1.09 |
| Follow-up                      | 6.01    | 1.10 | 6.23 | 1.74 |

| IDCS Positive Resolution |Baseline | 3.12 | 1.2 | 2.70 | 1.17 |
| Post                           | 3.64    | 1.50 | 3.81 | 0.95 |
| Follow-up                      | 3.98    | 1.19 | 3.50 | 1.24 |

| IDCS Negative Resolution* |Baseline | 3.18 | 1.53 | 2.23 | 1.20 |
| Post                           | 2.96    | 1.04 | 2.71 | 0.85 |
| Follow-up                      | 2.85    | 0.96 | 2.81 | 0.86 |

| IDCS Commitment |Baseline | 6.71 | 0.91 | 6.86 | 0.99 |
| Post                           | 7.22    | 0.72 | 7.00 | 0.90 |
| Follow-up                      | 7.36    | 0.83 | 7.19 | 0.82 |

| IDCS Partner Satisfaction |Baseline | 6.53 | 1.31 | 6.53 | 0.95 |
| Post                           | 7.11    | 0.97 | 6.80 | 0.86 |
| Follow-up                      | 7.21    | 0.96 | 7.00 | 0.90 |

Take home: Religious HFA and Christian HFA equal in treating community couples in couple therapy.
Help Religious Organizations Preach and Teach Forgiveness, Especially REACH Forgiveness

Preach and Teach REACH Forgiveness:

A Practical Resource for Promoting Forgiveness in Your Congregation

Everett L. Worthington, Jr.

Virginia Commonwealth University

Prepared initially for the Episcopal Preaching Foundation
May 19, 2017 (Given to Participants of PEP1 and PEP2)
Revised July 18, 2017 and September 1, 2017

Take home: Market to early adopters and opinion leaders.