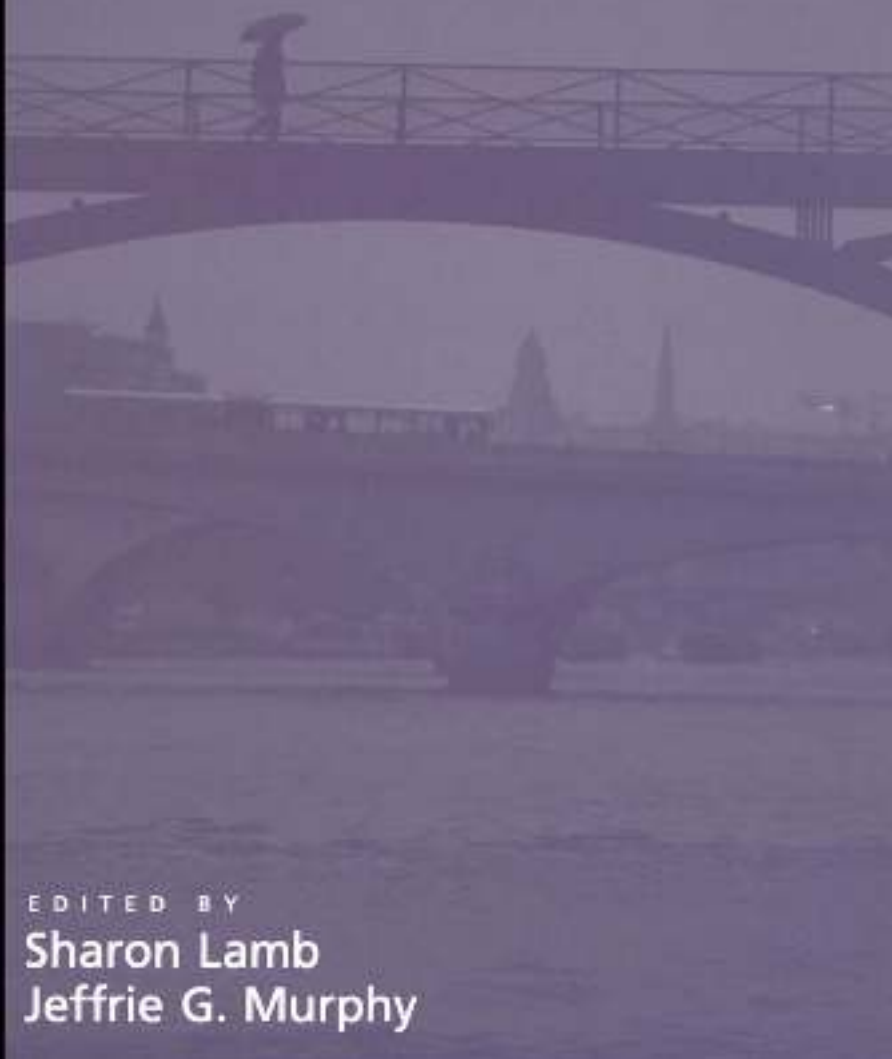


Before Forgiving

CAUTIONARY VIEWS OF FORGIVENESS
IN PSYCHOTHERAPY



EDITED BY
Sharon Lamb
Jeffrie G. Murphy

BEFORE FORGIVING

This page intentionally left blank

•••BEFORE FORGIVING

*Cautionary Views of Forgiveness
in Psychotherapy*

Edited by
Sharon Lamb
Jeffrie G. Murphy

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

2012

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford: New York
Auckland Bangkok Buenos Aires Cape Town Chennai
Dar es Salaam Delhi Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi Kolkata
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Mumbai Nairobi
Sao Paulo Singapore Taipei Tokyo Toronto
and many other cities in the world

Copyright © 2002 by Oxford University Press, Inc.

Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.
198 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10017
0-19-510770-0

Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise,
without the prior permission of Oxford University Press.

James M. Smith, *The Unknowable Culture Project* (2001) © 1997, 1999, 2001
Baylor Institute of Christian Studies.

Jeffrey G. Murphy, *Managing as an Evangelist: A Philosophical Perspective* (copyright © 1995
by Jeffrey G. Murphy, permission was granted by the author).

Book of Genesis, 1:1–2:4, 12:1–13:1, 22:1–24:1, 28:1–35:1, 37:1–50:26
Book of Genesis, Reprinted with permission of the United Bible Societies.

History of Corporate Evangelism in Public Relations (2002)

Reprinted by permission of the author of the original work, published by
Shane Larkin and Jeffrey G. Murphy.

Index/Chronological references and notes
ISBN 0-19-510770-0
Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication
E5587.S57 B44-2002
155.72—dc22 2001000605

5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper

This book is dedicated to the memory of Norman S. Care, a distinguished philosopher and a gifted and compassionate teacher

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

Preface ix

Jeffrey G. Murphy

Acknowledgments vi

Contributors xiii

Introduction: Reasons to Be Cautious about the Use of
Forgiveness in Psychotherapy 3

Sharon Lohb

Part I: When Forgiving Doesn't Make Sense

1. To Understand All Is to Forgive All—Or Is It? 17

Jerome New

Part II: Forgiveness in the Therapy Hour

2. Forgiveness in Counseling:
A Philosophical Perspective 41

Jeffrey G. Murphy

3. Forgiveness in Practice: What Mental Health Counselors
Are Telling Us 54

*Vivida Kinsman, Fern Marr, Jennifer Schurer, Nancy B.
Emerson Lombardo, and Anne K. Harrington*

4. Forgiveness as Therapy 72

Nevada Richards

5. Forgiveness in Counseling:
Caution, Definition, and Application 88

Mona Chantion Albritton

6. Forgiveness and Self-Forgiveness in Psychotherapy 112

Margaret D. Holroyde

7. Forgoing Forgiveness 136

Bill Puka

7.4	Culture and Context in Forgiveness	
8.	Women, Abuse, and Forgiveness: A Special Case	155
	<i>Sharon Leach</i>	
9.	The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Psychoanalytic and Cultural Perspectives on Forgiveness	172
	<i>Janice Lindler</i>	
10.	Forgiveness after Genocide: Perspectives from Bosnian Youth	192
	<i>Joshua M. Thomas and Andrea Carroll</i>	
Part IV Perpetrators and Forgiveness		
11.	Forgiveness and Ineffective Agency	215
	<i>Norman S. Carr</i>	
12.	Earning Forgiveness: The Story of a Perpetrator, Katherine Ann Fowler	232
	<i>Janet Landman</i>	
	Index	265

Preface

A few years ago I (a philosopher) read with admiration psychologist Sharon Lamb's book *The Trouble with Blame: Victims, Perpetrators, and Responsibility*. In my view, her book—although deeply sensitive to the genuine hurts experienced by victims—also advocated forcefully the case for victims responsibly taking charge of their own lives in order to transcend their victimhood rather than wallow in it. We live in a world, alas, where people are given strong incentives—often ideologically motivated—to remain stuck in their victimhood and let it define them. I found Professor Lamb's advocacy of strength and responsibility as an important corrective very persuasive.

Sensing a degree of intellectual and moral kinship with Professor Lamb, I sent her a letter telling her how much I liked her book and enclosed a recent essay of mine, "Forgiveness in Counseling: A Philosophical Perspective." In that essay I expressed some skepticism about the current trend of forgiveness counseling in psychotherapy—a trend revealed both in serious scholarly literature and in countless popular books in the self-help and recovery sections of bookstores. In these books, we are generally bombarded on all sides with the advice that the road to recovery and mental and moral health is paved with forgiveness—both of others and of ourselves. Frequently these books make a persuasive case that we sometimes can transcend our victimhood through acts of forgiveness, but they often fail to show appreciation that forgiveness can also sometimes be an act of weakness and inactivity—a heavy suppression of anger and resentment when that anger and resentment are neither evil nor unhealthy but rather valuable testimony to our self-respect.

Although certainly not an enemy of forgiveness under the proper circumstances, I found much of this literature overly sentimental and enthusiastic in its boosterism for forgiveness. In particular, I thought that much of it tended to see only the good side of forgiveness and only the bad side of resentment and getting even. The purpose of my essay was to resist forgiveness as a universal prescription; it stated the case against and showed the dangers of hasty and uncritical forgiveness—a haste that fails to appreciate that there is such a

thing as evil in the world and that people who do evil may be, particularly if unrepentant, legitimate objects of resentment rather than forgiveness by those they have victimized. Forgiveness, in my view, is generally legitimate only if directed toward the properly deserving (e.g., the repentant) and if it can be bestowed in such a way that victim self-respect and respect for the moral order can be maintained in the process. Cheap and hasty forgiveness, what some have called “cheap grace,” can only debase the real and valuable article—as former president Clinton’s resolute, perpetual babble about forgiveness surely illustrates.

When Professor Larch read my essay, she wrote back that she shared my skepticism about the forgiveness movement in psychotherapy, and we began a correspondence about this and other matters that soon developed into such a warm relationship that Professor Larch (now Sharon) became the first person with whom I have developed a friendship totally through the Internet. We still have never met in person.

At some point in our e-mail conversations, one of us (I cannot remember who) suggested that it might be a good idea to put together a collection of essays expressing not opposition to forgiveness but some cautions about its hasty and inappropriate uses—particularly in the context of psychological counseling. Our thought was that forgiveness is not something to be jumped into but rather to be adopted, if at all, only after some rational thinking—hence the title *Before Forgiving*. We thought that useful discussion of forgiveness must be interdisciplinary in nature and decided to bring together the perspectives of our two disciplines: philosophy (with its careful conceptual analysis and reflection on values) and psychology (with its understanding of the human personality and clinical practice). Our plan was to tempt a mix of both psychologists and philosophers to respond to some of the concerns I had raised in my essay.

The present volume represents the fruits of that idea. It contains essays by philosophers (selected for the most part by me) and psychologists (selected for the most part by Sharon). Except for my essay and the essay by Norman Gale, all of the essays were written expressly for the present volume.

My goal (and, I believe, Sharon’s also) for this collection is to enrich the discussion of the topic of forgiveness by setting it in a broad context where criticism as well as advocacy will be given a hearing. The purpose is not to reject or oppose forgiveness but rather to explore some cautions about it—in short, to throw a bit of the wet blanket over ready forgiveness boosterism. We have all heard the cliché, “to err is human, to forgive divine,” but we need to hear S. I. Perelman’s variation on this cliché as well: “to err is human, to forgive supine.” The truth is probably to be found somewhere between the two.

August 2001
Tucson, Arizona

Jeffrey G. Murphy

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank several people for contributing to our thinking on these issues: Ellen Canackos, Anne Dalke, Jean Hampton, Ron Miller, Peter Tunulty, the authors who contributed to this volume, and members of the Association for Moral Education. Special thanks to Patricia Springuel, Tara Accary, Pauline Beaulieu, and Monica Kellow for help with the manuscript.

This page intentionally left blank

Contributors

Mona Gustafson Affinito, Ph.D., L.P., emeritus professor of psychology at Southern Connecticut State University, has given frequent workshops on "forgiveness" and taught courses on morality in psychotherapy and on forgiveness at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven. In 1995 she moved from Connecticut to Minnesota, leaving behind an active seventeen-year private psychotherapy practice. In Minnesota she has served as teaching and supervising faculty at Eden Prairie Psychological Resources and is a member of the faculty at the Alfred Adler Graduate School, while maintaining a small private practice. She is the author of *Helping with Forgiveness Decisions: A Brief Guide for Counselors and When to Forgive*.

The late *Norman S. Care* was a professor of philosophy at Oberlin College. He was educated in music at Indiana University and in philosophy at the University of Kansas, Yale University, and Oxford University. His areas of interest in teaching and writing were moral theory, moral psychology, political philosophy, environmental ethics, medical ethics, and aesthetics. He wrote *On Sharing Fate*, coedited a number of collections, and published essays and reviews in journals in philosophy, law, and education and in magazines of social comment. His most recent books are *Living with One's Past: Personal Values and Moral Pain* and *Decent People*, from which, with permission, his chapter here has been excerpted.

Andrew Corrad is associate professor of education at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, where he teaches courses in adolescence, moral development, and educational psychology. His recent publications include the coedited volumes *Souls Looking Back: Life Stories of Growing Up Black: Creating Customs*, *International Students Write on U.S. College Life and Culture*, and *Learning Disabilities and Life Stories*. His diverse work in the field of education has focused recently on cross-cultural applicability of moral development theory and on the use of personal narrative as a tool to explore issues of development.

Janice Hawks is professor of psychology at Portland State University and a clinical psychologist in private practice. She has published widely in the areas of gender and violence, psychoanalysis and feminism, and the psychology of social movements. She is author of *Filler of Sails: Gender, Memory, and the Perils of Looking Back* and coproducer of the video *Diamonds, Guns, and Race: Seven Lessons and the Women's Peace Movement*.

Anne K. Harrington is president of Anne Harrington & Associates, Inc., a consulting firm that specializes in aging and long-term care. She is the author of more than 120 articles and 3 chapters on aging. Currently she is conducting research on forgiveness and dementia caregiving.

Margaret K. Halverson received a B.A. in philosophy from Bryn Mawr College and a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Texas at Austin. She is currently an associate professor of philosophy at Iowa State University and has been a visiting professor at Oberlin College and Wellesley College, as well as a visiting fellow at the Center for the Study of Values and Social Policy at the University of Colorado at Boulder. She has published articles in philosophy of law, ethical theory, and biomedical ethics and is the author of two articles on forgiveness, "Forgiveness and the Intrinsic Value of Persons" and "Self-Forgiveness and Responsible Moral Agency."

Karla Krasson is professor of counseling and school psychology at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. She has published in the area of psychological adaptation to chronic illness, marital interactions, and health-related quality of life. She is an experienced clinician who has worked with adults, couples, and families.

Sharon Lamb is associate professor of psychology at St. Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont. For a long time she has been interested in moral issues as well as abuse and victimization and has tried to combine these interests in her work. Her first book, coedited with Jennie Kagat, is *The Emergence of Morality in Young Children*. Her second book, *The Trouble with Blame: Victims, Perpetrators, and Responsibility*, was her first attempt to combine these two interests. Her recent book, *New Versions of Victims: Feminists' Struggle with the Concept*, is a cultural critique of the idea of victim in the historical present. *The Secret Lives of Girls: What Good Girls Really Do* was published in March 2002. She is also a clinical psychologist who sees children and adults in private practice in Shelburne, Vermont.

Janet Landman is associate professor of psychology at Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts. She taught for over a decade at the University of Michigan, where she earned her doctorate in psychology. She is author of *Legacy: The Persistence of the Parable* and numerous research articles and book chapters. Her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Princeton Arts Review*, *The Dickinson Review*, *Latent*, *Northern Corridor*, *Black River Review*, and other literary journals.

Nancy D. Emerson Lombardo is senior research scientist at the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. She has extensive research and intervention experience with persons with dementia, frail elders, and caregivers. She developed a theoretical model on forgiveness as a mental health intervention and has presented workshops with the foundations for a variety of audiences.

Lynn Marx is senior research scientist at the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. Over the past sixteen years her research on gender-related issues has included participation as an author of the American Association of University Women study "How Schools Shortchange Girls," as well as publications on effective social supports and programs to foster adolescents' and young adults' self-esteem, self-efficacy, and social competence.

Jeffrey G. Murphy is Reginald Professor of Law and Philosophy at Arizona State University. He is the author of numerous books and articles on moral and legal philosophy, including *Keat: The Philosophy of Rights, Forgiveness, and Mercy* (with Jean Hampton); and *The Philosophy of Law: An Introduction to Jurisprudence* (with Jules Coleman). His third collection of essays, *Character, Liberty and Law: Kantian Essays in Theory and Practice*, appeared in 1998. His most recent writings on forgiveness and related topics are "Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Responding to Evil," *Fordham Urban Law Journal*; "Two Cheers for Vindictiveness," *Punishment and Society*; "Moral Epistemology, the Relativistic Emotions, and 'The 'Clumsy Moral Philosophy' of Jesus Christ," in *The Business of Law*, ed. Susan Bandes; "Reparation, Punishment and Mercy," in *Reparation*, ed. Amitai Etzioni; and "Jean Hampton on Terrorism, Self-Hatred, and Self-Forgiveness," *Philosophical Studies*.

Jaume Nuñez teaches philosophy at the University of California at Santa Cruz. He is the editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Freud* and the author of *Emotion, Thought, and Theory* and *A Tear from Intellectual Things: The Meanings of Emotions*.

Bill Puka is a psychologist and philosopher who teaches in the department of cognitive science at Rensselaer Institute. He has published widely in the area of ethics and public policy, psychological theory, and philosophy. Puka received a Ph.D. from Harvard, working with John Rawls, Robert Nozick, and Lawrence Kohlberg. He was the first "philosopher-in-residence" in the U.S. Senate, working on the Senate Budget Committee as a legislative aide to Senator Gary Hart. He runs a character education program, "Be Your Own Hero: Careers in Commitment," and a sister-city program in Umuhoze, Nigeria. He has also consulted in managerial ethics for various corporations and government agencies, including Western Electric Corporation and the New York State Governor's Office.

Norvan Richards is professor of philosophy and chairperson of the department of philosophy at the University of Alabama. His recent publications include *Liberty*; "Forgiveness," in *Ethics* and reprinted in *Ethics and Personality*, et.

John Deigh: "Emancipation," in *American Philosophical Quarterly*; and "Criminal Children," in *Law and Philosophy*.

Jennifer Scherer was a research intern with Fern Marx at the Center for Research on Women at Wellesley College when the analysis for chapter 3 was undertaken. Ms. Scherer graduated from Wellesley College in May 2000 with honors in psychology and women's studies. She now works at a strategy consulting firm in Boston and plans to commence graduate studies for an M.S.W. and an M.P.A. in the fall of 2002.

Justin M. Thomas is currently an intern chaplain for the Episcopal campus ministry at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. He graduated summa cum laude from Dartmouth in 2000 with a B.A. in Russian area studies. His honors thesis considers the role of Orthodox religious philosophy in postcommunist Russia. He was a summer camp counselor for nine years and an outdoor education instructor; his interests include the faith development of adolescents and young adults as well as the role of religious organizations in work with at-risk youth and their communities.

BEFORE FORGIVING

This page intentionally left blank

Introduction: Reasons to Be Cautious about the Use of Forgiveness in Psychotherapy

Sharon Lamb

Forgiveness is in the air—public figures making public apologies, movies depicting loving kindness offered to murderers, and psychotherapy programs promoting forgiveness in individuals as well as in marital couples. It is a gift, an offering, a blessing, a cleansing event. Professionally speaking, within the field of psychology the literature on forgiveness has arisen with little criticism and developed without the generally accepted process of hypothesis testing in a neutral context. Rather than neutrality, there has been an almost wholesale acceptance of forgiveness as a virtue and, because of this, little concern about advocating forgiveness in psychotherapy.

Indeed, this trend is in line with other trends in psychology that have been promoted by American Psychological Association president Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2009) on "positive psychology." In a recent article, the two define the field of "positive psychology at the subjective level" as being about valued experiences such as "well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present)." ("Flow" is a term coined by Csikszentmihalyi to describe the feeling of well-being a person derives from mindful engagement in an activity he or she loves to do.) They go on to describe what positive psychology means for the individual: "The capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom" (p. 5).

I believe forgiveness has become a popular notion among therapists today (see chapter 10) because of this new "positive psychology" which is indeed an extension of the three-decade long growth of cognitive-behavioral methods. The step-by-step process toward forgiveness, the encouragement of benevolent attitudes, and the reframing of negative thoughts that are a part of many forgiveness counseling goals today have their roots in the cognitive-behavioral methods originated by Albert Ellis, Albert Bandura, Aaron Beck, and Martin Seligman. These men all researched and advocated a form of therapy that asked patients to change the way they *think* about their problems in

order to change the way they feel and behave toward them. In a sense they oversteer the humanistic psychology movement of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow in the 1960s, which emphasized acceptance of feelings and self-discovery, and replaced it with a more directive approach to therapy, with homework assignments and sometimes even argumentative therapists whose goal is to show clients the errors in their thinking. Although, like all therapies, cognitive-behavioral therapy originated in the clinical setting, it aspires to be a more scientifically based practice and positions itself in opposition to "softer" (less scientifically based) practices like humanism and psychoanalysis. Indeed, cognitive-behavioral theorists like Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) frequently belittle humanistic psychology in particular, saying it spawned a "myriad of self-help movements," a psychology of "vicinology," a legacy of "crystal healing, aromatherapy," and books that help one find one's inner child.

Many forms of forgiveness therapy follow this cognitive-behavioral track in psychology. Advocates believe that if one changes the way one thinks about one's pain, one's perpetrator, and one's injury a person can forgive and that this act, this change of heart, this new way of thinking about one's injuries can bring about happiness and contentment. The belief is that a person has the freedom to choose to forgive, to think differently, and to feel differently. As in Beck's therapy for depression, Ellis's therapy for life's problems, or Seligman's optimism, through challenging old thinking patterns and old ways of responding, a person can free him or herself from responding to the past.

While current practices of forgiveness in therapy follow this model, recent forgiveness theorists and researchers have not ignored the philosophical history and the religious underpinnings of the concept of forgiveness. And there is now an extensive literature in the field, the bulk of which is reviewed in Worthington's *Disparities of Forgiveness*, published in 1998, and in *Forgiveness: Theory, Research, and Practice*, a book of edited chapters by McCullough, Pargament, and Thoresen published in 2000, as well as Enright and Fitzgibbon's most recent manual, *Helping Clients Forgive*. In spite of these extensive reviews of the philosophical, religious, and scientific dimensions of forgiveness, few have challenged the idea that forgiveness is a virtue to be endorsed and taught in a variety of circumstances. This virtue is borne of two fundamentally but differently responses in this literature: one from a philosopher concerned that psychologists were not taking seriously the philosophical questions that arose in their promotion of forgiveness, and the other from a feminist psychologist who saw problems specific to women as well as problems for psychologists whose goals ought to be the exploration, understanding, and accepting of negative emotions as well as positive ones.

Jeffrey C. Murphy, from a philosopher's standpoint, has been long interested in issues of justice, retribution, forgiveness, and mercy, claiming, in disagreement with Jean Hampton in their coauthored volume *Forgiveness and Mercy* (1988), that in some situations forgiveness may be morally inappropriate and mercy a questionable substitute for justice. In my book *The Trouble with Blame* (1996), I took on the topic of forgiveness with regard to perpetra-

tors of sexual abuse, battering, and rape and made pleas for a judicial system that created better spaces for repentance, apology, and reparation in the lives of wrongdoers. Making no claims for victims and forgiveness, I argued that victims needed to look realistically at their perpetrators' as well as their own responsibility and refrain from either taking too much blame on themselves or forgiving their perpetrators too easily in an effort to get psychological relief.

Our interest in psychotherapy arose for several reasons. Over the past two decades, psychologists have no longer been content to philosophically argue points about forgiveness but have begun to advocate its use in psychotherapy. Along with the huge data that forgiveness will have psychotherapeutic benefits have come scientific studies showing the benefits of forgiveness to the mental and physical well-being of people, books giving pragmatic advice about how to do forgiveness therapy, and articles showing steps and stages that lead to forgiveness.

I have been a psychotherapist for over 20 years, working with children, couples, families, and adults with various problems, but also, in particular, those who have experienced abuse and victimization. I have also worked in both the psychoanalytic as well as the humanistic traditions and thus in traditions that generally do not sort emotions into categories of good and bad, nor encourage any particular feeling or set of feelings for a client to cultivate. Although McCullough, Pargament, and Thoresen (2000) point out that Freud says nothing about forgiveness, he does, however, say quite a bit about guilt and aggressive feelings and the repression of each. Psychoanalytic clinicians welcome negative feelings into the therapy hour for exploration and insight, perceiving repression of guilt and aggression (as well as sexual feelings) at the heart of mental illness. The humanistic tradition welcomes negativity as well and holds out the expectation that in psychotherapy as well as in a client's life, all emotions are acceptable. Anger and vengeance are equally as important as joy and generosity, and the therapist refuses to direct a client toward a certain moral end. As Carl Rogers might have said, "How could I possibly judge for you what would be best for you to do?"

Murphy's interest in psychotherapy is less direct. Instead, he has worked primarily with those in the legal system to understand the place of moral emotions such as forgiveness, remorse, mercy, and vindictiveness in our laws and judicial system. I first came to admire his writings because of the practical examples he included to show how these ideas deeply influence the way we live our lives. A recent example of this is his essay "Two Cheers for Vindictiveness" (2000).

In looking at the literature that currently abounds on the practice of and hopes for forgiveness therapy, we found what seemed to us to be a surfeit of stage and step theories about how to forgive, with supporting theory that primarily was used to advocate for forgiveness therapy. Enthusiasm was so great that many theorists overlook or plow past some of the darker aspects of the theory, never demonstrating exactly in what way, for example, vindictive emotions are morally wrong. Although many of these theorists claim that they fully deal with objections to the advocating of forgiveness in psychotherapy,

Discussions are rarely given their due. There is no authored or edited book that incorporates naysayers or questioners in a serious way. In Enright's most recent manual (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000), each naysayer is given short shrift; his or her work is discussed in a paragraph, and then dismissed as wrong.

That is why we saw the need for a volume such as ours, where together naysayers and proponents take seriously the issue of whether forgiveness should be *advocated* in psychotherapy; the problems of unilateral forgiveness; and concomitant issues.

Some of the problems existing in this literature are discussed later; some are developed further in the chapters to come. One initial problem with this literature is that there is no consensus with regard to defining forgiveness (McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2000); some authors advocate for forgiveness only after a perpetrator has made amends and others advocate forgiveness no matter what the response from the perpetrator. In addition, there is little justification for the stage theories that abound. A third problem in the literature occurs in discussions of examples of unilateral forgiveness, forgiveness that expects nothing from the perpetrator of the wrongdoing. Here authors tend to consider only the benefits to the forgiver and rarely the possible losses he or she might experience. The literature on forgiveness is rife with assumptions about negative emotions that remain unexplored and assumptions about the applicability of forgiveness goals to all kinds of people, to all groups, no matter how wounded or harmed. Finally, alternative practices have rarely been examined alongside forgiveness therapy, and other religious beliefs and cultural practices are either ignored or given a nod without serious attempt to incorporate them into a more universal view of forgiveness practice. We expand slightly on each of these and more in this introduction before introducing the individual chapters in this volume.

Definitions

There is no consensus in the definition of forgiveness, although many theorists agree on what forgiveness is not. Those who advocate unilateral forgiveness try to make it clear that forgiveness is not "rationalizing" or "excusing" or "forgetting" or "denying" (Enright & Coyle, 1998). Baumeister, Exline, and Tice (1998), however, have shown that in actual practice, forgiveness expressed often fails to communicate to an offender this essential promise, that he or she is not excused or the behavior is not condoned. Enright, Freedman, and Rique (1998) define forgiveness as a "willingness to abandon one's right to resentment, negative judgment and ill-will toward one who unjustly hurt us, while fostering the undesired qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love towards him or her" (pp. 46–47). Exline and Baumeister (2000) call it a canceling of a debt by the person who has been wronged or injured. Patton (1985) writes that forgiveness is not doing something, but discovering something, "that I am more like those who have hurt me than different from them" (p. 16). Others embrace the religious aspect more fully

in their definition. For Pargament and Rye (1998), it is a method of religious coping and a religious pursuit. For McCullough, Worthington, and Rachal (1997), the essence of forgiveness is a change in one's motivation toward the offending person.

The central problem with definitions of forgiveness is not so much whether one theorist calls it the canceling of a debt and another a gift, but that these terms differ in their implications and are not always compatible. Although theorists may claim that forgiveness does not absolve or excuse the wrongdoer, their definitions can imply that it does. A gift, it could be argued, offers a modicum of absolution. If one cancels a debt, the other need not pay back the wronged person in terms of making reparations. Definitions also differ in terms of whether they portray forgiveness as other-focused or self-focused. If the purpose of forgiveness is the benefit to the self, a gift, as it were, that one gives oneself, is the good it does another a fortunate byproduct? These problems are addressed in the chapters that follow.

Stage Theories and Twelve-Step Programs

Many forgiveness theories agree that there is no easy path to forgiveness and warn against "parental forgiveness," or forgiveness that comes too easily. Perhaps this is why there is an abundance of stage theories implying a longer, step-by-step process. Stage theories became popular in the 1970s as cognitive-developmental theorists built newer interpersonal theories onto Piaget's stages of intellectual development in children and adolescents. Kohlberg is perhaps the most famous of these stage theorists. Others include Robert Keegan, Robert Selman, and Carol Gilligan, all of whom showed a natural progression from one stage to the next, tying socioemotional changes to intellectual changes through scoring hypothetical and real-life discussions of moral and social issues. During the emergence of such stage theories, it was generally accepted that proof of the existence of developmental stages relied on several assumptions: that the stages follow one another in a standard progression and that people move through them one at a time in a similar fashion; that people do not go back to earlier stages once they develop or progress to a higher stage; and that people generally function at their highest level of development.

The stage theories that abound in forgiveness research and counseling generally do not follow these requirements for developmental stages. Instead they use the terminology of stage theories without reference to or an understanding of the methods and qualifications that developmental psychologists have in mind when they develop stage theories. In the heyday of cognitive-developmental stage theories, researchers needed to defend stage progression as the natural way in which development progressed. They went to this through systematic interviews of children and adults of different ages over time (longitudinal methodology). Forgiveness theorists put their stages together using clinical observation (Fenrich & Coyle, 1998), neither defending

- [click Ruin the Sacred Truths: Poetry and Belief from the Bible to the Present \(The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures\) pdf, azw \(kindle\)](#)
- [Place, Ecology and the Sacred: The Moral Geography of Sustainable Communities book](#)
- [download online *Vaccins, mensonges et propagande* book](#)
- [Of Scions and Men pdf, azw \(kindle\)](#)

- <http://musor.ruspb.info/?library/Ruin-the-Sacred-Truths--Poetry-and-Belief-from-the-Bible-to-the-Present--The-Charles-Eliot-Norton-Lectures-.pd>
- <http://korplast.gr/lib/Current-Practice-Guidelines-in-Primary-Care-2014.pdf>
- <http://econtact.webschaefer.com/?books/Cooking-the-French-Way--Revised-and-Expanded-to-Include-New-Low-Fat-and-Vegetarian-Recipes--Easy-Menu-Ethnic-Coo>
- <http://bestarthritiscare.com/library/Of-Scions-and-Men.pdf>