Magazine of the Center for the Development of Peace and Well-Being

Greater Good

Fall 2004

Volume I, Issue 2

Why to Forgive

Better health, stronger bonds, and a more peaceful world. Four authors, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, remind us not to forget to forgive.

Plus: Empathy and the Economy: An Interview with Robert Reich

$5.95 US

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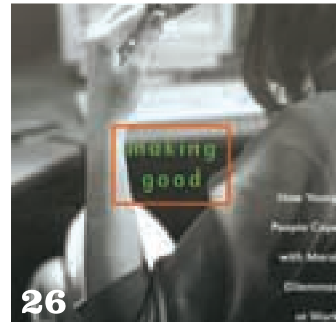

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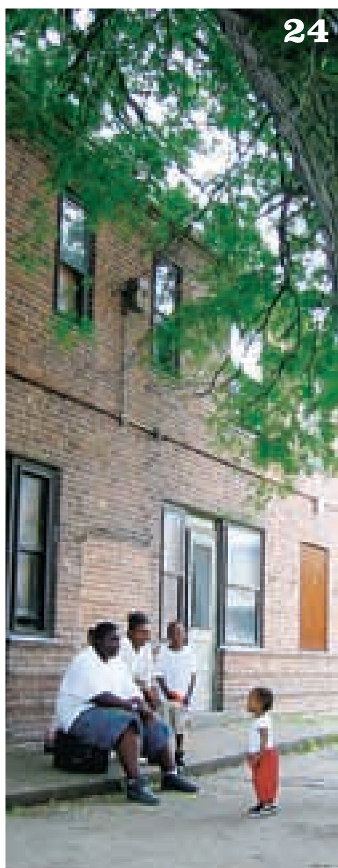

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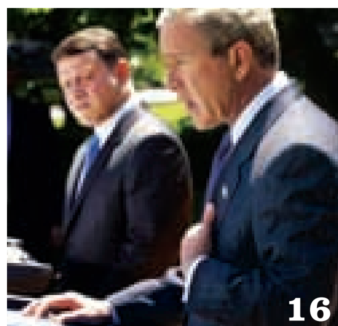
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from the editors

Since the launch of the Center for the Development of Peace and Well-Being and *Greater Good* magazine, people often ask if we study international peace and diplomacy. It's a fair assumption, given our name. But our center has its roots in psychology and education, not peace and conflict studies.

Yet we're quick to emphasize how these fields overlap. So many of the principles vital to peace between individuals—tolerance, empathy, humility—apply to peace between groups as well. Indeed, a main mission of this magazine is to show how the great potential for human goodness extends outward from the individual psyche to the larger society.

Our first issue was devoted to the topic of compassion, a primary virtue for the greater good. We have chosen forgiveness as the theme of this issue's symposium because it illustrates the far-reaching power of compassion in action. Any exploration of the psychology of peace must appreciate forgiveness's role in maintaining harmonious bonds between friends, romantic partners, community groups, and political bodies.

The four essays in the forgiveness symposium form a continuum from the interpersonal to the international. In the lead essay, Everett Worthington, a psychologist and the director of the Campaign for Forgiveness Research, ties together a range of scientific findings on the benefits of forgiveness to physical and mental health, and to the health of relationships. This research indicates that relinquishing grudges large and small makes life more personally gratifying, and strengthens our connections to family, friends, and even strangers.

Knowing about forgiveness's benefits doesn't necessarily make it any easier to do. That's why forgiveness researchers have focused not only on the rewards of forgiveness but on successful methods for teaching it. In his essay, Fred Luskin describes the method that he and his colleagues at Stanford University have developed and tested to help people let go of lifelong grudges. His impressive results, and the stories behind them, inspire hope that most anyone can learn to replace grudges with feelings of hope and compassion.

As Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes in his essay, learning to forgive can be vital to the survival of an entire country. Forgiveness played a prominent role in South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which exposed the horrors of apartheid so that citizens could begin to confront them and move on. Drawing on the example of South Africa, Archbishop Tutu explains how forgiveness is often both a moral duty and a political necessity.

Finally, psychiatrist Aaron Lazare brings the discussion of forgiveness into the arena of international relations. Lazare dissects the elements of a successful apology and, applying his analysis to the Abu Ghraib prison scandal in Iraq, shows how some apologies can inspire forgiveness and reconciliation between one-time enemies—while failed attempts at apology may only make things worse.

Integral to each of these essays are stories of people who chose forgiveness over anger and retribution. Their decisions may seem heroic or even illogical. But the ability to forgive often improved their personal health, relationships with others, and practically or symbolically promoted peace between cultures. They repaid cruelty with empathy, transforming tragedy into hope.

These instances of forgiveness are admirable, but they are not aberrations. Some of the people featured in this issue were simply following their instincts. In other cases, people struggled with forgiveness but gradually learned to appreciate its value. The experiences of both groups confirm what scientists have found repeatedly in recent years: forgiveness is adaptive and healthy, and it can be taught to people in most any circumstance.

In our war-torn world and divided nation, there is a growing hunger for any knowledge or skills that might help reduce conflict. Of course, no cure exists for all the problems that plague this planet, just as there's no easy fix for a damaged relationship. But the science and stories featured in this issue of *Greater Good* convey that forgiveness is a vital step in the right direction.

Dacher Keltner
Jason Marsh

Greater Good

Magazine of the Center for the Development of Peace and Well-Being

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Greater Good (ISBN #1553-3239) explores current trends in the study and practice of peace and well-being, including subtopics such as compassion, empathy, altruism, resilience, and conflict resolution. It fuses innovative research with inspiring stories, promoting dialogue between social scientists and parents, teachers, community leaders, activists, and policy makers.

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THE CENTER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEACE AND WELL-BEING

in brief

Wealth and health

IT MAY BE A CULTURAL CLICHÉ to say that money can't buy happiness. But it's also the conclusion psychologists Ed Diener and Martin E.P. Seligman reached after an exhaustive scientific review.

Diener and Seligman analyzed over 150 studies on happiness, life satisfaction, and various other signs of well-being, and published their findings in the July issue of *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*. They determined that traditional economic indicators of wealth, such as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and average per capita income, don't accurately reflect mental health and happiness within industrialized nations. For instance, although the GDP has risen dramatically over the past several decades in the United States, life satisfaction has not risen in tandem. In fact, there has been an equally dramatic increase in depression over the same time period. Americans are now 10 times more likely to experience clinical depression or anxiety than they were 50 years ago.

"Economics currently plays a central role in policy decisions because it is assumed that money increases well-being," write Diener and Seligman. "But money is an inexact surrogate for well-being." They note that more wealth does increase well-being if it helps people meet basic needs that they couldn't meet before. But this correlation between wealth and well-being disappears as a society becomes more prosperous.

Because economic markers alone are a poor approximation of well-being, Diener and Seligman call for a different system of indicators to follow national and personal well-being over time. Such a system would track the factors that previous research has shown to be crucial to well-being. These include low divorce rates, high rates of membership in voluntary organizations, high governmental effectiveness and stability, and high levels of work satisfaction. Such a system, they hope, would provide governments, organizations, and individuals with a road map for the true pursuit of happiness.

—Christine Carter

The right touch

ONE OF THE FIRST LESSONS children learn in school is to keep their hands to themselves.

Mikki

The reason seems clear: no one wants to be touched inappropriately by a classmate—or a teacher.

But a growing body of research points to constructive methods of touching as well. Much of this research has focused on the positive effects of touch in close relationships—its role in forming secure, soothing attachments between an infant and a parent, for instance. Now a study has found that certain kinds of touch between strangers can provide a useful and effective means of communicating positive reinforcement.

As he reports in the August issue of *Social Psychology of Education*, French psychologist Nicolas Guéguen instructed the professor of a 120-person statistics class to give the same verbal encouragement to any student who volunteered to solve a problem at the front of his classroom. But to a randomly selected group of students within the class, the professor also gave a slight tap on the upper arm when speaking to them. Guéguen compared the volunteer rate of those who were touched to those who were not, and found that students who were touched were significantly more likely to volunteer again. In fact, roughly 28 percent of those who were touched volunteered again, compared with about nine percent of those who were not.

Drawing on previous research in the field, Guéguen speculates that a touch to the arm may have infused participants with a feeling of self-confidence that motivated their positive behavior. "It is possible that touching, coming from a high-status person, is perceived as a sign of distinction," he writes. "The effect would have been to overcome the inhibition of correcting the exercise in front of his/her classmates."

Of course, as Guéguen notes, "touching tends to have become taboo in the American school system," and valid fears about abusive forms of touching rightfully limit contact within the classroom. But these findings suggest that as we define and redefine the limits for this contact, we should not neglect the sense of comfort and confidence that might come through the right kinds of touch between strangers.

—Jamie Rowen

How to befriend people you don't like

FIFTY YEARS AGO, Gordon Allport recast the study of prejudice and stereotypes with his influential "contact theory," which held that contact between members of different groups could reduce prejudice. While psychologists have tested this theory and sought out the right conditions for friendships to form across group boundaries, the question of how intergroup contact actually works is more of a mystery. What is it about those friendships that helps break down prejudices?

As they report in a recent issue of the *Personality Social Psychology Bulletin*, researchers from Australia, the United Kingdom, and Italy considered this question in Northern Ireland, a profoundly segregated community with a 300-year history of violent conflict. They asked large groups of college-age students and randomly selected adults about their friendships across Catholic and Protestant lines. Not surprisingly, they found that people with friends in rival groups, and even those with friends who had friends in rival groups, showed less prejudice.

But they also found something else. Based on the participants' own reports, the researchers determined that the key ingredient in reduced prejudice was reduced anxiety.

Think about it this way: If you hold negative views of a group, when you come into contact with a member of that group, you are more likely to be nervous—whether it's about saying the wrong thing, offending someone, or being treated badly yourself. The researchers found that when someone befriends a particular member of a rival group, that person becomes less anxious—and more comfortable about interacting with other members of this group in general.

The study suggests the possibility of a ripple effect: Seeing friends act comfortably around people from other groups could make someone less anxious and encourage him to initiate an intergroup friendship himself. One successful way to combat prejudice, it seems, is by serving as a model to others.

—Allison Briscoe-Smith

Q & A

The Cost of Apathy

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT REICH

Perian Flaherty

by Jason Marsh

The wealthiest one percent of Americans now earns more after taxes than the bottom 40 percent. Its average after-tax income increased by 200 percent between 1979 and 2000. During the same period, the bottom fifth of Americans saw its income rise by just nine percent.

Long before John Edwards spoke of "two Americas," Robert Reich was one of the most prominent critics of these growing inequities. In recent years, Reich, who served as Secretary of Labor in the first Clinton administration and is now a professor of social and economic policy at Brandeis University, has written widely about the challenges middle-class Americans face in a new, globalized economy.

Reich's writings and lectures stand apart from those of other critics who focus on inequality. He doesn't settle for easy condemnations of outsourcing or offshoring, nor does he think such effects of globalization can be easily undone. At the same time, he rejects the idea that these changes need result in greater disparities of wealth. Instead, Reich attributes rising inequality not only to structural economic changes but to how Americans, and their policy makers, have failed to meet the social challenges posed by the new economy. While others point fingers at the government or big corporations, Reich also holds a mirror up to American society.

To Reich, rising inequality is intertwined with a breakdown of Americans' social contract—the norms, mores, and values that dictate their mutual commitments and responsibilities to one another. His own policy prescriptions for combating inequality demand that Americans regain "a sense that we have some common bonds—that we have responsibilities to one another because we are of each other," as he said in a recent lecture, "Social Justice and Social Empathy: Where Did They Go? How Can We Regain Them?" which was sponsored by the Center for the Development of Peace and Well-Being at the University of California, Berkeley.

Reich doesn't shy away from language, like "social empathy," that's usually employed by social science researchers. Nor is he reluctant to wear his partisan political hat: He served as an economic advisor to John Kerry during the presidential campaign, and his latest book is *Reason: Why Liberals Will Win the Battle for America*. But, as was the case in his Berkeley lecture, Reich seems uniquely comfortable in the region where these fields overlap, exploring the political implications of our emotions and values. He recently discussed this theme with *Greater Good*.

Greater Good: What does empathy have to do with inequality?

Robert Reich: Any society depends upon empathy in order for people to be able to answer the question, 'What do we owe one another as members of the same society?' Indeed, without empathy, the very meaning of a society is up for grabs. Margaret Thatcher famously declared that there was no such thing as a society. There might be a nation, for strictly political purposes, there might be a culture, in terms of tradition, but a society, she felt, was a construct without meaning. I disagree. I think that we have all sorts of societies. Some of them are very tight: clubs, religious affiliations, friendships, neighborhoods. Some are much larger, extending outwards in concentric circles from us as individuals. And we are bound by feelings of empathy and affiliation. Those feelings inspire us to come to the aid of those within these concentric circles.

GG: It's easy to point to indicators of rising inequality. What do you see as the indicators of dwindling empathy?

RR: Rising inequality itself is an indicator of a breakdown in the social contract. It means that for a variety of reasons, those who have resources—and political power—are not taking steps to ensure that large numbers of others in the same society have opportunities to better themselves, and have the resources they need to become full-fledged members of that society. Wide inequality suggests that we may not be living in the same society any longer. In fact, it could be argued that we're drifting into sep-

> “The art of leadership is the art of enabling people to understand their commonalities and to build empathy upon that sense of commonality.”

arate societies: one very rich, one very poor, and one a middle class that's increasingly anxious and frustrated.

GG: How did this happen? Is it a new phenomenon?

RR: It's happened before in the United States in the 1880s and 1890s, the so-called Gilded Age. Inequality of wealth and opportunity were extreme. In happened again in the 1920s—not quite to the same degree as the 1880s and 1890s, but inequality was very wide in the '20s. It is happening now for a third time.

Now we can have an interesting debate about cause and effect—that is, is inequality the effect of dwindling empathy and a reduction in social solidarity? Or is inequality somehow causing it, to the extent that people who are very wealthy no longer come in contact with people who are poor and no longer feel the empathy that comes from contact. It's probably both.

GG: So what are some of the broader factors contributing to widening inequality today?

RR: Well, technology and globalization are the two major structural causes. The more technologically sophisticated our economy becomes, and the more globalized, those people who are well-educated can take advantage of technology and globalization to do continuously better. Those who are not well-educated and lack social connections find that technology and globalization reduce their economic security, replace their jobs, and condemn them to a fairly menial existence.

GG: If we're not part of that group, why should we care about inequality?

RR: In very narrow, selfish terms, we might care because those of us who are well-positioned might not want to bring up our children in a society that is sharply divided between rich and poor. That kind of society has a very difficult time coming to decisions, because the winners and the losers are so clearly differentiated. Democracy itself can be undermined. Violence, crime, and demagoguery can result. In other words, it may be increasingly unpleasant and dysfunctional. The experience of living in a country with a lot of disparities of wealth, income, and opportunity may be unpleasant. And that society as a democracy may be increasingly dysfunctional.

GG: With changes in wealth resulting from broad technological shifts and globalization, what can people do on a local or individual level to address growing inequality?

RR: Many things. There are many public policies at the federal, state, and local levels that can reduce inequality without necessarily reducing the benefits of technology and globalization. I teach an entire course about these policy areas. They range from improved education, job training, and early childhood education all the way through the earned income tax credit, minimum wage, macroeconomic policies, and many others. There's no magic bullet. But it is important that the United State becomes more aware of what is happening and why widening inequality poses a danger. We don't have to be economic determinists and throw up our hands and assume it's inevitable. There are steps that can be taken.

GG: Are there policy steps that can be taken to address dwindling empathy in particular, that would in some ways motivate people to care more about inequality in the first place?

RR: Yes. We know from history in this country and elsewhere that empathy is related to facing common challenges. The more people feel that they are in the same boat, the more they empathize with one another. Do we face a common challenge today? Of course. Terrorism. Global warming. An aging population. All of these and many others are common problems we face. The art of leadership is the art of enabling people to understand their commonalities and to build empathy upon that sense of commonality.

GG: And do you see that art practiced by our public leaders today?

RR: Not nearly enough. Public leaders today—that is, elected officials—tend to be too dependent on public opinion polls. And public opinion polls only register where people are right now. You can't lead people to where they already are, because they're already there. The essence of leadership is leading them to where they're not, but where they could be.

GG: So if people aren't in a position right away to be public leaders or effect policy change, what do you hope will change in their consciousness? What could they start to do tomorrow?

RR: I hope they have a sense of their own power, and their capacity to inspire others. Too many people in this country today are discouraged, if not cynical, about the possibilities for reform and progressive change. And yet the climate is ripe for it. People are waking up to some of the large problems—the social inequities in this country and around the world—that are beginning to haunt us. If we do nothing, they will simply get worse. An individual working alone has limited capacity, obviously. But individuals coming together—in their communities, in their neighborhoods, in their small societies—and linking up with others in other communities and neighborhoods can accomplish a huge amount.

Jason Marsh is a co-editor of *Greater Good*.

Everett L. Worthington, Jr. has dedicated his career to the study of forgiveness. He has found that it carries tremendous health and social benefits—and he's taken his research to heart.

The New Science of FORGIVENESS

When Chris Carrier was 10 years old, he was abducted near his Florida home, taken into the swamps, stabbed repeatedly in the chest and abdomen with an ice pick, and then shot through the temple with a handgun. Remarkably, hours after being shot, he awoke with a headache, unable to see out of one eye. He stumbled to the highway and stopped a car, which took him to the hospital.

Years later, a police officer told Chris that the man suspected of his abduction lay close to death. "Confront him," suggested the officer. Chris did more than that. He comforted his attacker during the man's final weeks of life, and ultimately forgave him, bringing peace to them both.

Chris Carrier's act of forgiveness might seem unfathomable to some, an act of extreme charity or even foolishness. Indeed, our culture seems to perceive forgiveness as a sign of weakness, submission, or both. Often we find it easier to stigmatize or denigrate our enemies than to empathize with or forgive them. And in a society as competitive as ours, people may hesitate to forgive because they don't want to relinquish the upper hand in a relationship. "It is much more agreeable to offend and later ask forgiveness than to be offended and grant forgiveness," said the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. I think many people today are inclined to agree with him.

Surely now is a time when the world could use some more forgiveness. Americans resent the Muslim world for September 11. Some hold a grudge against President Bush and supporters of the war in Iraq, while others begrudge war protestors. Iraqis and much of the Middle East feel humiliated by the United States. Diplomats in the United Nations bicker and insult each other, igniting or re-igniting national rivalries. Still, many people hesitate to ask for or grant forgiveness when they feel they have nothing to gain in return.

But a new line of research suggests something different. This research has shown that Chris Carrier's story isn't an anomaly. Forgiveness isn't just practiced by saints or martyrs, nor does it benefit only its recipients. Instead, studies are finding connections between forgiveness and physical, mental, and spiritual health, and evidence that it plays a key role in the health of families, communities, and nations. Though this research is still young, it has already produced some exciting findings—and raised some important questions.

Forgiveness and health

Perhaps the most basic question to address first is, What is forgiveness? Though most people probably feel they know what forgiveness means, researchers differ about what actually constitutes forgiveness. I've come to believe that how we define forgiveness usually depends on context. In cases where we hope to forgive a person with whom we do not want a continuing relationship, we usually define forgiveness as reducing or eliminating resentment and motivations toward revenge. My colleagues Michael McCullough, Kenneth Rachal, and I have defined forgiveness in close relationships to include more than merely getting rid of the negative. The forgiving person becomes less motivated to retaliate against someone who offended him or her, and less motivated to remain estranged from that person. Instead, he becomes more motivated by feelings of goodwill, despite the offender's hurtful actions. In a close relationship, we hope, forgiveness will not only move us past negative emotions, but move us toward a net positive feeling. It doesn't mean forgetting or pardoning an offense.

Unforgiveness, by contrast, seems to be a negative emotional state where an offended person maintains feelings of resentment, hostility, anger, and hatred toward the person who offended him. I began with Chris Carrier's story because it is such a clear example of forgiveness. Although he never forgot or condoned what his attacker did to him, he did replace his negative emotions and desire for retribution with feelings of care and compassion, and a drive toward conciliation.

People can deal with injustices in many ways. They don't have to decide to forgive, and they don't necessarily need to change their emotions. But if they don't change their response in some way, unforgiveness can take its toll on physical, mental, relational, and even spiritual health. By contrast, new research suggests that forgiveness can benefit people's health.

In one study, Charlotte vanOyen Witvliet, a psychologist at Hope College, asked people to think about someone who had hurt, mistreated, or offended them. While they thought about this person and his past offense, she monitored their blood pressure, heart rate, facial muscle tension, and sweat gland activity. To ruminate on an old transgression is to practice unforgiveness. Sure enough, in Witvliet's research, when people

recalled a grudge, their physical arousal soared. Their blood pressure and heart rate increased, and they sweated more. Ruminating about their grudges was stressful, and subjects found the rumination unpleasant. It made them feel angry, sad, anxious, and less in control. Witvliet also asked her subjects to try to empathize with their offenders or imagine forgiving them. When they practiced forgiveness, their physical arousal coasted downward. They showed no more of a stress reaction than normal wakefulness produces.

In my own lab, we wanted to determine whether people's stress levels are related to their ability to forgive a romantic partner. We measured levels of cortisol in the saliva of 39 people who rated their relationship as either terrific or terrible. Cortisol is a hormone that metabolizes fat for quick response to stress (and after the stress ends, deposits the fat back where it is easily accessible—around the waist). People with poor (or recently failed) relationships tended to have higher baseline levels of cortisol, and they also scored worse on a test that measures their general willingness to forgive. When they were asked to think about their relationship, they had more cortisol reactivity—that is, their stress hormone jumped. Those jumps in stress were highly correlated with their unforgiving attitudes toward their partner. People with very happy relationships were not without stresses and strains between them. But forgiving their partner's faults seemed to keep their physical stress in the normal range.

The physical benefits of forgiveness seem to increase with age, according to a recent study led by Loren Toussaint, a psychologist at Luther College in Iowa. Toussaint—along with David Williams, Marc Musick, and Susan Everson—conducted a national survey of nearly 1,500 Americans, asking the degree to which each person practiced and experienced forgiveness (of others, of self, and even if they thought they had experienced forgiveness by God). Participants also reported on their physical and mental health. Toussaint and his colleagues found that older and middle-aged people forgave others more often than did young adults and also felt more forgiven by God. What's more, they found a significant relationship between forgiving others and positive health among middle-aged and older Americans. People over 45 years of age who had forgiven others reported greater satisfaction with their lives and were less likely to report symptoms of psychological distress such as feelings of nervousness, restlessness, and sadness.

Why might that relationship between unforgiveness and negative health symptoms exist? Consider that hostility is a central part of unforgiveness. Hostility also has been found to be the part of Type A behavior that seems to have the most pernicious health effects, such as a heightened risk of cardiovascular disease. Forsaking a grudge may also free a person from hostility and all its unhealthy consequences.

It probably isn't just hostility and stress that link unforgiveness and poor health. According to a recent review of the literature on forgiveness and health that my colleague Michael Scherer and I recently published, unforgiveness might compromise the immune system at many levels. For instance, our review suggests that unforgiveness might throw off the production of important hormones and even disrupt the way our cells fight off infections, bacteria, and other physical insults like mild periodontal disease.

Forgiveness and relationships

Forgiveness has proven beneficial to a range of relationships, whether it's a family, romantic, or professional relationship. Forgiveness within close relationships is not harder or easier than forgiving absent individuals, such as strangers who rob or assault us or people who have moved away or died since hurting us. In ongoing relationships, forgiveness is simply different. A present partner can make things better or worse. An absent person can't be confronted, but also can't reject a confrontation or compound harms with new hurts.

Johan Karremans and Paul Van Lange in the Netherlands and Caryl Rusbult at the University of North Carolina have, in collaboration and separately, investigated forgiveness in close relationships. People are usually more willing to forgive if they sense trust and a willingness to sacrifice from their partner. The authors predicted that forgiving would be associated with greater well-being, especially in relationships of strong rather than weak commitment. They figured that people in highly committed relationships have more to lose if the relationship fails and so would be willing to make certain sacrifices. They used several methods, such as having people fill out questionnaires, recall past relationships, and assess their present relationships. What they found was that if people were unwilling to sacrifice at times—

A STORY OF FORGIVENESS

Life Science

by Everett L. Worthington, Jr.

The phone rang. My brother Mike's voice was shaky on the other end of the line. "Mom's been murdered."

That morning, Mike had found our 78-year-old mother, Frances Worthington, bludgeoned to death in the doorway to her bedroom. She had apparently interrupted burglars in mid-robbery.

Rage grew inside of me during the seven-hour drive to Tennessee. It swelled as my brother, sister, and I talked about the murder scene. That night I was so angry I couldn't sleep. Around 3 a.m., I began to consider the irony of my situation. I had studied forgiveness scientifically for seven years, but all day the word "forgiveness" hadn't even crossed my mind. I wondered, "Could the forgiveness methods I've taught other people actually help me?"

By this time in 1996, colleagues and I had helped about 1,000 people experience emotional forgiveness by replacing negative, unforgiving emotions with positive emotions like empathy, sympathy, compassion, and love. The last thing I wanted to do was feel anything positive about the murder, but I knew that my anger would solve nothing. Healing could only come from changing my emotions.

I systematically imagined who the perpetrator was and what he must have experienced. I tried to understand his fear and shame at being caught by my mother, and I tried to extend compassion toward him. My own rage was gradually replaced by empathy; my resentment gave way to emotional forgiveness.

Forgiveness is seldom a once-and-for-all-time event. My emotions were complicated when, in the following weeks, a youth confessed, then retracted, then was not arraigned after a grand jury determined that the evidence in the case had been contaminated.

I struggled with this news, but forgiveness held as I extended my empathy toward overworked and unappreciated police and courts. I replaced resentment toward the system with compassion. Years later, I learned that the youth had been killed in a fight, and I felt sad. If he had committed the murder but hadn't repented, now he wouldn't have the chance.

if they wanted to exact revenge rather than practice forgiveness—they often suffered conflict, negative emotions, and poor abilities to compromise when inevitable differences arose.

The researchers also found the relationship between forgiveness and well-being in marriages was stronger than in other relationships. Their findings suggest that the more we invest in a relationship, the more we need a repertoire of good strategies to guide it through troubled times—and the more these strategies will prove satisfying and rewarding. Forgiveness is one of those strategies.

Colleagues and I developed a scale to measure forgiveness between people. We asked people to remember a specific offense in which someone harmed them, and then asked about their motives for revenge and for avoiding the perpetrator. People who showed high motivations for revenge and avoidance had lower relationship satisfaction. People who tended to forgive reported greater relationship quality and also greater commitment to relationships.

People who tended to forgive reported greater relationship quality and also greater commitment to relationships.

Frank Fincham and Julie Hall, at the University of Buffalo, and Steven Beach, at the University of Georgia, recently reviewed 17 empirical studies on forgiveness in relationships. By their analysis, the studies suggest that when partners hurt each other, there is often a shift in their goals for their relationship. They might have previously professed undying love and worked hard to cooperate with their partner, but if this partner betrays them, suddenly they become more competitive. They focus on getting even and keeping score instead of enjoying each other. They concentrate on not losing arguments rather than on compromise. They use past transgressions to remind the partner of his or her failings. Forgiveness, assert Fincham and his colleagues, can help restore more benevolent and cooperative goals to relationships.

Learning forgiveness

These findings suggest that forgiveness has benefits like high self-esteem, better moods, and happier relationships. But skeptical scientists will be quick to ask, "Couldn't it simply be that when people feel good about themselves, feel happy, and feel satisfied with their relationships, they'll forgive almost anything? Could it be that happiness drives forgiveness, not the other way around?" Sometimes that might well be the case. But one way to test this idea is to see whether people—cheerful, sad, and everywhere in between—could learn to become more forgiving and, if they do, how that might affect their mental and physical health. This would imply that forgiveness could be possible for almost anyone, not just the perpetually happy and well-adjusted.

Interventions have been designed for partners seeking to make their marriages better, for parents, victims of incest, men offended because their partner aborted a pregnancy, people in recovery for drug and alcohol problems, divorced partners, and love-deprived adolescents.

Through all these interventions, no one has yet found a silver bullet that helps people forgive instantly. But evidence so far suggests that people of various backgrounds and temperaments can learn to forgive. For instance, Robert Enright has developed a specific 20-step intervention that he has tested rigorously, with encouraging results. In one study, men who reported being hurt by their partner's decision to have an abortion went through 12 90-minute weekly sessions designed to help them forgive. These men showed a significant increase in their levels of forgiveness and significant reductions in their levels of anxiety, anger, and grief when compared with a control group. Enright has reported similar results with other populations, including victims of incest.

Not everyone responds equally to these interventions, and a lot of work still must be done to determine exactly what makes forgiveness interventions most effective. British researchers Peter Woodruff and Tom Farrow are doing some of this important work. Their research suggests that the areas in the brain associated with forgiveness are often deep in the emotional centers, in the region known as the limbic system, rather than in the areas of the cortex usually associated with reasoned judgments. In one study, they asked people to judge the fairness of a transgression and then consider whether to forgive it or empathize with the transgressor. Ten indi-

viduals evaluated several social scenarios while the researchers recorded images of their brain activity. Whether people empathized or forgave, similar areas in the emotion centers of the brain lit up. When those same people thought about the fairness of the same transgression, though, the emotion centers stopped being as active. This could be a clue for interventionists. To help people forgive, help them steer clear of dwelling on how fair a transgression was or how just a solution might be. Instead, get people to see things from the other person's perspective.

There are other clues for encouraging forgiveness. Charlotte Witvliet, Nathaniel Wade, Jack Berry, and I have conducted a set of three studies that show that when people feel positive emotions toward transgressors—such as when they receive apologies or restitution for offenses—they experience changes in physiology, including lowered blood pressure, heart rate, and sweat activity, as well as lowered tension in the frown muscles of the face. When they experience positive emotions toward transgressors, they are also more likely to forgive them. Sincere apologies helped people forgive and calm down. Getting fair restitution on top of an apology magnified the effect. Insincere or incomplete apologies actually riled people up more.

It's important to stress again that forgiveness usually takes time. In fact, in a meta-analysis of all research that measured the impact of forgiveness interventions, Nathaniel Wade and I found that a factor as simple as the amount of time someone spent trying to forgive was highly related to the actual degree of forgiveness experienced.

So, the question I posed at the beginning of this section—does forgiveness drive happiness or vice versa?—seems at least in part answerable by saying that forgiveness is not necessarily something that just comes naturally to people with high self-esteem and stable relationships. Instead, it is something all different kinds of people can learn. With the right kind of practice, its benefits can be available to most of us.

Teaching people to forgive raises some important questions. Are some offenses so heinous that they ought never to be forgiven? Are there times when justice should trump forgiveness? (See sidebar.) Justice and forgiveness do clash at times. I do not advocate forgiving under all circumstances (unless a person's religion dictates it). But I know that a sincere apology, restitution, or a punishment imposed by the proper authorities can often make it easier for victims to grant forgiveness. The big transgressions are not necessarily "unforgivable" because they are big. Instead, big transgressions are often the ones that, if they are ever to be surmounted, must be forgiven.

What we don't know

While we have learned a lot over the past few years, we also realize that our knowledge fills only a tea cup when there is a giant swimming pool of unknowns awaiting discovery.

We know little about how children forgive or how they can learn to forgive. We know that not everyone responds equally to the interventions to promote forgiveness. Who does and doesn't benefit by different forgiveness interventions? How long should interventions last?

We still need to discover how forgiveness can be better promoted in society at large. How can schools, parents, and sport coaches work together in communities to foster cooperation and forgiveness instead of violence? Given the role of forgiveness in religious traditions, should youth programs be created to promote forgiveness at churches, mosques, or synagogues? Can the media serve as a tool for effective education, or can forgiveness education work as an adjunct to therapy by mental health professionals?

Conflicts and transgressions seem inevitable as humans rub against each other. The sharp corners of our personalities irritate and scuff against those with whom we interact on a daily basis. But if the new science of forgiveness has proven anything, it's that these offenses don't need to condemn us to a life of hurt and aggravation. For years, political and religious figures, such as Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa, have demonstrated the beauty and effectiveness of forgiveness in action. Through a harmony of research and practice, I trust that we can continue to foster forgiveness—and continue to study the effects scientifically—to bring health to individuals, relationships, and societies as a whole.

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Is Anything Unforgivable?

by Jason Marsh

Forgiveness may benefit health and relationships, but that doesn't mean people can—or should—forgive all offenses. Some acts, such as the terrorist attacks of September 11, are so vicious that forgiving them seems improbable—and perhaps even immoral.

Judaism, for instance, teaches that God cannot forgive a sin against another person unless the victim grants forgiveness, making it impossible to receive forgiveness for murder. By that reasoning, the September 11 attacks would certainly seem to be unforgivable.

But some researchers, like psychologist Ervin Staub, have suggested that forgiveness is necessary after acts of murder or even genocide in order to promote healing, reconciliation, and psychological well-being. This idea is consistent with new findings by psychologists Loren Toussaint and Jon Webb.

Toussaint and Webb surveyed more than 400 people six to nine months after September 11, asking the respondents how forgiving they felt toward the terrorists, themselves, and toward other people in general. Their results showed that, not surprisingly, people found it significantly more difficult to forgive the terrorists than to forgive themselves or others. Still, Toussaint and Webb found that feelings of forgiveness toward the terrorists were more common than they had expected—42 percent of respondents seemed willing to consider forgiving the terrorists. Those feelings of forgiveness held regardless of whether respondents reported being directly or indirectly affected by the September 11 attacks.

What's more, people who felt more forgiving toward the terrorists in general reported significantly lower levels of depression and anger and fewer symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder than people who did not. Toussaint said he was "surprised and amazed" by respondents' ability to forgive.

"You can think of forgiveness as a healing ointment for the incredible wounds people suffer from events as heinous as September 11," he said. "I'm not advocating turning around and forgiving on September 12. But six months later, a fair number of people in our survey suggested that that's what they were at least starting to do."

Truth +

Forgiveness is not just personally rewarding, it's also a political necessity, says Archbishop Desmond Tutu. He explains how forgiveness allowed South Africans to imagine a new beginning—one based on honesty, peace, and compassion.

Malusi Mpumlwana was a young enthusiastic anti-apartheid activist and a close associate of Steve Biko in South Africa's crucial Black Consciousness Movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s. He was involved in vital community development and health projects with impoverished and often demoralized rural communities. As a result, he and his wife were under strict surveillance, constantly harassed by the ubiquitous security police. They were frequently held in detention without trial.

I remember well a day Malusi gave the security police the slip and came to my office in Johannesburg, where I was serving as general secretary of the South African Council of Churches. He told me that during his frequent stints in detention, when the security police routinely tortured him, he used to think, "These are God's children and yet they are behaving like animals. They need us to help them recover the humanity they have lost." For our struggle against apartheid to be successful, it required remarkable young people like Malusi.

All South Africans were less than whole because of apartheid. Blacks suffered years of cruelty and oppression, while many privileged whites became more uncaring, less compassionate, less humane, and therefore less human. Yet during these years of suffering and inequality, each South African's humanity was still tied to that of all others, white or black, friend or enemy. For our own dignity can only be measured in the way we treat others. This was Malusi's extraordinary insight.

I saw the power of this idea when I was serving as chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. This was the commission that the post-apartheid government, headed by our president, Nelson Mandela, had established to move us beyond the cycles of retribution and violence that had plagued so many other countries during their transitions from oppression to democracy. The commission granted perpetrators of political crimes the opportunity to appeal for amnesty by giving a full and truthful account of their actions and, if they so chose, an opportunity to ask for forgiveness—opportunities that some took and others did not. The commission also gave victims of political crimes a chance to tell their stories, hear confessions, and thus unburden themselves from the pain and suffering they had experienced.

For our nation to heal and become a more humane place, we had to embrace our enemies as well as our friends. The same is true the world over. True enduring peace—between countries, within a country, within a community, within a family—requires real reconciliation between former enemies and even between loved ones who have struggled with one another.

How could anyone really think that true reconciliation could avoid a proper confrontation? After a husband and wife or two friends have quarreled, if they merely seek to gloss over their differences or metaphorically paper over the cracks, they must not be surprised when they are soon at it again, perhaps more violently than before, because they have tried to heal their ailment lightly.

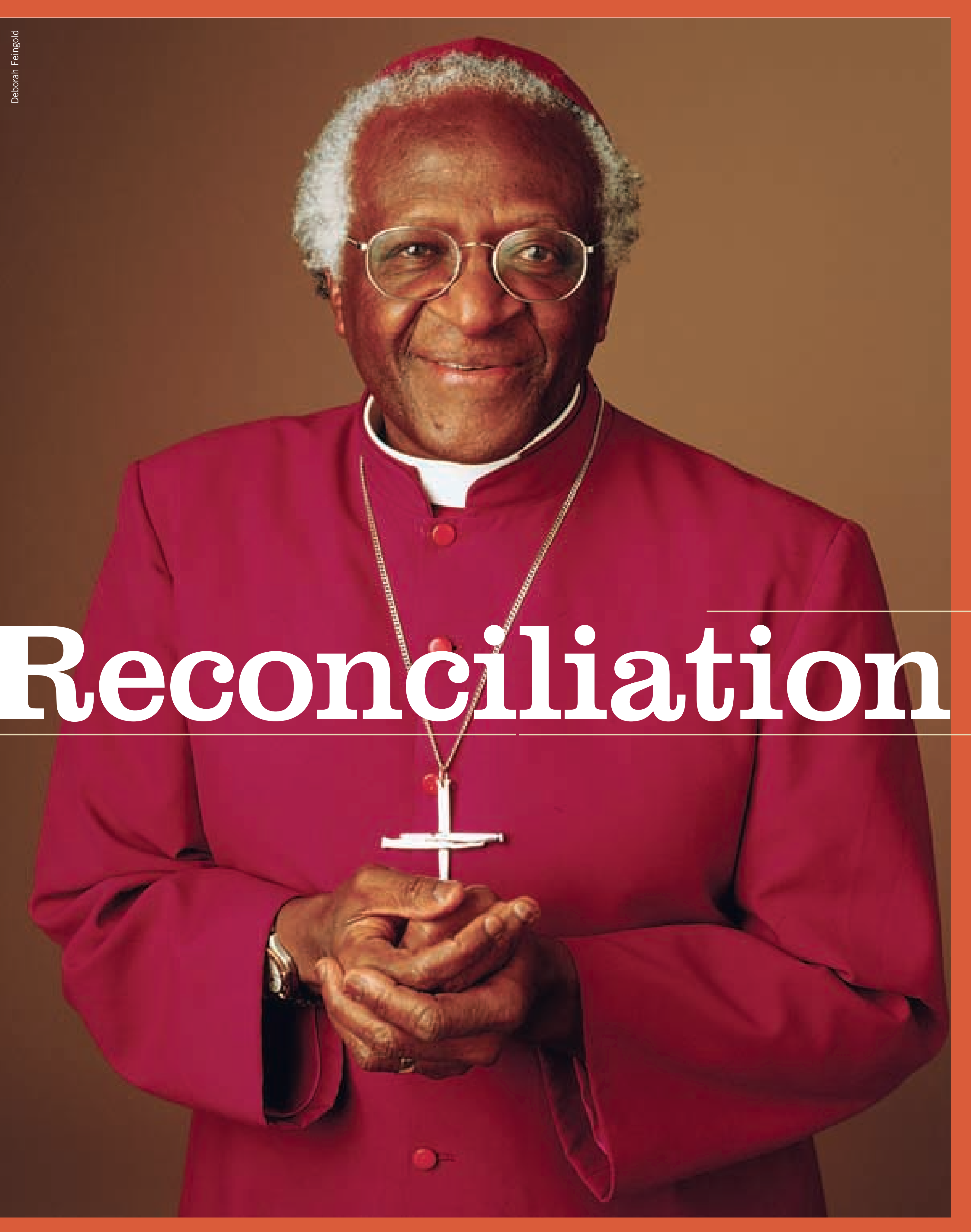
True reconciliation is based on forgiveness, and forgiveness is based on true confession, and confession is based on penitence, on contrition, on sorrow for what you have done. We know that when a husband and wife have quarreled, one of them must be ready to say the most difficult words in any language, "I'm sorry," and the other must be ready to forgive for there to be a future for their relationship. This is true between parents and children, between siblings, between neighbors, and between friends. Equally, confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation in the lives of nations are not just airy-fairy religious and spiritual things, nebulous and unrealistic. They are the stuff of practical politics.

Those who forget the past, as many have pointed out, are doomed to repeat it. Just in terms of human psychology, we in South Africa knew that to have blanket amnesty where no disclosure was made would not deal with our past. It is not dealing with the past to say glibly, "Let bygones be bygones," for then they will never be bygones. How can you forgive if you do not know what or whom to forgive? In our commission hearings, we required full disclosure for us to grant amnesty. Only then, we thought, would the process of requesting and receiving forgiveness be healing and transformative for all involved. The commission's record shows that its standards for disclosure and amnesty were high indeed: Of the more than 7,000 applications submitted to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, it granted amnesty to only 849 of them.

Unearthing the truth was necessary not only for the victims to heal, but for the perpetrators as well. Guilt, even unacknowledged guilt, has a negative effect on the guilty. One day it will come out in some form or another. We must be radical. We must go to the root, remove that which is festering, cleanse and cauterize, and then a new beginning is possible.

Forgiveness gives us the capacity to make a new start. That is the power, the rationale, of confession and forgiveness. It is to say, "I have fallen but I am not going to remain there. Please forgive me." And forgiveness is the grace by which you enable the other person to get up, and get up with dignity, to begin anew. Not to forgive leads to bitterness and hatred, which just like self-hatred and self-contempt, gnaw away at the vitals of one's being. Whether hatred is projected out or projected in, it is always corrosive of the human spirit.

We have all experienced how much better we feel after apologies are made and


Deborah Feingold
Reconciliation

Making Change

by Linda Biehl (as told to Jason Marsh)

Eleven years ago, near Cape Town, South Africa, Easy Nofemela, Ntobeko Peni, and two other South African men murdered Amy Biehl, a white American Fulbright scholar. When South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission granted the men amnesty for their crime in 1998, Amy Biehl's parents, Peter and Linda, supported the decision. Today, Easy Nofemela and Ntobeko Peni work with Linda Biehl at the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust in Cape Town, a charity that supports youth education and anti-violence programs in South Africa. Peter Biehl passed away in 2002.

I really do give credit to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the amnesty process. Easy and Ntobeko needed to confess and tell the truth in order to receive amnesty, and there was a genuine quality to their testimony. I had to get outside of myself and realize that these people lived in an environment that I'm not sure I could have survived in. What would you do if you had been oppressed for generations? What would you do? I think you have to ask yourself these questions.

Then there was their desire to actually meet us. They wanted us to be a part of their lives. When I walked into Easy's house for the first time, I showed him a photo of my new grandson. Easy looked at me and said, "Oh, Makhulu!" That means grandmother, wise woman. From that point on, I sort of became Makhulu, not only to some of the township people like Easy and Ntobeko, but also to my own grandchildren in the States.

They really did include us in their lives. I sensed their love, their remorse. I don't know how they do it everyday—how they look at pictures of Amy all around the office, how they look at me. But they've come to terms with that inside themselves.

I do think forgiveness can be a fairly selfish thing. You do it for your own benefit because you don't want to harbor this pain, you don't want to hold this cancer in your body. So you work through it. The reconciliation part is the hard work. It's about making change.

There's a lot of collective guilt, but Amy wanted things to be better here. I sense that she would be right here alongside us, holding their hands. I take great comfort in that; it brings me peace. But we don't really dwell on the past. We dwell on what needs to be done.

accepted, but even still it is so hard for us to say that we are sorry. I often find it difficult to say these words to my wife in the intimacy and love of our bedroom. How much more difficult it is to say these words to our friends, our neighbors, and our coworkers. Asking for forgiveness requires that we take responsibility for our part in the rupture that has occurred in the relationship. We can always make excuses for ourselves and find justifications for our actions, however contorted, but we know that these keep us locked in the prison of blame and shame.

In the story of Adam and Eve, the Bible reminds us of how easy it is to blame others. When God confronted Adam about eating the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, Adam was less than forthcoming in accepting responsibility. Instead he shifted the blame to Eve, and when God turned to Eve, she too tried to pass the buck to the serpent. (The poor serpent had no one left to blame.) So we should not be surprised at how reluctant most people are to acknowledge their responsibility and to say they are sorry. We are behaving true to our ancestors when we blame everyone and everything except ourselves. It is the everyday heroic act that says, "It's my fault. I'm sorry." But without these simple words, forgiveness is much more difficult.

Forgiveness is not about turning a blind eye to the wrong.

Forgiving and being reconciled to our enemies or our loved ones are not about pretending that things are other than they are. It is not about patting one another on the back and turning a blind eye to the wrong. True reconciliation exposes the awfulness, the abuse, the pain, the hurt, the truth. It could even sometimes make things worse. It is a risky undertaking but in the end it is worthwhile, because in the end only an honest confrontation with reality can bring real healing. Superficial reconciliation can bring only superficial healing.

If the wrongdoer has come to the point of realizing his wrong, then one hopes there will be contrition, or at least some remorse or sorrow. This should lead him to confess the wrong he has done and ask for forgiveness. It obviously requires a fair measure of humility. But what happens when such contrition or confession is lacking? Must the victim be dependent on these before she can forgive? There is no question that such a confession is a very great help to the one who wants to forgive, but it is not absolutely indispensable. If the victim could forgive only when the culprit confessed, then the victim would be locked into the culprit's whim, locked into victimhood, no matter her own attitude or intention. That would be palpably unjust.

In the act of forgiveness, we are declaring our faith in the future of a relationship and in the capacity of the wrongdoer to change. We are welcoming a chance to make a new beginning. Because we are not infallible, because we will hurt especially the ones we love by some wrong, we will always need a process of forgiveness and reconciliation to deal with those unfortunate yet all too human breaches in relationships. They are an inescapable characteristic of the human condition.

We have had a jurisprudence, a penology in Africa that was not retributive but restorative. Traditionally, when people quarreled the main intention was not to punish the miscreant but to restore good relations. This was the animating principle of our Truth and Reconciliation Commission. For Africa is concerned, or has traditionally been concerned, about the wholeness of relationships. That is something we need in this world—a world that is polarized, a world that is fragmented, a world that destroys people. It is also something we need in our families and friendships. For retribution wounds and divides us from one another. Only restoration can heal us and make us whole. And only forgiveness enables us to restore trust and compassion to our relationships. If peace is our goal, there can be no future without forgiveness.

Desmond Tutu, the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984, retired as Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, in 1996. He then served as chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This essay draws from his latest book, *God Has a Dream* (Doubleday, 2004). Audio of Archbishop Tutu reading from his book can be heard at www.godhasadream.com.

Jake Oktawiec

Forgiveness takes practice, says Fred Luskin, but it's a skill almost anyone can learn. He shares his research-tested method for helping people give up their grudges.

The Choice to Forgive

Delores was good natured and attractive, but I could see the hurt in her eyes and the sorrow in the way she held herself. Though her parents were successful business people who raised her in an upper middle-class neighborhood, her mother was cold and critical, while her father was quiet and aloof. Delores grew up feeling unattractive and uncared for, and she struggled to create strong relationships.

When Delores was thirty, her fiancé Skip decided he was more interested in sleeping with local waitresses than remaining faithful to her. One day she came home and found him in bed with someone else. She saw this betrayal as an example of how unfair the world was—as proof that she never got a break. She was angry, hurt, confused, scared, and lonely. Skip moved out, but Delores constantly thought of begging him to return.

I met Delores when she came to a class I teach to help people learn to forgive others. She rarely spoke without mentioning at least one of the many people who had done her wrong. When she began the forgiveness training, she doubted it would do her any good. She was there because her therapist had recommended the class.

I've known many people like Delores. There's no shortage of people in the world who've been hurt—by someone they love, by a friend, by someone they didn't know at all. My classes rest on the simple and radical notion that how we react to these hurts is up to us. I teach people to make forgiving choices.

For eight years, I have directed the Stanford Forgiveness Projects, the largest interpersonal forgiveness training research projects ever conducted. In conjunction with this research, I teach classes and workshops that offer a concrete method for forgiving others. I stress that while pain and disappointment are inevitable, they need not control us. It is vital to our health and well-being that we handle what comes our way without getting mired in blame and suffering.

Through my research and teaching, I have found that forgiveness isn't just wishful thinking. It's a trainable skill. My colleagues and I have developed a nine-step method for forgiving almost any conceivable hurt. (See sidebar on next page.) We have tested this method through a series of studies with people who had been lied to, cheated, abandoned, beaten, abused, or had their children murdered. They ranged from neglected spouses to the parents of terrorist victims in Northern Ireland.

What we have found is that forgiveness can reduce stress, blood pressure, anger, depression, and hurt, and it can increase optimism, hope, compassion, and physical vitality. For instance, in a study we conducted with Protestants and Catholics from Northern Ireland who had lost a family member in the violence there, participants reported a 40 percent decline in symptoms of depression after undergoing the forgiveness training. Another study involved people who had suffered a variety of hurts, from business partners lying to them to best friends abandoning them. Six months after their forgiveness training, these people reported a 70 percent drop in the degree of hurt they felt toward the person who had hurt them, and they said they felt more forgiving in general.

This does not mean that forgiveness is ever easy. It certainly wasn't easy for Delores. But forgiveness was something she could learn to practice, even if it didn't come naturally to her. Difficult as it was, Delores's experience is emblematic of many others I've seen through this forgiveness training. Each story is different, but most follow a similar trajectory across the nine steps of forgiveness.

First steps

Delores had mastered the first step before we even met: She determined what she did not like about her fiancé's behavior and knew in gruesome detail how she felt about it. She told anyone willing to listen what a louse Skip was.

Learning the second and third steps of forgiveness was more difficult. Even a year after Skip had cheated on her, Delores was in so much pain that she could not think straight. At first, healing meant only that she would revive her relationship with Skip. It was a struggle for her to want to heal just for her own well-being. In fact, Delores considered taking her fiancé back because she did not think other men would ever find her attractive. In her mind, Skip was the cause of and the solution to her problem.

I stress that while pain and disappointment are inevitable, they need not control us. I teach people to make forgiving choices.

Delores thought forgiving condemned her to being a doormat her entire life. She thought it meant staying with Skip and overlooking his cheating. She suffered under the misconception that forgiving Skip meant condoning his actions, or that it meant forgetting the painful things that had happened.

In truth, these things are very different. Forgiving someone does not mean forgetting or approving of hurtful events in the past. Rather, it means letting go of your hurt and anger, and not making someone endlessly responsible for your emotional well-being. Delores struggled to understand how controlling the way she felt in the present was more important than reviewing what happened to her in the past. She had trained herself to talk relentlessly of her past and of how her parents and poor relationships limited her options and happiness. It was hard for her to understand that constantly focusing on the past was the reason for her current distress.

I emphasized to Delores that she could not change the hurtful parts of the past, but only how much space she rented to them in her mind. By putting less blame on the past, she could change the way she felt in the present.

Glimmers of peace

Delores got her first glimpse at an alternate way of living when she started to practice stress management every time she thought of Skip. She saw, if only for an instant, that breathing slowly and deeply affected how she felt. It gave her body and mind a break and a glimmer of peace. When she did not practice, she remained in a state of upset and continually blamed her ex-fiancé for how she felt. After a few weeks of this pattern, she started to understand that she could reclaim her emotional life.

Delores simultaneously experimented with challenging what I call "unenforceable rules." By "unenforceable rules," I mean the desires we have that we are simply powerless to turn into realities. For instance, while Delores wanted Skip to love and be faithful to her, it was clear there was no way to make him do so. His behavior was a constant reminder that he did what he wanted and she had limited power over him.

Delores also started to examine her theory that her parents had ruined her life. She noticed that she had an "unenforceable rule" that her parents must love her and treat her with kindness. Her parents had treated Delores the best they could, which included some cruelty and lack of care. Her parents' behavior was a reminder that no matter how much Delores wanted things to go her way, she did not have the power to control either the past or other people's behavior. By continuing to insist that her past should somehow change, Delores was dooming herself to endless blame, offense, and suffering.

As the forgiveness training progressed, Delores began to look at her suffering and ask herself what "unenforceable rule" she was trying to enforce. I reminded her that she would not be so upset unless she was trying to change something that was impossible for her to change. Delores saw that trying to change her ex-fiancé's behavior would always lead to pain and helplessness. She saw that just because she hoped for something, it did not have to come true. She understood that she would not be continuously upset if her rules for life were more in line with reality.

Therefore, Delores took it upon herself to create more enforceable rules. She was finally able to ask herself the revealing question, "What do I really want?" What she wanted was happiness, confidence, and peace of mind—things only she could provide for herself. Through asking this question, she saw that Skip and her parents did not have to remain in control of her life. Because of this insight, she started to work on her "positive intention," or life goals described only in positive terms. She realized that her positive goals were to learn how to value herself and her actions, as opposed to capturing someone to affirm her. She saw that it was more important for her to feel good about herself than it was for other people to feel good about her. Identifying these goals helped Delores to focus more on creating her future and less on lamenting her past.

In response, she concentrated on learning about herself and approving of herself. She talked about blaming other people and holding onto the past as impediments to her goal of healing. She told me how she was entering counseling, looking for male friends and not lovers, and appreciating her good qualities. She did not gloss over the difficulties she faced—there is no miracle cure for life's struggles.

Delores found this strategy helped her free up mental space so she could uncover other ways to meet her needs. She realized that neither Skip nor her parents were ever

going to approve of her in the way she wanted. She was going to have to find that in herself. Her old habit had been to see her glass as empty. She started retraining her mind to see where her cup might already be full.

Delores looked at her life and saw that she had good friends and was capable of doing well at work. She found appreciation for her parents' business acumen and the freedom their financial success granted her to attend college full time without accruing any loans. She started to enjoy the beautiful area in which she lived and she gave herself credit for her excellent exercise routine.

Delores also practiced gratitude when doing ordinary, everyday tasks. She found that one can be thankful for anything at any time, whether it's the beauty of the trees one passes while driving, the phenomenon of one's breathing, or the embarrassing riches of 21st century America. When shopping, she made it a point to marvel at the opportunities she had to purchase a stupendous array of items. She learned to stop for a minute at the local shopping mall and say thanks to all of the people working there. She would walk into her local supermarket and take a moment to appreciate the abundance of food choices in front of her.

Delores had experienced the pain of parents who were more interested in their business than in caring for her. She had dwelled for years on what she had lost. Now she saw that her parents' financial success was also a blessing. She was able to appreciate the hard work they put in to provide a life for her. Delores practiced and saw the value of the old adage that a life well lived is the best revenge.

Moving on

When I bumped into Delores a year after her forgiveness classes ended, it was rewarding to see the changes in her. She was filled with energy and showed a lovely smile. When I asked her about Skip, she almost responded, "Skip who?" Instead of Skip, she wanted to talk about how much she had learned about herself. When I asked about her parents, she said her relationship with them had improved. Delores accepted what they could offer and realized their enormous emotional limitations. As an adult she understood she was the one with the best chance to create a good life for herself. She was learning to let her parents off the hook. She forgave them for their mistakes.

The biggest change in Delores was the way she turned her grievances into more positive stories about herself. She talked with pride of forgiving Skip and learning how to take care of herself. Delores was a woman who took her forgiveness training to heart. She completed the full nine steps and now presented herself as a hero and not a victim. Forgiveness brought her a sense of peace that had previously eluded her for her entire life.

Of course, she did not always have it easy. She still longed for a loving and tight family and a faithful partner. When she found the longing overpowering, she told herself to make the best of what she had. She would take a walk and remind herself of the blessings of a beautiful day or the possibilities the future might bring. And sometimes, like the rest of us, there were times when she was simply unhappy.

To become a forgiving person we have to practice forgiving smaller grievances. Then, when a bigger insult comes, we are ready, willing, and able to deal with it. Alternatively, like Delores, once we learn to forgive a major grievance, we can understand the value of limiting the power that pain and anger hold over us the next time we are hurt. No one can make the people in life behave kindly, fairly, or honestly at all times. We cannot end the cruelty on this planet. What we can do is forgive the unkindness that comes our way and put energy toward meeting our positive goals. Then we can help others do the same.

Forgiveness, like other positive emotions such as hope, compassion, and appreciation, are natural expressions of our humanity. These emotions exist within a deep part of each of us. Like many things, they require practice to perfect, but with this practice they become stronger and easier to find. Ultimately, they can be as natural to us as anger and bitterness. It takes a willingness to practice forgiveness day after day to see its profound benefits to physical and emotional well being, and to our relationships. Perhaps the most fundamental benefit of forgiveness is that, over time, it allows us access to the loving emotions that can lie buried beneath grievances and grudges.

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Nine Steps to Forgiveness

by Fred Luskin

1. Know exactly how you feel about what happened and be able to articulate what about the situation is not OK. Then, tell a couple of trusted people about your experience.

2. Make a commitment to yourself to feel better. Forgiveness is for you and no one else.

3. Forgiveness does not necessarily mean reconciling with the person who upset you or condoning the action. In forgiveness you seek the peace and understanding that come from blaming people less after they offend you and taking those offenses less personally.

4. Get the right perspective on what is happening. Recognize that your primary distress is coming from the hurt feelings, thoughts, and physical upset you are suffering now, not from what offended you or hurt you two minutes—or 10 years—ago.

5. At the moment you feel upset, practice stress management to soothe your body's fight or flight response.

6. Give up expecting things from your life or from other people that they do not choose to give you. Remind yourself that you can hope for health, love, friendship, and prosperity, and work hard to get them. However, these are "unenforceable rules:" You will suffer when you demand that these things occur, since you do not have the power to make them happen.

7. Put your energy into looking for another way to get your positive goals met than through the experience that has hurt you.

8. Remember that a life well lived is your best revenge. Instead of focusing on your wounded feelings, and thereby giving power over you to the person who caused you pain, learn to look for the love, beauty, and kindness around you. Put more energy into appreciating what you have rather than attending to what you do not have.

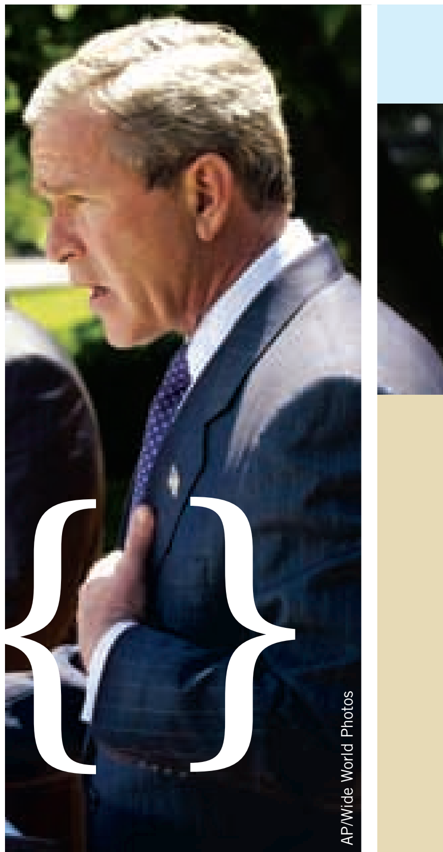
9. Amend the way you look at your past so you remind yourself of your heroic choice to forgive.

There's more than one way to say "I'm sorry," according to apology expert Aaron Lazare. Some apologies encourage forgiveness and reconciliation; others only make things worse. Here's how to tell the difference.

Making Peace through Apology

In April of 2004, televised photographs revealed to the world the abuse of Iraqi prisoners held by the United States military in the Abu Ghraib prison. These photos, and many other images that followed, showed soldiers taking pleasure in torturing and mocking naked Iraqi prisoners. The prisoners' treatment drew criticism from around the world; it was described as cruel, humiliating, appalling, and unacceptable. Iraqis, understandably, were enraged. As details unfolded, Americans, including government and military officials, expressed shame that their country's democratic and humanitarian values were being undermined.

The U.S. government, as the responsible party, sought forgiveness—not only from the Iraqis, but also from the American public. Toward this end, President George W. Bush, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice offered public comments, including what some might call apologies. President Bush told the American public how he had apologized to King Abdullah II of Jordan. "I was sorry for the humiliation suffered by the Iraqi prisoners and the humiliation suffered by their families," he said. "I told him I was as equally sorry that people seeing those pictures didn't understand the true nature and heart of America.... I am sickened that people got the wrong impression." In an appeal on an Arabic-language television station, the president said that Iraqis "must understand that I view these practices as abhorrent. They must also understand that what took place ... does not represent the America that I know.... Mistakes will be investigated."



AP/Wide World Photos

Left: Jordan's King Abdullah II and President Bush in the White House Rose Garden discussing the abuses at Abu Ghraib prison with the media on May 6, 2004.

Speaking on the same television channel, Condoleezza Rice said, "We are deeply sorry for what has happened to these people, and what the families must be feeling. It's just not right. And we will get to the bottom of what happened." Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld told the Senate Armed Services Committee, "These events occurred on my watch. As Secretary of Defense, I am accountable for them and I take full responsibility."

These attempted apologies and expressions of consolation failed to elicit forgiveness from the Iraqi people or the Arab world in general. In fact, the words may have aggravated feelings of hostility and resentment. What was missing from these so-called apologies? Why were they flawed?

What makes an apology work?

For the past 10 years, I have studied the structure and function of public and private apologies. My goal has been to understand why certain apologies succeed or fail to elicit forgiveness and bring about reconciliation. During my analysis, I have been surprised that most writers and researchers overlook the relationship between forgiveness and apology. Forgiveness is often portrayed as a generous gift bestowed on us by someone we offended, or as a gift we unconditionally extend to someone who offended us, regardless of an apology. Yet my own analysis has convinced me that forgiveness and apology are inextricably linked. Indeed, especially after a party has been humiliated, as in the case of Abu Ghraib, apology is a vital, often necessary, step toward assuaging feelings of humiliation, promoting forgiveness, and restoring balance to a relationship.

I believe there are up to four parts to the structure of an effective apology. (Not every apology requires all four parts.) These are: acknowledgment of the offense; explanation; expressions of remorse, shame, and humility; and reparation.

Of these four parts, the one most commonly defective in apologies is the acknowledgment. A valid acknowledgment must make clear who the offender is (or has the standing to speak on behalf of the offender) and who is the offended. The offender must clearly and completely acknowledge the offense. People fail the acknowledgment phase of the apology when they make vague and incomplete apologies (an apology "for whatever I did"); use the passive voice ("mistakes were made"); make the apology conditional (an apology "if mistakes have been made"); question whether the victim was damaged or minimize the offense (an apology "to the degree you were hurt" or "only a few enlisted soldiers were guilty at Abu Ghraib"); use the empathic "sorry" instead of acknowledging responsibility; apologize to the wrong party; or apologize for the wrong offense.

The U.S. apology for Abu Ghraib contained several of these deficiencies. For a national offense of this magnitude, only the president has the standing to offer an apology. It appeared that other spokespersons were apologizing on behalf of President Bush, or even to shield him. That was the first deficiency. Second, the apology must be directed to the offended people, such as the Iraqis, the American public, and the American military. Instead, in President Bush's most widely publicized comments, he apologized to the King of Jordan and then reported his conversation secondhand to the offended parties. He never directly addressed the Iraqis, the American public, or the American military. Third, the person offering the apology must accept responsibility for the offense. Neither President Bush nor Condoleezza Rice accepted such responsibility.

The United States apology for Abu Ghraib contained several deficiencies.

Instead, they extended their sorrow to the Iraqi people. Feeling sorry does not communicate acceptance of responsibility. The president also avoided taking responsibility as the Commander-in-Chief by using the passive voice when he said, "Mistakes will be investigated." In addition, he failed to acknowledge the magnitude of the offense, which is not only the immediate exposure of several humiliating incidents, but a likely pervasive and systematic pattern of prisoner abuse occurring over an extended period of time, as reported by the International Red Cross.

The next important phase of an apology is the explanation. An effective explanation may mitigate an offense by showing it was neither intentional nor personal, and is unlikely to recur. An explanation will backfire when it seems fraudulent or shallow, as by saying, "The devil made me do it," or "I just snapped," or "I was not thinking." There is more dignity in admitting, "There is no excuse," than in offering a fraudulent or shallow explanation.

President Bush, and others in his administration, tried to explain prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib as the work of a few bad apples. Rather than discussing any broader explanation for the abuses—or outlining how he would make sure they did not happen again—he just stressed that they did not represent "the true nature and heart of America."

Remorse, shame, and humility are other important components of an apology. These attitudes and emotions show that the offender recognizes the suffering of the offended. They also help assure the offended party that the offense will not recur, and allow the offender to make clear that he should have known better.

Only Secretary Rumsfeld's apology accepted responsibility for the "events." But neither he nor President Bush recommended any reparations, including his possible resignation.

President Bush failed the humility test when he suggested that his critics did not know "the true nature and heart of America," and that he was as sickened by people getting the "wrong impression" of America as he was by the abuses at Abu Ghraib. In my opinion, he was implying that the U.S. was a victim in the incident.

Finally, reparation is a way for an apology to compensate, in a real or symbolic way, for the offender's transgression. When the offense causes damage or loss of a tangible object, the reparation is usually replacement or restoration of the object. When the offense is intangible, symbolic, or irreversible—ranging from an insult or humiliation to serious injury or death—the reparation may include a gift, an honor, a financial exchange, a commitment to change one's ways, or a tangible punishment of the guilty party.

Of the three attempted apologies, only Secretary Rumsfeld's apology accepted responsibility for the "events." But neither he nor President Bush recommended any reparations, including his possible resignation.

How apologies heal

Within the above structure of apology, an effective apology can generate forgiveness and reconciliation if it satisfies one or more of seven psychological needs in the offended party. The first and most common healing factor is the restoration of dignity, which is critical when the offense itself is an insult or a humiliation. Another healing factor is the affirmation that both parties have shared values and agree that the harm committed was wrong. Such apologies often follow racial or gender slurs because they help establish what kind of behavior is beyond the pale. A third healing factor is validation that the victim was not responsible for the offense. This is often necessary in rape and child abuse cases when the victim irrationally carries some of the blame. A fourth healing factor is the assurance that the offended party is safe from a repeat offense; such an assurance can come when an offender apologizes for threatening or committing physical or psychological harm to a victim. Reparative justice, the fifth healing factor, occurs when the offended sees the offending party suffer through some type of punishment. A sixth healing factor is reparation, when the victim receives some form of compensation for his pain. Finally, the seventh healing factor is a dialogue that allows the offended parties to express their feelings toward the offenders and even grieve over their losses. Examples of such exchanges occurred, with apologies offered, during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in South Africa.

In the U.S. government's apologies for the Abu Ghraib incident, there was not a full acknowledgement of the offense and an acceptance of responsibility, so there could be no affirmation of shared values. In addition, there was no restoration of dignity, no assurance of future safety for the prisoners, no reparative justice, no reparations, and no suggestion for dialogue with the Iraqis. So it should not come as a surprise that the Iraqi people—and the rest of the world—were reluctant to forgive the United States.

A causal relationship between apology and forgiveness is understandable based on this analysis of apology. The apology repairs the damage that was done. It heals the festering wound and commits the offender to a change in behavior. When the apology meets an offended person's needs, he does not have to work at forgiving. Forgiveness comes spontaneously; the victim feels like his offender has released him of a burden or offered him a gift. In response, he often wants to return the gift by downplaying the damage done to himself, sharing part of the blame for the offense, or complimenting the offender in some way. Commonly, the relationship becomes stronger with a bond forged out of the honesty and courage of the offending party.

Getting it right

For an example of this type of apology, it is useful to compare the Abu Ghraib incident with another case of prisoner abuse and its aftermath.

Eric Lomax, a Scotsman in the military during World War II, was captured in Singapore by the Japanese and held prisoner at Kanburi, Thailand, from 1940 to 1944. In his book *The Railway Man*, Lomax describes his experience of being caged like an animal in a tiny cell, beaten, starved, and tortured. His captors broke his bones. The interpreter, Nagasi Takashi, who appeared to be in command, became the focus of Lomax's hostility.

After his release from prison at the end of the war, Lomax was a broken man, behaving as if he were still in captivity, unable to show normal emotions or maintain important relationships. He frequently thought about exacting revenge on the translator and was unable to forgive, even though he knew his vengeance was consuming him. In 1989, Lomax discovered that his nemesis was alive and was writing about his repentance and his desire to be forgiven for his wartime activities. Lomax wanted revenge. He wanted to reconstruct his story of those war years. He wanted to see Takashi's sorrow. He wanted to have power over him.

Lomax and his wife wrote to Takashi, who then asked for a meeting. Both men and their wives met for two weeks near the site of the prison camp in Thailand and at Takashi's home in Japan. With Takashi's help, Lomax was able to piece together the story of his prison existence. Takashi acknowledged with sorrow and guilt the wrongs for which he and his county were responsible. He said he had never forgotten Lomax's face, and admitted that he and others in the Japanese Imperial Army had treated Lomax and his countrymen "very, very badly." He explained how, since the war, he had argued against militarism and built memorials for the war dead. During their meetings, Lomax observed Takashi's suffering and grief.

Before they met, Lomax had been unable to forgive. He was controlled by his grudges and vengeance. It took a heartfelt and extended apology on the part of Takashi to

When the apology meets an offended person's needs, he does not have to work at forgiving. Forgiveness comes spontaneously; the victim feels like his offender has released him of a burden or offered him a gift.

meet Lomax's needs—the need to have his dignity restored, to feel safe, to understand that he and Takashi had shared values, to grieve, and to learn that Takashi suffered perhaps as much as he did. After the two weeks, Lomax said his anger was gone. Takashi was no longer a "hated enemy" but a "blood-brother." Lomax wrote that he felt like "an honored guest of two good people."

Although apology and forgiveness between these men occurred in private, their story serves as a microcosm of what can happen after public apologies between groups or nations. Whether an offended party is an individual or a collection of individuals, an apology must meet the same basic psychological needs in order for it to bring about forgiveness and reconciliation.

Exceptions and conclusions

There are situations in which it is useful to forgive without an apology. One obvious example is where the offending party is deceased. Forgiveness then helps the aggrieved get on with his life. In other situations, where the unrepentant offender shows no signs of remorse or change of behavior, forgiveness can be useful, but reconciliation would be foolish and self-destructive. For example, a woman who has been abused by an unrepentant husband may forgive him but choose to live apart. On the other hand, without an apology, it is difficult to imagine forgiveness accompanied by reconciliation or restoration of a trusting relationship. Such forgiveness is an abdication of our moral authority and our care for ourselves.

These situations aside, effective apologies are a tool for promoting cooperation among people, groups, and nations in a world plagued by war and conflict. Although the apologies of the U.S. government to the Iraqis for the abuses at Abu Ghraib fell short, we must keep in mind that it is rare for apologies to be offered and accepted during war. In such times, emotions run high, preserving face and an image of strength are critical, and it is all too easy to demonize the enemy. But in the decades since World War II, several nations (or individuals or groups within nations) from both sides have apologized for their actions during that war. In 1985, Richard von Weizsacker, then the president of Germany, apologized to all of Germany's victims of the war. The U.S. government apologized to Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II. Additionally, in the wake of the Holocaust, Pope John XXIII eliminated all negative comments about Jews from the Roman Catholic liturgy. He followed this effort by convening the Second Vatican Council, or Vatican II, which marked a turning point in the Church's relationship with Jews, Muslims, and others. These and many other successful apologies, both private and public, require honesty, generosity, humility, and courage.

We can only hope that current and subsequent administrations in the United States, Iraq, and other nations can, in the decades ahead, acknowledge their offenses, express their remorse, and offer reparations for acts committed during wartime. Without such apologies, we may be left with grudges and vengeance for decades to come.

Aaron Lazare, M.D., is chancellor, dean, and professor of psychiatry at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. He is a leading authority on the medical interview, the psychology of shame and humiliation, and apology. His most recent book is *On Apology* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

What an Apology Must Do

by Aaron Lazare

There are up to four parts to an effective apology, though not every apology requires all four parts. They are as follows.

1. A valid acknowledgment of the offense that makes clear who the offender is and who is the offended. The offender must clearly and completely acknowledge the offense.
2. An effective explanation, which shows an offense was neither intentional nor personal, and is unlikely to recur.
3. Expressions of remorse, shame, and humility, which show that the offender recognizes the suffering of the offended.
4. A reparation of some kind, in the form of a real or symbolic compensation for the offender's transgression.

An effective apology must also satisfy at least one of seven psychological needs of an offended person.

1. The restoration of dignity in the offended person.
2. The affirmation that both parties have shared values and agree that the harm committed was wrong.
3. Validation that the victim was not responsible for the offense.
4. The assurance that the offended party is safe from a repeat offense.
5. Reparative justice, which occurs when the offended sees the offending party suffer through some type of punishment.
6. Reparation, when the victim receives some form of compensation for his pain.
7. A dialogue that allows the offended parties to express their feelings toward the offenders and even grieve over their losses.

Pam Hasegawa

by Sarita Tukaram

To help teachers deal with the stress of their job, new programs are drawing on some unconventional—and research-tested—techniques.

Caring for the Care givers

When hijackers crashed airplanes into the towers of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, Ada Rosario Dolch was at work nearby. Principal of the High School for Leadership and Public Service in New York, a school two blocks south of Ground Zero, Dolch guided her staff and students to safety amidst panic, chaos, and the knowledge that her sister was at work in Tower One.

"I knew my sister was in that building, but my first duty was to my school children," said Dolch. She prayed for her sister's safety as she tried to calm her frightened students. After the towers fell and the smoke cleared, Dolch's pupils were free from danger, but she had lost her sister.

Following the attacks, Dolch and many other New York educators had to double as crisis counselors at their schools. They provided much needed support to their students for weeks or even months on end, but they often failed to care for themselves and attend to their own recovery. Dolch said her responsibilities to her students, staff, and family required more emotional strength than she thought she could muster. "I was burning deep inside," she said. But before she burned out, Dolch found Project Renewal.

Project Renewal was launched in the spring of 2002 by Linda Lantieri, the founding director of one of the nation's largest school-based conflict resolution programs, the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program. Lantieri had visited many schools after September 11 and said she saw teachers fading away under intense stress, with little support "to physically, mentally, and emotionally replenish themselves." Through Project Renewal, she wanted to help educators "learn how to develop their own inner resources for resilience" so that they could care for themselves even as they empathized with other people's pain. The program received a seed grant from the September 11th Fund, and 20 New York City educators enrolled, including Ada Dolch.

To help connect participants with their "inner resources for resilience," Project Renewal offers them day-long and seasonal residential retreats, yoga classes, and individual stress reduction sessions from certified bodywork practitioners. At the retreats, participants learn soothing breathing exercises, techniques for relaxing their muscles, and basic meditation practices.

Project Renewal is not alone in its approach. Psychologist Margaret Kemeny and other researchers at the University of California, San Francisco, have piloted a program that tests whether Eastern philosophy and meditation can bolster teachers' capacities for empathy and compassion. That program, called Cultivating Emotional Balance, aims to help teachers handle the everyday emotional demands of their job, not only a large-scale tragedy like September 11.

These programs' methods might seem more suitable to a New Age spa than a New York City classroom, but they are grounded in recent scientific research on the physical and mental benefits of meditation and similar stress-reduction techniques. This research has suggested that people who deal with a lot of stress—including but not limited to teachers—can develop skills and practices to rein in their anxieties and cultivate positive emotions.

Two pioneering scientists in this field are Richard Davidson and Jon Kabat-Zinn. In 1997, Davidson, director of the Laboratory for Affective Neuroscience at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, tested the effects of "mindfulness meditation" on employees of a biotechnology company. That form of meditation is meant to make practitioners more aware of their external surroundings and internal emotions.

Davidson divided participants into two groups. Twenty-five subjects in the experimental group were given training in mindfulness meditation from Kabat-Zinn, who founded a mindfulness-based stress reduction program when he was on the faculty of the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. Over two months, this group attended a weekly meditation class and one seven-hour retreat. They were also told to practice their meditation at home for an hour a day,

Left: Margaret Kemeny, the principal investigator on the Cultivating Emotional Balance research project.

Opposite page: Linda Lantieri (left), the founder of Project Renewal, with high school principal Ada Rosario Dolch.

Jason Marsh

six days a week. The 16 members of the control group did not receive meditation training until after the study was completed.

For both groups, the Madison researchers measured electrical activity in the prefrontal cortex, the frontal part of the brain that is associated with specific kinds of emotion. Research had already shown that the left side of this region becomes more active during periods of positive emotion while the right prefrontal cortex is associated with emotional distress. Davidson's results showed increased activity in the left side of the frontal region among members of the meditation group; these people also went from saying they were highly stressed to reporting that they felt more excited by their work. Altogether, the results suggested a link between meditation and both reduced anxiety and heightened positive emotions.

"Practices such as mindfulness meditation are tools to actively and voluntarily control our emotions through mental training," said Davidson. "They are potentially useful for a large number of occupations and individuals, in that they can decrease stress reactivity and increase positive emotions in different kinds of people."

Preliminary results from the Cultivating Emotional Balance program corroborate Davidson's findings. The program's pilot study involved 15 secondary school teachers in a five-week training session, where they learned Buddhist mindfulness techniques as well as skills developed by Western psychology for understanding their own and others' emotions. According to Kemeny, the principal investigator, the results showed that a heightened emotional awareness also encouraged a heightened sense of self. After the training, participants showed an increase in affection for others and a decrease in their negative reactions to stress.

"Often people's negative reactions stem from a negative sense of self," said Kemeny. "In the pilot study, as people developed a sense of self, they became less vulnerable to outside factors."

Teachers were the right subjects for the study, she added, because of "the emotional demands and stressful nature of their jobs." Indeed, much of the feedback from participants showed how the Cultivating Emotional Balance program helped them manage their stress. One teacher wrote that the meditation techniques she'd learned had given her a "deeper sense of relaxation than [she'd] ever felt before." Another teacher described how the program had helped her to empathize with a difficult student. "I probably would have taken it personally before and felt angry with the kid," she wrote. "But that's not what it was about. It had nothing to do with me. It was about his internal trauma."

The response to Project Renewal was similarly enthusiastic. Dolch, for one, said the program helped her "heal from within and restock my emotional reserves." After working with teachers in the wake of September 11, Lantieri said she recognized an ongoing need for Project Renewal. She decided to expand the program so that it could help prepare educators to care for themselves and serve their students before a time of crisis, not just in response to one. Project Renewal has now become a project of the Tides Center and continues to offer retreats and trainings for teachers in 56 New York City schools. So far, the program has involved more than 3,000 educators, who collectively serve over 70,000 students.

A clinical trial of Cultivating Emotional Balance is scheduled to begin in January 2005. As in the pilot study, the seven-part curriculum will train participants in skills such as meditation, recognizing emotions communicated by other people's facial expressions, and strategies to counteract negative emotions. Kemeny and her colleagues have already begun to recruit female school teachers (between the ages of 25 and 60) who live in the San Francisco Bay Area and are in a relationship with an intimate partner.

Ada Dolch said these programs and research efforts are satisfying a substantial need, and she only hopes more teachers learn about them. These days, she looks back with fondness on her own Project Renewal retreat after September 11. "Each participant left with a pocketful of goodies—great tools that they could lay their hands on in times of crisis and carry on their good work."

Sarita Tukaram is a student at the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism.

Gaming the School System

by Matthew Wheeland

Thanks to one program, students have found that resolving their differences can be all fun and games.

Just before 10 a.m. on a Friday morning in September, the blacktop at Norwood Street Elementary School in Los Angeles was swarming with children. Recess seemed woefully understaffed, with just three adults monitoring more than 100 students. But, almost miraculously, even those adults seemed unnecessary. The scene was one of peaceful and happy chaos.

"Look at this: all these kids and they're just playing," said Meghann McMahon, one of the adults on hand. "Where else can you see that many kids and not one fight?"

For McMahon, this phenomenon was as gratifying as it was remarkable. She is the Los Angeles Site Director for Peace Games, a program that she has helped implement at Norwood over the past three years. In that time, she's witnessed a sea change in the way Norwood's students relate to themselves and their peers.

In third- and fourth-grade classrooms, students are taught communication and cooperation skills for resolving disagreements and celebrating cultural differences. Games for this age group include "Trust Walks," in which one student leads a blindfolded peer through an obstacle course, and the "Community Power Game," which has students assume the roles of city councilmembers, business leaders, parents, and members of other groups to find a commonly agreeable solution to a problem.

In the later years of the curriculum, students discuss gender and cultural identities and learn how they can work to promote social justice and social change. Games for these students include "Build a City," where students in three groups are given a set amount of funds and materials for an imaginary construction project. The students are not told that each group has started with a different amount of money until the end of the game, when they discuss the effects of social and economic inequality on a community.

Volunteer Arameh Anvarizadeh tutors a student at Peace Games' Norwood Street Elementary School site in Los Angeles.

Matthew Wheeland

Peace Games is built on the foundation of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), also known as Social and Emotional Education (SEE). The guiding principle of both Peace Games and SEL is that raising children's awareness of their emotions—and how to communicate them—will help them become more caring and conscientious people. Peace Games' curriculum develops this emotional awareness through structured and engaging activities that focus students on celebrating diversity and resolving conflict in nonviolent ways.

The program began at Harvard University in 1992 as a one-day, student-run project. In 1996—after its methods had been analyzed, refined, and expanded—it became an independent, non-profit organization and has since grown into a year-long curriculum for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. The program now exists on both coasts, serving 12 schools in Boston, three in Los Angeles, and three in Alaska. Peace Games is also starting to create a program in New York City.

In the early years of the curriculum, children learn to appreciate their unique qualities and the unique qualities of other people, and also learn to recognize and communicate their emotions. They engage in exercises that encourage self-reflection, such as writing about the traits that set themselves apart from everyone else. Among the games for young Peace Games kids is "Blob Tag," where one student pretends to be a slimy green blob determined to take over the Earth. Each child that this student touches becomes a part of the blob and must link arms to tag others, emphasizing teamwork and communication.

Peace Games students of all ages are also required to spend part of each school year working on a community service project, a way of encouraging the kids to apply their peacemaking skills. Last year, Norwood students visited a nearby senior center and wrote oral histories of residents.

"Peace Games believes that the best way to deal with the twin problems of youth violence and disengagement is to prepare them at an early age to be thoughtful and engaged peacemakers," said Eric Dawson, executive director of Peace Games and one of its founders. Dawson gives three reasons for the program's success. "First, we meet people where they live. Second, we focus on relationships—that's the only way real social change happens. And finally, we walk our talk. We teach by doing."

Dawson said his 12-year history with Peace Games has allowed him to witness its long-term effects. He cited the story of Chiké, who was 10 years old when Dawson met him and was discouraged by the feeling that he was "just not good enough" to make it in society—a message, said Dawson, that is repeatedly conveyed to young people, especially people of color, throughout their lives. After participating in Peace Games, Chiké went on to college and now has returned to his own elementary school to help teach the program himself. "To watch him develop some deep immunity to those pretty horrific messages and then want to give back to other young people was a real powerful thing to watch," Dawson said.

A mix of playful methods and serious messages increases the effectiveness of social and emotional learning programs such as Peace

Games, according to Jane Perry, a childhood education researcher at the University of California, Berkeley. “Kids are naturally inclined to keep games going,” she said. “They’ll work really hard at a task if it’s part of a game or challenge.”

Diane Levin, a professor of education at Wheelock College in Boston who studies how games can build peaceful skills in children, also commended the Peace Games curriculum. She said it teaches students vital lessons that many public schools currently neglect. “Increasingly, schools focus on one thing: getting students to pass tests,” said Levin. “In the process, the school is cutting off options for kids to get involved with social activities.”

The task—and cost—of broadening these options has fallen on local school districts and dedicated educators. Peace Games came to Norwood largely through the initial efforts of Naya Bloom, who directs the school’s Healthy Start program, a state-funded grant intended to help schools connect local families with community-based social services. Following an increase in violence and racial tension at Norwood, which is a predominantly Latino school, Bloom sought out ways to address the problem before it got worse, and she asked Peace Games’ staff to make a presentation at the school. With financial help from a three-year, $325,000 grant from Los Angeles’s School Community Policing Partnership program, Peace Games was launched at Norwood in 2001.

Among the first things one notices while wandering Norwood’s hallways is just how prevalent and visible the Peace Games program is there. From the “Peace Mural” painted across the street to the “What Makes Me Happy” posters decorating the walls, Peace Games has established a physical presence all around the school. And Norwood’s administration has worked hard to spread the program’s social messages.

“There’s a near-universal level of knowledge about different strategies for how to resolve conflict [at Norwood],” said Dee Dee Lonon, who has been the school’s principal for three of Peace Games’ four years there. Constant budget pressures aside, Lonon said she and the rest of the Norwood staff are committed to keeping Peace Games at the heart of their school. The administration recently instituted a biweekly “Peacemaker Award” for students who put Peace Games skills to practice outside the classroom. “I’ve seen a definite change within the school community,” said Naya Bloom. “There’s more talk about being peacemakers, there’s an openness and a friendliness here now, and it’s among the teachers as much as the students.”

The Peace Mural has made these changes at Norwood especially evident. It covers two brick walls that were previously plastered with graffiti from the neighborhood’s two rival gangs. With an immense amount of coordination that involved Norwood and Peace Games staff and the Los Angeles city attorney, students from Norwood and nearby Crenshaw High School came together to paint a scene of children who were, as described on the mural, “taking a stand for peace and our dreams.”

By creating a culture of peace, Peace Games helps counteract the messages of a popular culture steeped in violence, according to Diane Levin. “Children don’t learn positive social skills by osmosis,” she said. “When surrounded by violence on television, in movies and video games, children become socialized to resort to violence and aggression in the face of a conflict.”

Internal studies reveal just how effective Peace Games has been in teaching children different strategies for dealing with conflict. An internal evaluation of the entire program for the 2002-2003 school year found that 84 percent of teachers at a Peace Games school said the program had improved communication among their students; 74 percent of teachers said Peace Games had helped their students get along better. When the lessons began at Norwood in 2001, there were 260 office referrals for physical aggression. Just two years later, that number had dropped 36 percent to 166. Similarly, racial and ethnic conflicts dropped by between 50 and 70 percent in those years. Most impressively, in the 2002-2003 school year, there was not a single referral for abuse toward a teacher or for defacing property; there were 26 such incidences in the previous year.

But the responses from Peace Games students and alumni might tell the biggest story. On that Friday at Norwood, after recess had ended for those 100-plus students, Naya Bloom sat at her desk with a book of laminated drawings before her. The drawings were made by a first-grade class Bloom had worked with on Peace Games material. Among the many declarations of thanks and love were examples of what the kids had learned. One student, Zulema, wrote, “I learned to be fair. I learned not to fight.” Another student, Clark, wrote, “I learned to de-esculate (sic) the problem.”

“The most powerful piece of Peace Games is that kids really take ownership of the program, of their role in it,” said Bloom. “They see themselves as peacemakers.”

The “Peace Mural” painted across the street from Norwood Street Elementary School. It spans two walls formerly covered by graffiti.

Matthew Wheeland

Matthew Wheeland is a student at the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism. His work has appeared in Alternet.org, PopMatters.com, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, among other publications.

What could help do the work of medication,

Chris Young

Green Peace

by Chris Young

The answer's in your back yard.

Leslie Keaton's red brick home is on the edge of Chicago's Ida B. Wells public housing project. Her back door opens onto a courtyard surrounded by nearly identical two-story buildings, boarded up windows all around.

But at Wells, Keaton has something some of her neighbors don't: trees. A sturdy walnut tree rises from the concrete next to her stoop, with two rows of thinner trees in the courtyard. Her six-year-old neighbor Gerald and his two-year-old cousin Chilo race around them in plastic toy cars.

Two researchers at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign believe the trees do more than provide shade around Wells in Chicago's scorching summers. Frances Kuo and William Sullivan have found that trees may lower crime and improve residents' mental health as well. At their Human-Environment Research Laboratory (HERL), Kuo and Sullivan have amassed a body of research around the connection between green spaces and people's well-being. Chicago's public housing projects are part of their testing ground.

When Kuo and Sullivan began their research here in the mid-1990s, Wells was one of the 12 poorest neighborhoods in the United States and housed about 5,700 people. Half of the families at Wells were on welfare and unemployment was over 90 percent. When Wells was built in the 1940s, the city planted trees around all the buildings. By the time Kuo and Sullivan arrived, many of these trees had since been pulled out and paved over for maintenance reasons, leaving some yards with trees and others barren.

Kuo and Sullivan ran a number of experiments here. In 2001, they found that residents reported being victim to half as many crimes in and around buildings with trees as around buildings without them. Kuo said that after other factors were excluded, such as the number of people per building, the amount of green cover explained seven to eight percent of the differences in crime between buildings.

"It's staggeringly high, given you expect it to be zero," she said of the trees' effect. "If most mayors could do something to reduce crime by that much, they'd jump at it."

In fact, the city of Chicago used Kuo and Sullivan's research in a decision to plant 20,000 trees around the city at a cost of $10 million several years ago.

As to why lush environments had lowered crime rates, Kuo and Sullivan suggest that green spaces draw people outside to enjoy them, and those increased numbers of people deter crime. In fact, they found that 83 percent more people socialized in green spaces at Wells than in barren spaces. And socializing can have long-term effects on crime prevention as well: Neighbors who are outside more form stronger bonds and communities, said Sullivan.

The researchers have found that green spaces have psychological benefits as well. In a study Kuo published in September with Andrea Faber Taylor, also of the HERL, they discovered that green spaces helped reduce the symptoms of children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The study, published in the *American Journal of Public Health*, analyzed parents' observations of how their children behaved in different settings. The parents rated their children's ability to remain focused on tasks, follow directions, and resist distractions.

The results showed that after spending time in green settings, like a park or a backyard, children had significantly fewer symptoms of ADHD than children in indoor or "built" outdoor areas like a downtown area or parking lot. This finding held regardless of a child's age or gender, parents' income level, community size or location (rural or urban), or severity of ADHD. When children performed the same activity in a green setting and another outdoor or indoor location, their ADHD symptoms were consistently reduced only after their time in the green space.

Kuo said the study suggests a way to help children deal with ADHD—without the unwanted side effects of medication.

She added that she's gotten positive feedback from parents of ADHD children after sharing her results with them. "They say, 'Now

William C. Sullivan

Human-Environment Research Laboratory co-director, Frances Kuo.

L.B. Stauffer

Chris Young

we stop by a park and he's so much better.' People are building nature into their lives."

And the mental health implications extend beyond children with ADHD. In their studies at Ida B. Wells and other public housing projects, Kuo and Sullivan found that a higher number of trees lowered residents' mental fatigue and stress, factors that can contribute to violence. In a study at nearby Robert Taylor Homes, Kuo and Sullivan found that individuals' aggression was lower if they lived in buildings surrounded by trees than if they did not. These people performed better on cognitive tests as well.

A buildup of mental fatigue can cause people to feel stressed out and misinterpret social cues, leading to aggression and possibly violence, said Sullivan.

How greenery actually works to reduce stress and aggression remains something of a mystery, according to Kuo. But she speculates that green spaces affect the brain in a way similar to meditation, fostering a "gentle engagement" that allows muscles to recover and relax. She said other leisure activities could have a similar effect, although some—most notably television—have been shown not to.

Despite their research, Kuo pointed out that schools are increasingly reducing recess because administrators think they don't add value to the school day, while municipalities are asphalting over more playgrounds to save money. "There may be hidden costs to doing that," she said.

Sullivan, who is currently analyzing crime data from several major cities relative to their greenery levels, is concerned that the urban tree canopy nationwide has decreased by at least a third in the last two decades. He said cash-strapped cities trying to improve public health and safety should consider investing in green neighborhoods rather than some other programs.

"We pour million of dollars into DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education)," Sullivan said. "But there are no comprehensive studies that show there's a long-term decrease in drugs and alcohol abuse. We're showing in multiple studies that green spaces have a significant impact on people's lives." To change the paradigm, Sullivan said every city, county, and state should incorporate green neighborhood spaces such as parks into their development plans. On a smaller level, planning agencies should show levels of greenery on their maps.

There are signs that more local governments are starting to notice the researchers' work. Last year, the United States Conference of Mayors passed a resolution that recognized Kuo and Sullivan's findings and pledged to increase tree cover in urban areas. The researchers are talking to planning and design boards in different municipalities and to green advocacy groups in states like Georgia, Florida, and Washington. Their findings helped convince officials in Providence, Rhode Island, to add a zoning ordinance that increased the amount of tree cover on new properties, said John Campanini, technical advisor for the Rhode Island Tree Council, a tree advocacy group.

Schools are reducing recess while municipalities are asphalting over more playgrounds to save money. "There may be hidden costs to doing that," said Kuo.

"They helped us enlighten people on the social benefit of trees," he said.

Still, Kuo believes that she and Sullivan have more work to do.

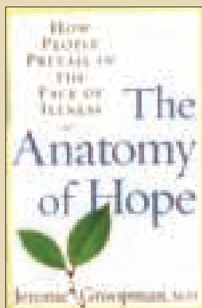
"There's a notion that (green spaces) are just frivolous and an amenity—urban forestry to mayors is first on the last list," she said. "It's really not seen as a necessary part of healthy human habitats. But I think that's what our research is pointing to."

Chris Young is a freelance writer and a student at the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism. His work has appeared in various publications, including the *Chicago Tribune*.

in print

The Anatomy of Hope

by Jerome Groopman
Random House, 2004, 248 pages



As an oncologist and hematologist, Jerome Groopman has spent his career working primarily with cancer and AIDS patients. It might seem unlikely, then, that he would write a book about hope, or that such a book would contain anything but wishful thinking.

But *The Anatomy of Hope* is a sober and thoughtful book with real medical value. In his introduction, Groopman, who is also a staff writer for *The New Yorker*, admits that he was once cynical of claims that hope could affect a patient's physical and mental health. "I slammed the door on hope and closed off my mind to seriously considering it as a catalyst in the crucible of cure," he writes. *The Anatomy of Hope* chronicles the gradual opening of his mind, an education that was both professional and personal.

It wasn't always easy. Using medical case studies from his own career, Groopman illustrates how doctors can rely too heavily on optimism or harsh reality in the face of a grave prognosis. He describes how he gradually learned to live in the middle ground, neither shielding patients from the truth nor allowing them to be overcome by fear and doubt.

Groopman's love for his work is clear in his heartfelt and engaging writing about his patients. He goes to great lengths to describe their diagnoses and how they reacted to their illnesses. The reader can chart Groopman's understanding of the power of hope through his detailed observations and reactions to his patients' cases. He leads readers through one case involving a man with profoundly advanced non-Hodgkins lymphoma, a cancer of the respiratory system. Despite Groopman's assurances that his chances of survival were better than 50-50, the patient had already given up. The process of convincing this man he could be cured, and the vindication of his survival and continued health, became a cornerstone of Groopman's education in the power of hope.

If there is a weakness in *The Anatomy of Hope*, it is the section where Groopman analyzes research on the physiological and mental components of hope. While this section offers key support to his thesis, its tone and style depart drastically from those of previous chapters. From the inviting and even conversational style of most of his book, Groopman abruptly shifts to more technical discussions of research and theory. The majority of *The Anatomy of Hope* is captivating enough to read in one sitting, but this jump is likely to disorient a reader who had been previously engaged by Groopman's writing. It is a shame that Groopman couldn't make this important clinical section as accessible to the lay reader as his case studies.

In his final analysis, Groopman recognizes that research on hope and healing is in its infancy. But he notes that it has already changed his own practice of medicine. "We are just beginning to appreciate hope's reach and have not defined its limits," he writes in his book's conclusion. "I see hope as the very heart of healing."

—Matthew Wheeland

Resiliency: What We Have Learned

by Bonnie Benard
WestEd, 2004, 148 pages

According to Bonnie Benard, resilience is something we all possess. It is an internal drive to satisfy our most basic psychological needs. It helps us overcome obstacles to staying on a healthy developmental path. And it is the reason why many kids who experience poverty or abuse still turn out OK.

Social scientists have traditionally predicted a bleak life for these children, commonly dubbed "at risk" kids. Benard's latest book, *Resiliency: What We Have Learned*, puts this assumption in check. Drawing upon a decade's worth of resilience research from a wide range of scholars, Benard shows that negative factors in a child's life don't necessarily predict negative outcomes, whereas there is a strong association between positive factors and positive outcomes.

Benard stresses that this does not mean we should ignore the effects of abuse or poverty on children. Rather, she argues, we can offset these effects by giving children the right kinds of support, enabling them to find their own natural strengths. In *Resiliency*, Benard evaluates previous attempts to put these supports in place at the level of the family, school, and wider community. She also suggests how we can continue to create such opportunities for children in the future.

At the core of Benard's argument is the idea that the most supportive environments for children contain three elements: caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities to be an active member of a community. In the home, for example, Benard suggests that parents can communicate high expectations by becoming attuned to their child's unique strengths, then connecting him or her with resources that will help these strengths develop—a process Benard calls "talent scouting." Schools can promote caring relationships by reducing class size and the size of schools as a whole, creating more small group projects, and encouraging adult-student mentor relationships. As for communities, Benard says they must provide more activities that children can participate in and contribute to. Through job training, art, or adventure programs, among others, she says children not only develop concrete skills but a sense of belonging, purpose, and respect. At the same time, they act as role models for their peers.

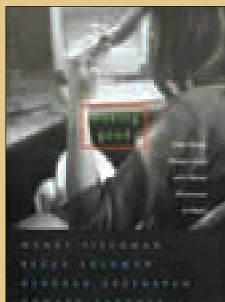
Resiliency is a hopeful and practical book. As a comprehensive review of the resiliency literature, it is a rich source of theory. Additionally, Benard has distilled these theories into concrete ideas for action—all in a clear writing style. As a result, it should be a useful tool for people helping those in need of hope.

—Lauren Shapiro

Making Good: How Young People Cope with Moral Dilemmas at Work

by Wendy Fischman, Becca Solomon, Deborah Greenspan, and Howard Gardner

Harvard University Press, 2004, 208 pages



The Jayson Blair scandal at *The New York Times* showed that professional success and professional ethics don't necessarily go hand-in-hand. It seemed that an ambitious young journalist could fly through the ranks despite—or even because of—an inability to tell right from wrong.

These moral failings go beyond Jayson Blair and the profession of journalism, according to four Harvard University researchers who have studied "good work"—work that is skillful and socially responsible—since the late 1990s.

Making Good: How Young People Cope with Moral Dilemmas at Work summarizes the findings from their study, which is part of the broader Good Work Project led by one of *Making Good's* co-authors, psychologist Howard Gardner. Gardner is well-known for his expertise in childhood education and his theory of multiple intelligences. Here he combines his longstanding investigation of how people develop particular talents with a focus on how they develop moral reasoning skills.

Gardner and his research team examined more than 100 young people at the start of their careers in one of three fields: journalism, science, or acting. Through in-depth interviews and a survey designed to assess participants' values, the authors form a picture of how these budding professionals balance their ambition, demands from authority figures, and a desire to maintain personal integrity. When the researchers compare this picture with information gathered from veteran professionals in the same three fields, the result is troubling.

Consistently, the young professionals point to fierce competition as a source of stress and a valid reason for crossing moral boundaries. They seem to feel they are "out there on their own" to succeed, while veterans often speak of the powerful support they received from mentors and role models. This feeling among the young participants often translates into a willingness to justify unethical actions, which they say they will make up for later, after they've achieved success.

To be fair, the book also includes stories of young people who stood by their values, even if it meant not getting ahead, and of others who were seriously considering changing fields because of pressure to behave unethically. The values survey also shows that young people do value good work, even if they're not always capable of producing it.

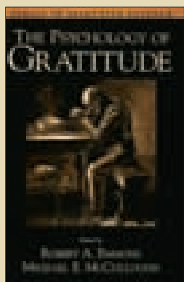
Ultimately Gardner and his co-authors identify six factors that determine whether an individual is likely to do good work. These include having strong role models, supportive peers, and regular opportunities to discuss an organization's core principles. But, as the authors recognize, none of these factors can develop overnight. It will take considerable individual and collective willpower to make more young professionals feel committed to anything beyond their own personal success. That kind of shift will require good, ongoing work by American culture as a whole, not just by young people struggling to succeed.

—Jason Marsh

The Psychology of Gratitude

Edited by Robert A. Emmons and Michael E. McCullough

Oxford University Press, 2004, 368 pages



The title of *The Psychology of Gratitude* sells the book short. In this compilation of 14 essays, editors Robert Emmons and Michael McCullough go beyond the field of psychology to incorporate research from anthropology, philosophy, biology, theology, and even primatology. This breadth of research gives a deservedly thorough treatment to a human emotion and virtue that, until now, social science has largely overlooked.

The volume both defines and explores the contours of gratitude. Theologian David Steindl-Rast distinguishes gratefulness from thankfulness. Thankfulness, he says, is marked by personal gratitude for undeserved kindness "because it typically expresses itself in thanks given to the giver by the receiver of the gift." Gratefulness, on the other hand, is transpersonal: its experience goes beyond an emotion directed toward any one person to encompass an "oceanic feeling of universal belonging," such as when someone feels grateful for a beautiful sunrise.

Other authors consider the beneficial consequences of gratitude. Psychologist Philip Watkins shows that gratitude is part of a cycle of virtue: Gratitude causes happiness, while at the same time, that feeling of happiness fosters gratitude. Barbara Fredrickson draws on previous research to theorize that gratitude broadens a person's capacity to express love and kindness, which helps that person build lasting friendships and other social bonds. If someone feels grateful toward another person, she suggests, he'll try to promote the well-being of other people in general, not just of his original benefactor.

The book does touch on negative aspects of gratitude. Both Robert Solomon, in the foreword, and Emmons, in the introduction, note that gratitude is sometimes accompanied by a "perceived inferiority of the receiver relative to the giver," which could induce feelings of humiliation, resentment, embarrassment, or jealousy. Solomon and Emmons also note that people sometimes associate gratitude with femininity, dependence, and feelings of undeserved merit.

These associations point to the role that culture plays in shaping our definition and experience of gratitude. Such distinctly sociological aspects of gratitude are mentioned in passing, but an exploration of the sociology of gratitude is strangely absent from the book—a surprising omission given that it is dedicated to an emotion that is primarily social in nature. This absence, however, speaks to the larger point that Emmons makes: Because social science has neglected gratitude in the past, there remain vast opportunities for scientific attention and analysis in the future.

—Christine Carter

Any Volunteers?

Why Americans need more chances to serve their country—and each other.

by Amitai Etzioni

Now that the presidential election is over, it's a good time to take stock of what I was asked to do for my country over the past few years, and what I can expect to be asked of me in the months and years to come.

When President Bush, during his 2002 State of the Union speech, called on me (and my fellow citizens) to do good for our nation by volunteering 4,000 hours, I was moved. I rushed off a letter to the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, telling him, "Take my hours, no questions asked—just tell me what you want me to do." I have yet to hear back.

I would have to return my Ph.D. in sociology to the University of California if I did not realize that it takes more than an inspiring speech to create a fleet of volunteers. Sociologists hold that calls for public service must be "institutionalized." That is, people must have structured opportunities to serve, so when they get up in the morning full of voluntary gusto, they know where to go and what to do. President Kennedy's often cited cry to "ask not what your country can do for you" was followed by the formation of the Peace Corps, which has allowed tens of thousands of Americans to do good overseas. The Peace Corps has done us proud as a nation and bettered our youth. Whenever I travel overseas, I keep seeing how other nations have copied this fine American institution.

The Bush Administration institutionalized the president's call for service in a peculiar way. Its main task has been to take previously well-established voluntary bodies—including the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, and Senior Corps—and tie them together with a new ribbon, calling them the Freedom Corps. Administrations like to leave their mark on history, and realigning federal agencies and renaming them is one of the most effortless ways of doing so. (See the Department of Homeland Security.) But renaming an agency does not make people jump up and down, overwhelmed by an urge to sign up and serve.

To be fair, the Bush Administration did add a new agency to the 15 members of the Freedom Corps. This is the Citizen Corps, which has been allotted a tiny staff and a minuscule budget. If you've heard of the Citizen Corps, you must have a particularly keen sense of hearing. Still, looking for a way to commit my 4,000 hours, I knocked on its doors.

> **It takes more than an inspiring speech to create a fleet of volunteers.**

I chose the Citizen Corps because I believed that the United States would need millions of new volunteers if it is to be better prepared for future 9/11-like attacks. Given that we are an open society and that there are countless "soft targets" for terrorism, it seemed obvious that police alone could not patrol all our vulnerable points. When I heard of the Citizen Corps, I imagined volunteers dedicating one weekend day a month, and some hours they could pry loose during the workweek, to help patrol water resources, bridges, dams, and electrical plants. I envisioned citizens learning to staff phone banks so that fire fighters and police could respond to emergencies. And trained in advanced first aid, as emergency medical technicians are, volunteers could even serve as back up for healthcare personnel. It was heartening to read on its website that the Citizen Corps' mission is to give expression to a post-9/11 "wellspring of selflessness and heroism," which led "people in every corner of the country to ask, 'What can I do?' and 'How can I help?'"

The Citizen Corps' answers to these questions is a crushing bore. It largely "coordinates" local and regional volunteer activities conducted by other groups and helps form councils of representatives from various associations and organizations.

In the years that have passed since President Bush's speech, any inspiration his words might have generated has been squandered. Not surprisingly, Citizen Corps failed to capture the imagination and commitment of the American people. Freedom Corps is barely known. The Bush Administration long ceased to promote either of these agencies, or any other, as an outlet for the "wellspring" of American volunteerism. The administration was so eager not to impose any demands on voters that it was even reluctant to reiterate the president's call for more volunteering. It didn't help that it was also fighting fires on so many fronts, responding to loads of criticism abroad and at home about preemptive invasions and tortures and misleading information. As a result, it lost the ability to call on people to do good out of a sense of kindness and commitment to their fellow citizens.

During the presidential campaign, neither President Bush nor Senator Kerry seemed eager to raise the question of what Americans should be asked to do for their country or for one another; instead, they told us what new tax cuts we could expect. Indeed, the nation has been so polarized that any call to the common good might have seemed disingenuous.

But with the election now behind us, I can only hope that President Bush will make a concerted effort to build bridges between red and blue America. Designing new ways for all Americans to work together toward a common goal—especially protecting one another from terrorism—is as good a place to start as any I can imagine.

Amitai Etzioni, Ph.D., is a University Professor at The George Washington University. His most recent book is *From Empire to Community: A New Approach to International Relations* (Palgrave, 2004). **This essay may not be reprinted without permission of the author.**

resources for the greater good

On forgiveness

The Amy Biehl Foundation is a charity that supports youth education and anti-violence programs in South Africa. http://www.amybiehl.org, 949-650-5356

The Campaign for Forgiveness Research sponsors research and disseminates scientific findings and other information about new studies of forgiveness. http://www.forgiving.org, 804-828-8089

The Forgiveness Project is a touring exhibition of artwork and stories that centers on the themes of forgiveness and reconciliation. The goal of the exhibition is to raise the profile of, and funds for, grassroots conflict resolution and reconciliation projects. http://www.theforgivenessproject.com, 00-44-208-964-4034

The International Forgiveness Institute disseminates scientific findings on forgiveness to interested researchers and members of the general public. It is an outgrowth of the research conducted by Dr. Robert Enright at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. http://www.forgivenessinstitute.org, 608-251-6484

Research sources

The Center for Positive Organizational Scholarship at the University of Michigan Business School offers research and teaching resources relevant to the burgeoning field of positive organizational scholarship. This line of research studies the key factors in creating vibrant, collaborative, fulfilling, and compassionate workplaces. http://www.bus.umich.edu/Positive

The Cultivating Emotional Balance Project is a study being conducted by researchers at the University of California, San Francisco. It is testing the effects of an eight-session training program designed to promote positive changes in the health and emotional responses of participants. For the clinical trial of the program, which will begin in January 2005, the researchers are recruiting female school teachers between the ages of 25 and 60 who live in the San Francisco Bay Area and are in a relationship with an intimate partner. http://www.cultivatingemotionalbalance.org, 415-476-7681

The GoodWork Project researches how leading professionals carry out work that is high quality and socially responsible. http://www.goodworkproject.org, 617-496-7097

The Human-Environment Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign studies how to create environments in which individuals, families, and communities flourish and how to better involve people in the design, management, and stewardship of their local environments. http://www.herl.uiuc.edu, 217-244-0930

The Seattle Social Development Project is an ongoing longitudinal study testing strategies for reducing childhood risk factors for school failure, drug abuse, and delinquency. http://depts.washington.edu/ssdp

The Stanford Center on Conflict and Negotiation is an interdisciplinary center at Stanford University that focuses on identifying and analyzing the strategic, psychological, and institutional barriers to conflict resolution, as well as bridges to overcome those barriers. http://www.stanford.edu/group/sccn, 650-723-2574

In the field

The Center for the Fourth and Fifth Rs disseminates articles on character education, sponsors an annual summer institute in character education, publishes a newsletter, and is building a network of schools committed to teaching respect, responsibility, and other core ethical values as the basis of good character. http://www.cortland.edu/c4n5rs, 607-753-2455

The Giraffe Heroes Program is a K-12 curriculum that tries to inspire active citizenship and compassion in youth by teaching them about the work of local and international activists. http://www.giraffe.org, 360-221-7989

The Gottman Institute offers practical, research-based therapy to married spouses and couples. It also provides state-of-the-art training to mental health professionals and other health care providers committed to helping couples. http://www.gottman.com, 888-523-9042

Operation Respect disseminates educational materials designed to reduce the emotional and physical cruelty some children inflict upon others through ridicule, bullying, and violence. http://www.operationrespect.org, 212-904-5243

Peace Games uses cooperative games and activities to teach conflict resolution skills to students in kindergarten through eighth grade. http://www.peacegames.org, 617-261-3833

Project Renewal, now a project of the Tides Center, offers a variety of support services to New York City educators to help them deal with the emotional traumas of September 11 and future crises. http://www.esrnational.org/lantieri/beyond_renewal.htm, 212-509-0022

A World of Difference Institute provides hands-on training to help children and adults challenge prejudice and discrimination and learn to get along with others in an increasingly diverse world. http://www.adl.org/awod/awod_institute.asp, 212-885-7700

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To learn more about the UC Berkeley Center for the Development of Peace and Well-Being, please visit http://peacecenter.berkeley.edu. The Center's website serves as a clearinghouse for ground-breaking research on peace and well-being, including topics such as compassion, empathy, forgiveness, cross-group relationships, and social and emotional learning programs.

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