Introduction


Rodrigo Menzoza
Near the Iguazu Falls with Guarani people
My Purpose

- **WHY**: Like most of us, I want to help people meet (and even exceed) what they think is their potential.
- People encounter barriers to fulfillment as people (and as a community).
- These barriers are often grudges, paying offenders back, rumination, and avoidance of people.
  - They can lead to additional physical health, mental health, relationship, and spiritual barriers.
I want to help you smash any such barriers in your individual life or communities (i.e., family, congregation, or workplace).

HOW: Giving psychology away to those who need more freedom in their lives from grudges, resentment, rumination, and feelings of revenge so they can bless others (therefore contributing to a more peace-filled world).

WHAT: REACH Forgiveness (five steps you can easily do) to help improve your health, mental health, relationships, and spiritual life … so you can better bless others and better promote peace.

SPECIFICALLY HOW: REACH Forgiveness by (1) leading or being in psychoeducational or other small groups and (2) working through DIY Workbooks…

BECAUSE: They are (1) proven effective; (2) free; (3) easy to use, remember, and train others; (4) available in secular or Christian; (5) can be done in groups or alone.
Christian Formation: Helping People Be More Christian Christians
Christian Formation Happens in Many Ways—But It Usually Does Not Happen Spontaneously

- The Holy Spirit working within and from outside in to build someone who manifests the “mind of Christ” and “Christ in us, the hope of glory.”

- Ways the Holy Spirit works
  - Unilaterally
  - Parents and other influential people—instruction and modeling
  - Examples, exemplars, and interactions
  - Scripture
  - Spiritual disciplines like fasting, praying, study, generosity
  - Christian community
  - Worship
  - Study and effort
  - Humanities, arts, and life
How we want to acquire virtue

Isn’t there some way we can just upload a virtue into our being?
NOPE!
How We Have to Acquire Virtue
Christian Formation: Helping People (and Ourselves) Be More Christian Christians

- Glimpse the Goal of perfect happiness (or transitory happiness)
- Moral Effort to Cultivate the Virtues and Form Habits of the Heart
- Successfully Meet Suffering, Tests, Trials, and Temptations to Pleasure, Power, Pride and People and Empowerment of the Temptations by Prurient Passions
- Temporal Satisfaction from Living Virtuously
- Ultimate Satisfaction
Steps to Acquire Virtue

1. Glimpse the Goal

2. Practice until it becomes a habit of the heart. “Practice doesn’t make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect.”
   – Vince Lombardi

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

4. Not always victory, but ultimate satisfaction
Understanding Forgiveness
Four Types of Forgiveness

- God forgives us (i.e., Divine Forgiveness), as restorative justice, based on Jesus’ finished work.
- We might forgive ourselves (i.e., self-forgiveness) after seeking God’s forgiveness and after/while responsibly trying to make amends to the people we hurt or offended and trying to repair psychological damage we did to ourselves.
- We forgive others (i.e., interpersonal forgiveness).
- Countries and organizations might forgive offenders and classes of offenders for social wrongdoing (i.e., societal forgiveness).
- I’m going to talk about the power of forgiving others.
As Christians, we are a forgiving people.

God forgives us, and that empowers us to forgive others.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

_Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT)_
Jesus requires forgiveness of us.

"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. 6:14-15)

This is not about salvation, but about Christians receiving spiritual rewards.

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13
“Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet as through fire”

1 Corinthians 3:12-15.
Forgiveness: The Hard Virtue

- Note: Forgiveness occurs within our skins
Forgiveness is hard because life is hard

- Yes, that’s me in the para-military costume (aka band uniform), with the sharp, clip-on, and oh-so-well-coiffed tie canted at a jaunty angle.
I Know that Forgiveness Is Very Difficult
A Redemptive Relationship, but also Suffering, Loss, Death of Dreams

My Lessons: Enjoy our relationships while we have them. They tend to be up and down. On this earth, nothing is permanent. Personally, I believe that we are not ONLY living on this earth. We are also citizens of eternity. God is forever, and we also will live forever.
"Injustice Gap"
(Definition) the gap between my ideal and the way that I perceive that things currently stand

What I anticipated was about to happen.
And it wasn't this pretty
We Have Options

- There are many ways to deal with injustice
Revenge

“We have unfinished business.”
We Have Options

- There are many ways to deal with injustice

a. See Justice done

b. Turn it over to God

- South Africa (St. James Church)
b(1). Turn it over to God

- Who will enact Divine justice (on MY behalf)
b(2). Turn it over to God

- Who will enact Divine justice (on MY behalf)
- Out of my control and into God’s control
c. Forbearance

- Effortful attempts to ignore or accept the transgression without making a negative response
- Involves effortfully controlling negative motivations
- Involves effortfully controlling negative feelings

d. Accept and move on

- Stuff happens

"Sure, I can learn to accept things as they are. How are they?"
e. Forgive

- One of those options is to forgive
(1) Decisional Forgiveness

An intention statement stating one’s intent to forswear revenge or avoidance and treat the person as a valued person.
We might decide to forgive and still feel Emotional Unforgiveness

A complex combination of negative emotions (i.e., resentment, bitterness, hostility, hatred, anger, and fear)
Emotional forgiveness is defined as the emotional replacement by positive other-oriented emotions of negative unforgiving emotions.
What are the Positive other-oriented emotions?

- Empathy
- Sympathy
- Compassion
- Agape (altruistic) love
- Romantic love
Facilitated by Positive Non-Self-focused Emotions

- Gratitude (for having been forgiven)
- Humility (recognition that I, too, have erred)
- Hope (toward the future)
Reminder: Don’t Confuse DF, EF, and Reconciliation

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

DF=decision
EF=emotional experience

Both occur within our skin

Forgiveness can promote reconciliation
Decisional and Emotional Forgiveness are not Reconciliation and not simply saying, “I forgive you.”
Two Types of Human-to-Human Forgiveness

- Decisional Forgiveness (*Required of Christians*)—remember Mt 6

- Emotional Forgiveness (*God Desires for Christians*)
Main Points about Forgiveness

- Begins with injustice gap
- Many things (other than forgiveness) can reduce the injustice gap
- Two types of forgiveness: Decisional and Emotional
- Forgiveness is not equal to reconciliation
How to Forgive
The 5 Steps to REACH Emotional Forgiveness

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

These five steps are the external FORMS of forgiveness. The action happens within you.
Recent Developments in Helping Others Forgive

- **Meta-Analysis of Interventions**

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

Psychoeducational Small Groups

Everett Worthington
Professor of Psychology | Virginia Commonwealth University

How can you REACH Forgiveness?

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

Learn more »

Forgiveness Research
Forgiveness Manuals
DIY Workbooks
REACH Resources
VCU Page
Wikipedia Page
Curriculum Vitae (PDF)
Contact Ev

The New Science of Forgiveness
Forgiveness carries tremendous health and social benefits

— Greater Good

If You Want to Forgive...
Outlining five steps to forgiveness

— Dallas Morning News
Forgiveness Groups (Manuals for Leaders and Participants)

Forgiveness Intervention Manuals Available for Download

Links to manuals will open Word documents in new windows.

**REACH Forgiveness Groups—20 Hours of Exercises for Secular and Christian Groups**

The Five Steps to REACH Forgiveness and Becoming a More Forgiving Person is a psychoeducational small group program available for anyone’s use (requiring citation and proper acknowledgement, but requiring no fees). There are two versions in Word documents to permit you to modify and tailor the groups to your own setting:

- **Leader Manual** and **Participant Manual** for Psychoeducational Groups for Becoming a More Forgiving Person for Use in Secular Groups.
- **Leader Manual** and **Participant Manual** for Psychoeducational Groups for Becoming a More Forgiving Christian for Use in Groups Tailored to Christians.

The above manuals have over 20 hours of exercises for the psychoeducational group format, and people who download the materials can cut and paste exercises pertinent for the amount of time and type of attendees.

**REACH Forgiveness Groups—6 Hours Christian Groups**

At present, EV is conducting a multi-site study in 16 explicitly Christian colleges (funded by the Fetzer Institute), and within that study, explicitly Christian groups are conducted for 6 hrs. Thus, the **Leader-6-Hour Manual** and **Participant-6-Hour Manual** reflect what EV considers the best exercises to use within a focused 6 hr
Recent Development: Do-It-Yourself Workbooks

- Workbooks

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

Self-Directed Learning Workbook

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

Self-Directed Learning Workbook

An Intervention to Promote Forgiveness

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Quandrea Harper,1 Everett L. Worthington, Jr.,1 Brandon J. Griffin,1 Caroline R. Lavelock,1 Joshua N. Hook,2 Scott R. Vrana,1 and Chelsea L. Greer1

1 Virginia Commonwealth University
2 University of North Texas

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

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

Take home: Equally effective as group psychoeducation.

Figure 2. Participants’ ratings of unforgiveness and forgiveness over time. TRIM AR = Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations-Avoidance + Revenge (range, 7-60), RFS = Rye Forgiveness Scale (range, 15-75). Participants' forgiveness ratings on other measures (i.e., DFS & EFS) follow a similar pattern.
What does forgiveness give you the power to do?

- Get past barriers
  - Better physical health (cortisol, cardio, all systems)
  - Better mental health (which also aids better health)
  - Better relationships (which also aids better health)
  - Better spirituality (which also aids better health)
What does forgiveness give you the power to do?

- Live without being consumed by flare-ups of anger and resentment—they still come up; they still hurt; they are God’s way of telling us to be careful with similar people in similar situations.
  - Old hurts growing up in a family
  - Severe hurts in adolescent or adult past
  - Recent hurts from children, spouse, work, friends

- Doesn’t it make sense that “Forgive and forget” is not Scriptural. We should NOT forget, but rather not remember the person’s offenses against them because we remember differently.
Self-Forgiveness
Six Steps to Self-Forgiveness and Decisional Plus Emotional Self-Forgiveness

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

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

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

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Workbook to Promote Self-Forgiveness

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

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

Everett L. Worthington, Jr., PhD
Virginia Commonwealth University
(Adapted as a Workbook by Brandon Griffin & Caroline Lawlock)
Take the 5-Second Forgiveness Fix

Jay Winsten, a Harvard Professor, had heard the concept in Scandanavia. He persuaded 160 television programs to insert the idea for a mere five seconds in a television show. Three years (1991) after he launched that campaign in 1988, nine out of ten people in the USA were familiar with the term; 37% of all US adults reported having been a designated driver in the last three years; 54 percent of people who said they were frequent drinkers had been driven home by one. Alcohol-related traffic fatalities declined from 23,626 in 1988 to 17,858 in 1992—saving almost 5,000 deaths a year!
Remind yourself that you want to head in a new direction, what that direction is, and why.

- For example, you could say,

- “I want to be more loving and forgiving toward my partner because I want to show Christ’s love and forgiveness more in my life and I want to act outwardly showing the love and forgiveness I feel inwardly for my wife.”
You can be transformed

Adopt the Five-Second Forgiveness Fix: For six months, everytime you reach for your coffee, say, “As a Christian, I am a forgiving person. How can I practice this today?”
Forgiven and Befriended By Victim, Attacker Dies

OCT 6, 1994

Chris Carrier recently went to visit his ailing elderly friend at a nursing home in North Miami Beach. He took along a portion of the friend’s favorite fish treat, smoked amberjack, comforted the man and made sure that he was warm and well taken care of. It was the last time that he saw his friend, who died later that night.

The friend, David McAllister, was a blind, frail and lonely 77-year-old with no one to look after him. He had also recently confessed to abducting, stabbing and shooting Mr. Carrier in the head and leaving him in the Everglades 22 years ago.

The survival of Mr. Carrier, who was 10, stunned Miami in 1974. Last month, he shocked people again by forgiving and befriending the man who had confessed to the crime.

Now Mr. Carrier has been waiting to learn about funeral arrangements,
If Chris Carrier can forgive what he went through, so can you with things you have gone (or will go) through.
If I, as flawed a person as I am, can forgive my mother’s murderer and myself in my brother’s suicide, then I believe you can forgive too—AND you can help people in your congregation, family, and community forgive whatever they need to forgive.
Questions and Answers