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The Role of Personality and Situational Factors in Forgiveness

by

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Abstract

This study deals with personality and situational variables that influence forgiveness. The relations between empathy and forgiveness were studied, followed by the examination of the relation of these two variables to the Big Five personality traits, as well as honesty, absorption, the propensity to mystical experiences, and dissociation. Empathy was then tested as a mediating variable between the personality variables and forgiveness. Empathy and forgiveness were then studied in relation to childhood maltreatment. Finally, the effects of six different motivations to forgive were examined in relation to the personality variables. Participants were 142 undergraduate students recruited from the first year psychology class at Brock University; 75% were either 18 or 19 years of age, and 84% were female. All of the variables were measured using self-report questionnaires.

The relation between empathy and forgiveness was only partially replicated. In terms of personality, forgiveness was found to be related to honesty, emotionality, and agreeableness. Empathy at least partially mediated the relations between forgiveness and agreeableness, honesty and emotionality. Childhood maltreatment was negatively related to forgiveness, and positively related to openness to experience, absorption, and dissociation from reality, but not to the propensity for mystical experiences. Six different motivations for forgiveness emerged from an exploratory factor analysis. Out of these, Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation was related to emotionality and dispositional empathy. Religious Forgiveness was related to honesty, emotionality, and mystical experiences. Forgiveness to Feel Better was related to honesty, emotionality, agreeableness, conscientiousness, absorption, mystical experiences, and empathy. Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority over the Injurer was negatively related to honesty, empathy, and positively related to extraversion. Forgiveness out of Fear was related to agreeableness. Finally, Altruistic Forgiveness was related to honesty, emotionality, and agreeableness, absorption and the propensity to mystical experiences. Altruistic Forgiveness correlated most highly with all the measures of forgiveness, followed by Forgiveness to Feel better. Altruistic forgiveness was also the motivation for forgiveness that correlated the highest with absorption.

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Introduction

The field of psychology has seen a recent shift towards positive psychology. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) report that positive psychology “promises to improve quality of life and prevent the pathologies that arise when life is barren and meaningless (p. 5)”. The field of positive psychology addresses issues such as well-being, optimism, and happiness. It also deals with searching for effective tools to help people work through their issues and improve the quality of their lives. There is an increasing amount of research that points to the benefits of forgiveness as one of those tools. Forgiveness is also believed to be a function of morality; in other words, the more developed one’s morality, the more likely it is that forgiveness takes place (Enright & The Human Development Study Group, 1991).

The following paper deals with personality and situational variables that influence forgiveness. A connection will be established between forgiveness and the process of empathy. Empathy and forgiveness will then be considered in relation to the Big Five personality traits, with the addition of honesty, a trait that Ashton, Lee, and Son (2000) argue is a sixth basic trait. If one could determine what types of people are more capable of experiencing empathy, then one may be able to find out the personality traits of those who are more likely to forgive.

Absorption and openness to experience will then be discussed, including how they are related to empathy and forgiveness. A connection will also be made between mystical experience and forgiveness, and how this could strengthen the relation between absorption and forgiveness. Hunt (2000) has argued that the same processes that underlie mystical experience also underlie dissociation; however, dissociation is more likely to arise from a traumatic upbringing. It will be argued that, in contrast to mystical experience, dissociative experiences and childhood maltreatment will be associated with less empathy and forgiveness.

The final section will deal with the interaction effects that may occur between these variables. More specifically, the interactions between absorption, forgiveness, and childhood maltreatment will be examined, as well as their relations to people’s individual motivations to forgive.

Benefits and Liabilities of Forgiveness

Forgiveness has many positive consequences. Freedman and Enright (1996) conducted a forgiveness intervention study with twelve female incest survivors and found that the intervention was effective. Specifically, the psychological well-being of the women in the study increased following the intervention. They had higher self-esteem, more hope, and less depression and anxiety. There were no negative effects. The participants also had fewer negative and more positive feelings, along with fewer negative and more positive judgments and behaviours toward their perpetrators. Another intervention study was conducted by Hebl and Enright (1993), who found that the group that underwent a forgiveness intervention had less anger and negative emotion, and more love and positive affect toward their offenders. McCullough and Worthington (1994) conducted a review of studies pointing out the benefits of forgiveness and concluded that forgiveness is correlated with the reduction of negative emotion, the restoration of well-being, the restoration of personal power, the reconciliation of broken relationships, and relief from chronic pain and cardiovascular problems. Karremans, Van Lange, Ouwerkerk, and Kluwer (2003) found that forgiveness was correlated with psychological well-being, especially when the one forgiven was someone close, such as a spouse.

Forgiveness has a large positive effect on relationships. It promotes harmony by mending injuries and eliminating negative affect (Freedman & Enright, 1996; McCullough, 2000). Forgiveness can help mend the relationship between the injured person and the perpetrator. It may also have an effect on the forgiver's other relationships. For example, if one is abused by a parent in childhood, that person may learn certain patterns and repeat those patterns in future relationships (Arata, 2002; Kessler & Bieschke, 1999). If one can forgive a parent, then one may be better equipped and empowered to forgive others.

Improved health is another potential benefit of forgiveness. According to Thoresen, Harris, and Luskin (2000), forgiveness may be good for overall health and well-being because it reduces the negative effects of guilt, depression, hostility, blame, and negative thoughts. It also improves social support, which has many demonstrated health benefits, including mediating the relationship between abuse and

distress (Levendosky, Huth, Bocks, & Semel, 2002). Perhaps one of the reasons forgiveness may be good for health is that it helps increase positive emotional states that are beneficial for boosting the immune system and for reducing heart rate and blood pressure (McCraty, Atkinson, Tiller, Rein, & Watkins, 1995). By reducing negative emotional states, forgiveness may also help reduce feelings of helplessness. Helplessness is known to contribute to stress, something that has been related to poorer health (Everson, Goldberg, Kaplan, Julkunen, & Salonen, 1998).

Many believe there are negative consequences of forgiveness, one of which is that forgiveness may perpetuate injustice by increasing the vulnerability in abusive relationships (Engel, 1989). Enright, Eastin, Golden, and Sarinopoulos (1992) argue, however, that this arises only when the process of forgiveness is thought to include reconciliation. According to Enright, Freedman, and Rique (1998), forgiveness does not mean condoning, or accepting blindly; it means holding less resentment, and seeing the other with a new understanding and compassion. They argue that it is possible to leave a relationship, and still forgive a perpetrator. If one were to stay in a relationship, then other things such as an adequate apology or a promise of no recurrence would be needed to ensure the safety of the injured person. Reconciliation, for example, may not be appropriate in a relationship if the perpetrator has not shown remorse, or the violation was too severe or too recent.

Another criticism of forgiveness is that those who forgive do so out of weakness (Nietzsche, 1887, as cited by Enright and the Human Development Study Group, 1991). Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991) argue against that, however, by saying that the act of forgiveness is not weak, but is characterized by the psychological strength of being able to respect the offender, even in the face of anger. This, however, would depend on one's motivations for forgiving, and one's definition of forgiveness.

Defining and Measuring Forgiveness

There has been much controversy regarding the definition of forgiveness; however, there is a growing consensus regarding which concepts should, and which concepts should not be included in the definition. One definition that seems to be holding its ground is one proposed by Enright et al. (1998, pp.

46-47). They define it as “a willingness to abandon one’s right to resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behavior toward one who unjustly hurt us, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward him or her”. They also mention that forgiveness is an interpersonal process that takes place over time, and happens due to a conscious decision to forgive. McCullough (2000) defines forgiveness further by saying that it is intra-individual, and consists of a complex of prosocial changes in motivations toward a perceived transgressor following an interpersonal offense. He claims that it is, essentially, the canceling of the negative consequences to the person who has been hurt, as well as the addition of prosocial behaviours towards the offender. Changes are made by the termination of anger, the cessation of rumination about the offense, the avoidance of revengeful thoughts or indifference towards the perpetrator, and perhaps, the addition of positive behaviours towards the perpetrator.

Although these definitions of forgiveness are gaining acceptance in the psychological community, they do not necessarily represent the definitions of the general public. Belicki, DeCourville, Michalica, Stewart-Atkinson, and Williams (2003) conducted a study to examine people’s definitions of forgiveness. They found that these vary greatly, and supposedly their attitudes towards forgiveness must vary greatly as well. For example, they replicated Kanz’s (2000) finding that many people believe that forgiveness and reconciliation must always happen together. Such a definition, however, would increase the risk of revictimization. Others, however, believe that forgiveness is possible when reconciliation is not an option, for example, if the perpetrator has passed on, or if the offence was committed by a stranger. Murray (2002) has argued that forgiveness can happen without reconciliation, but reconciliation is difficult without forgiveness. By separating forgiveness and reconciliation, one reduces the risk of revictimization by the same offender.

According to Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991), forgiveness is not the same as forgetting or legal pardoning. To pardon means to release the offender from further punishment. It is possible to forgive, however, and still let the offender suffer the legal consequences required by the situation. They say that forgiveness also differs from condoning, which means simply to overlook or put

up with the injustice. Denying the offence or the hurt that was inflicted has similar impact to condoning. If one condones the offense, then it does not necessarily mean that there is no more resentment. In forgiveness, resentment is said to be overcome by compassion for the perpetrator. Excusing and justifying an offense are also argued to be separate from forgiveness. Both terms imply freeing the offender from the blame. This can happen if there is a perfectly justifiable reason an event took place, and there is no need to forgive. Forgiveness is only appropriate when an unjust hurt has taken place, and that hurt has been acknowledged by the victim (Enright et al. 1998). Finally, there are times when people claim to have forgiven, but still hold resentment, and often act upon it. Enright et al. (1998) call this pseudo forgiveness. According to them, this type of forgiveness is often used as a ploy to maintain or gain power. The offended person verbally forgives, but then continues to remind the offender about the injury. This, Enright et al. (1998) say, is incompatible with forgiveness when forgiveness is defined as involving prosocial changes towards the perpetrator instead of the mere elimination of a desire for revenge.

For the purpose of this study, which focuses on the beneficial aspects of forgiveness, the most appropriate definition of forgiveness is one that maximizes well-being and minimizes the risk of revictimization. The definitions of both Enright and McCullough seem to do just that, and will, therefore, be assumed when forgiveness is mentioned in this study.

There are also two types of forgiveness that need to be considered. Dispositional forgiveness is a general tendency to engage in the act of forgiveness, while state, or situational forgiveness is the forgiveness of a specific situation or hurt. Different studies measure one or the other type of forgiveness; however, they are only moderately correlated (Jones, 2003). For this reason, both types of forgiveness were measured in this study.

In terms of measuring these two types of forgiveness, state, or situational forgiveness is measured by inquiring about a specific situation in which one had forgiven. Dispositional forgiveness is measured by asking whether one tends to forgive across situations. By using the latter method, one is making the assumption that people possess a disposition to forgive. This study focuses on personality aspects that

make one more likely to forgive; therefore, this method would be preferred. However, the most widely used questionnaires are event specific. The few dispositional questionnaires that exist are new and have very little research into their reliability and validity. Furthermore, the more a questionnaire focuses on behaviour in general as opposed to a specific situation, the less valid it is as a predictor of actual behaviour (Hersen, 1976). An event specific questionnaire inquires about the forgiveness of the most hurtful situation in one's memory. Such a hurtful event would be particularly difficult to forgive; therefore, would be a reasonable test of the ability to forgive in general. In this study, a combination of measures was used.

Process of Forgiveness

There has been much controversy regarding the process of forgiveness. There are core aspects, however, that are generally agreed upon. Most would agree that forgiveness is not something that can happen quickly. Forgiving often takes a long time, depending on the nature and the extent of the harm done. Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991) outlined seven processes that they argue are required in order for forgiveness to be reached. They say that the first thing that must happen is that the one who was injured must realize and experience the negative consequences of the injury. One negative consequence that often happens as a result of being injured is the development of defense mechanisms. These defense mechanisms, such as denial, repression, or projection, are often used to distance the injured person from the pain. In order to move on, these mechanisms must be examined and understood.

An obvious consequence of being injured is anger and hatred towards the perpetrator. This anger must be acknowledged and experienced before it becomes debilitating. Another consequence is shame or guilt, which can happen if a victim believes the offense was his or her fault. This consequence is especially relevant for victims of child abuse or sexual assault. For example, in the case of sexual abuse, guilt is often felt for enjoying the attention, feeling aroused, or for dressing in a certain way; however, the victim must realize that bodies respond to stimulation, and no one asks to have something done to them

that is against their will. The victim must acknowledge that an unjust event has happened that had nothing to do with his or her behaviour (Freedman & Enright, 1996).

Cognitive rumination is another consequence of being injured, and is characterized by the injured person continually replaying the offense mentally. This must also be examined in order to avoid experiencing excessive anger, believing that the perpetrator is in a much better state than the one who was injured, or experiencing a hopelessness that follows from belief in an unjust world.

When one acknowledges some of the consequences of the injury, and knows that his or her present coping mechanisms are not working, then one is ready to seek a resolution to the problem. This, according to Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991), is the second process required in forgiveness. The third process is choosing a strategy to resolve the problem. There are many strategies available, such as seeking legal justice, revenge, forgiveness, or using a self-healing strategy such as physical exercise. These strategies are not mutually exclusive. For example, one may choose to take legal action, use a self-healing strategy, and to forgive.

The fourth process is making the choice to include forgiveness in the healing strategy. There are several variables that determine whether or not one will choose forgiveness as a healing strategy. Some of these variables are moral development, environmental conditioning, social influences, religious or philosophical belief, time since the injury, degree of suffering, and finally, the ability to experience a change of heart. In one study, Mullet et al. (2003) found that the social commitment to religion, such as attending church, made a difference in the willingness to forgive, as opposed to mere personal beliefs. In terms of people who are more likely to choose to forgive, one general trend is that the older people are, the more likely they are to forgive (Girard & Mullet, 1997). Subkoviak, Enright, Wu, and Gassin (1995) found that forgiveness most likely evolves across the lifespan depending on a person's level of maturation. To date, no sex differences in forgiveness have been found, although the research is limited (Macaskill, Maltby & Day, 2002; McCullough, Rachal, Sandage, Worthington, Brown, & Hight, 1998).

There are several concepts that if grasped by the individual, would make forgiveness more likely. One such concept is that we all make mistakes, and we all need, at some point, to be forgiven. This

concept is similar to seeing the offender as an equal, and forgiving to create harmony and a better society, not simply out of duty and obligation. As will be discussed below, a propensity for mysticism may be related to forgiveness.

There are many situations that may increase the likelihood that people choose to forgive. McCullough et al. (1998) found one of these to be relationship status. This includes the closeness of the relationship, relationship satisfaction, and the general adjustment of the relationship. Another important variable is whether the perpetrator offers a sincere apology (McCullough et al., 1998). The more sincere the apology, the more likely forgiveness will take place. One explanation for this was proposed by McCullough (2001), who theorized that sincere apologies are expressions of the offender's vulnerability and fallibility, which could lead to feelings of empathy, and subsequently, a greater likelihood of forgiveness on that part of the victim. As discussed in more detail below, this study will focus on one situation where forgiveness may be less likely, this situation being childhood maltreatment.

The fifth process is making the conscious commitment to forgive. This may not necessarily involve saying "I forgive you", but may involve other behaviours such as refraining from revenge, acting positively towards the offender, or making an attempt at restoring a relationship. The personality trait of agreeableness may have an effect in this step of the forgiveness process. Agreeableness is a personality dimension that includes positive traits such as warmth, generosity, altruism, and care. McCullough (2001) describes highly agreeable people as those who thrive in the social realm, and experience less conflict than less agreeable people. Mauger (2003) also suggests that agreeable people are more trusting than less agreeable people. This may lead agreeable people to be more forgiving because they would be more likely to trust the offender not to repeat the offense. In fact, a positive relationship has been found between dispositional forgiveness and agreeableness (Ashton, Paunonen, Helmes, & Jackson, 1998; Mauger, 2003). Neuroticism, which is characterized by moodiness, anxiety, and a susceptibility to experience negative emotions such as anger, has been found to correlate negatively with dispositional forgiveness (Walker & Gorsuch, 2002). McCullough et al. (1998) explained this correlation by stating that people high in neuroticism tend to ruminate more about an offense, which may make it harder for

them to forgive. Emotionality, which is used in this study, is similar to neuroticism in terms of its moodiness, but different in that it does not incorporate anger, but in turn includes being overly sensitive (Lee & Ashton, 2004). It has also been found to relate negatively to forgiveness, because if one were too susceptible to negative emotions, then one may be more hurt by an offense, and less likely to forgive (Ashton et al., 1998). A final personality trait that has been shown to correlate with forgiveness is extraversion (Ross, Kendall, Matterns, Wrobel, & Rye, 2004). However, not all have found this. Walker and Gorsuch (2002) failed to find such a correlation, which surprised them, because extraversion has been known to correlate with other proactive forms of behaviour (Watson & Clark, 1992). The correlation found by Ross et al. (2004), however, was not very large, and they also used a different measure of forgiveness. They used Mauger et al.'s (1992) measure of Forgiveness of Others, which focuses mostly on questions that define forgiveness as a lack of a revenge motivation against the transgressor. There might be something about an avoidance of revenge that correlates with extraversion, but not forgiveness. This study focused on the above traits in relation to both dispositional and situational forgiveness.

The next process in forgiving involves seeing the event from the perspective of the offender. Murray (2002) describes this process, which he calls exoneration, as the understanding and appreciation of the wrongdoer's situation, options, efforts, and limits. Through understanding, the injured person can stop blaming the offender and see him or her as a human being with faults, not just as an offender. The crime is often easier to understand when one views the offender within the context of the hurt that was done, and takes into account the pressures that were surrounding the situation. Furthermore, people often act as a result of learned patterns from childhood, and, therefore, their upbringings and developmental histories must be taken into account before fully understanding their actions. This process of understanding the situation from the point of view of the offender and the capability to feel what the offender feels is often called empathy (McCullough, 2001). If one can see the reasons behind an offense and understand how the perpetrator felt at the time, then perhaps some of the anger for that perpetrator could be reduced.

There are other ways that anger could be reduced. Perhaps one of these ways is to examine one's own imperfections, and realize that he or she has been forgiven in the past. Another is to realize that if it were not for the offense, the injured person would not have learned something as a result of the situation, and would not be the same person that he or she is today.

There are several personality differences that have an effect on the likelihood of empathy and forgiveness. For example, Emmons (2000) theorizes that the narcissistic personality trait may be one that is incompatible with forgiveness. Narcissism is characterized by the tendency to focus excessively on the self. Narcissistic people often have difficulties in recognizing the feelings and needs of others. Given that empathy is such an important step in the forgiveness process, people who are more narcissistic would be likely to forgive less than people who are less narcissistic. Emmons (2000) also mentions several other characteristics that affect the likelihood of whether one forgives or not. These characteristics are highly developed emotional management skills, the ability to regulate anger, a general concern with benevolence, and the state of one's other relationships. As will be discussed in more detail below, this study will focus on the relation of empathy and forgiveness to trait absorption and openness to experience.

According to Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991), the final step in forgiveness is compassion. This step separates forgiveness from exoneration because instead of just understanding or feeling pain, compassion involves reacting to the pain. This is the step where prosocial behaviour takes place. Positive actions are taken towards the offender such as releasing grudges and anger. In situations where it is possible, acting kindly towards the perpetrator might also take place.

Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991) pointed out that not all people experience these stages in the same way or at the same speed. Some people may cycle around, or regress to a previous stage before moving forward. The process most relevant to this study is that of empathizing with the offender. The personality variables that facilitate or inhibit this process will be examined.

Empathy

The ability to experience empathy is agreed upon by many researchers to be one of the most important and prominent determinants of forgiveness (Emmons, 2000; Konstam, Chernoff, & Deveney, 2001; McCullough, 1998). This relation was empirically measured by Macaskill et al. (2002), who found that individuals with higher levels of empathy found it easier to forgive others, but not themselves. McCullough, Worthington, and Rachal (1997) also found that situational empathy significantly predicted situational forgiveness. Similarly, McCullough (1998) found that a lack of empathy leads to more avoidance and revenge motivations. He also found that empathy mediated the relationship between apology and forgiveness. Empathy is essential to being able to understand the perspective of the one who has committed the offense. It may also be an important mechanism for the cessation of blaming and the reduction of anger.

Given that empathy is one of the most direct known routes to forgiveness, then perhaps finding out what types of people are more capable of experiencing empathy is a good way to determine what types of people are more likely to forgive. Empathy, both situational and dispositional, will therefore also be examined in relation to the personality traits mentioned above. Empathy requires one to experience an emotion experienced by another. In order for this to readily occur, one would have to be relatively open to different experiences.

Openness to Experience, Absorption, and Dissociation

Openness to experience, which is one of the Big Five personality traits, is described by McCrae and Costa (1997) to be manifested in “the breadth, depth, and permeability of consciousness, and in the recurrent need to enlarge and examine experience” (p. 2). Openness is a way of approaching the world that affects one’s internal experience and all social interactions (McCrae, 1996). McCrae observed that people who are high in openness have more vivid fantasies, are more creative, are more sensitive to their feelings, are more behaviourally flexible, are more intellectually curious, and possess less conventional attitudes. They also tend to be more in tune with their intuition, have thin mental boundaries between what is inside and outside of them, and are lower in prejudice and authoritarianism. Openness is thought to be genetically determined, and is relatively stable in adulthood. McCrae (1993-94) found it to be

weakly related to intelligence and academic ability; however, others have found that openness accounts for about 25% of full scale intelligence scores on the Wechsler Adult intelligence Scale (Holland, Dollinger, Holland, & MacDonald, 1995). It has been documented to be unrelated to other basic dimensions of personality such as neuroticism, and extraversion (Wild, Kuiken, & Schopflocher, 1995).

A connection between openness and empathy was made by Rogers (1983), who analyzed the characteristics of various innovators in society. He reported that these innovators tended to share many characteristics of the openness dimension, and also greater empathy. This may be one reason that openness greatly affects the quality of social interactions (McCrae, 1996). In an earlier study, McCrae (1993-94) described that people with high scores on the factor of openness are more perceptive in recognizing the emotions of others. This connection may also help link openness to social acts such as forgiveness, although an empirical relation has not been supported (Walker & Gorsuch, 2002).

A related construct to openness is the trait of absorption. Absorption has been shown to be moderately correlated (.40 to .64) with openness to experience (Hunt, Dougan, Grant, & House, 2002; McClure & Lilienfeld, 2002; Roche & McConkey, 1990; Wild et al., 1995). The term absorption was first coined by Tellegen and Atkinson (1974), who described it as “a disposition for having episodes of total attention that fully engage one’s representational (i.e., perceptual, enactive, imaginative, and ideational) resources” (p. 268). Roche and McConkey (1990) describe it as an “openness to experience emotional and cognitive alterations across a variety of situations” (p.91). The conclusion of Tellegen and Atkinson (1974) that absorption is an openness to self-altering and absorbing experiences underscores its conceptual relationship to openness. People high in absorption tend to have periods of becoming fully absorbed in attentional stimuli. They are more likely than others to achieve a heightened sense of reality of a given stimulus, are unaware of distracting events, and often experience an altered sense of reality (Tellegen & Atkinson, 1974).

Absorption has been known to correlate with many other variables. Wild et al. (1995) theoretically related it to four other processes: experiential involvement (also an engagement with an attentional stimulus), aesthetic experience, flow (such an intense involvement with an optimally

stimulating task that one loses track of time), and peak experience (an experience of profound meaning). Absorption involves the ability to become open to a variety of domains such as fantasies, actions, ideas, feelings, and values (McCrae, 1993-94). Wild et al. (1995) found that absorption is related to the motivation to listen to music, to paint, and to view art. It is also related to the perceived importance of these things, and the impact of these activities on mood.

Two other concepts that some believe are strongly related to absorption are fantasy proneness and imaginative involvement (Lynn & Rhue, 1986). According to Lynn and Rhue (1988), these two concepts are not truly discriminable from absorption; therefore, they may be worthwhile exploring in order to achieve a better understanding of absorption. Imaginative involvement involves the suspension of reality, and the narrowing and expansion of consciousness (Roche & McConkey, 1990). It was a term used by Hilgard (1974) to describe highly hypnotizable people. She described it as “the savoring of sensory experiences, drama, reading, childhood fantasy...and creativity” (p.138). It is moderately related to openness (Hunt et al., 2002), and to hypnotizability (LeBaron & Zeltzer, 1987; Lynn & Rhue, 1987). Hunt et al. (2002) also found a moderate correlation between absorption and imaginative involvement. Fantasy proneness is similar to absorption in the fact that fantasy-prone people get so involved that they can lose themselves in a sunset, in a book, or in drama (Hilgard, 1974). It is also similar in the fact that fantasizers see themselves as unique, creative, and non-conforming (Lynn & Rhue, 1988). It is possible, therefore, that fantasizers show many of the same positive characteristics as people high in absorption. It is also possible that the two concepts are practically identical, or that the measurements lack discriminant validity.

There may be reason to believe that absorption is correlated with empathy. When Tellegen and Atkinson (1974) first described absorption, they reported that the attentional object that results in an altered self need not be inanimate, but can be another person. In other words, it is possible for someone to get so highly absorbed in another person that he or she can experience the other's emotions. Tellegen and Atkinson stated that the ability of high absorbers to achieve altered states might facilitate their role-playing skills and abilities to empathize. Wickramasekera and Szlyk (2002) found a significant

correlation of .43 between measures of empathy and absorption. Another study found that empathy was positively related to creativity, which is very often linked to absorption (Carozzi, Bull, Eells, & Hurlburt, 1995). A third study found that therapists who work with traumatized clients, and who experience post-traumatic stress disorder reactions related to their client's traumas, are high in both emotional empathy and absorption (Wertz, 2001). Therefore, there is evidence that high absorbers are generally better able to empathize with others, but does this extend to the ability to empathize with personal injurers? The present study is novel in that it looks not only at the relations between absorption and dispositional empathy, but also at the relation between absorption and situational empathy, and specifically whether someone is better able to empathize with a perpetrator.

There is another link between empathy and absorption that can only be understood when the link between absorption and mystical experience is explicated. Tellegen and Atkinson (1974) proposed that the identification that high absorbers have with objects with which they are absorbed has mystical overtones. This may lead high absorbers to have more mystical experiences than those without this identifying ability. It also seems probable that high absorbers have an affinity for mystical experience because of their capability of achieving altered states of being.

Consistent with this, Hunt (2000) reports that people high in absorption are more open to transpersonal experiences. These experiences can involve an expanded awareness, altered states, creative activity, and synesthesia. They are often mystical in nature, and result in transformations of consciousness. In a study in which he compared creative and non creative people, he found that the creative people had significantly more mystical experiences than the non-creative people, and even more than other imaginative types (Ayers, Beaton, & Hunt, 1999). He also noted that creative people were higher in absorption than the other imaginative types. Roche and McConkey (1990) agree by saying that high absorbers have more paranormal experiences, more out-of-body experiences, a different perception and meaning of body image, and a more subjective experience of time.

There are also several changes in understanding, and subsequently, in behaviour that can happen as a result of realizations that occur during these transformations. William James (1902) reported that

spontaneous religious experiences are often accompanied by a sense of purpose, which often leads one to a greater capacity for empathy. This is most likely because many people who have such experiences often encounter the realization of the unity of humanity. They understand the oneness of all people, and they understand that everything they perceive, and everything they do is based on their own experiences and learning. Such experiences could make one realize that people are all very much alike, and are all trying to do what they can in life based on their circumstances. This understanding would undoubtedly lead one to increase his or her capability of seeing others in their surroundings, and increase his or her willingness to understand where they are coming from. It is very much like a new sense of compassion for all living things. This can be illustrated by an example from my own experience:

I closed my eyes and saw a vivid starlit sky. The only difference between the actual sky and the sky I saw was that the stars in my sky were surrounded by a circle of transparent, white energy. The energy connected each star to the next one. It became clear to me that these stars represented all people on this planet, and that we are all connected by a unifying force. Following this vision, I became more aware of the perspectives of others, and I replaced the blaming of others with taking responsibility for what happens in my life.

James (1902) spoke of this also; he called it a “charity” that leads to more prosocial behaviour towards others, and less need for the material aspects of life.

If there is such a high correlation between absorption and mystical experience, and mystical experience often leads to more compassion and empathy, then perhaps this is another route through which absorption would be correlated with empathy.

This positive side of absorption, however, is not the only one that exists. As with everything in life, absorption has a “dark side.” According to Roche and McConkey (1990), openness to transformative states can have both dissociative and holistic qualities. Besides having been linked to positive characteristics such as creativity and mystical experience, absorption has also been linked to nightmares (K. Belicki & D. Belicki, 1986), and to somatization and global distress (Gick, McLeod, & Hulihan, 1997). Kirmayer, Robbins, and Paris (1994) stated that because high absorbers become so engaged in their internal processes, they may be more sensitive to them and, in turn, may attend more to minor discomforts, and amplify them. Lynn and Rhue (1988) also found that fantasizers scored higher on the

MMPI schizophrenia scale; however, it was only a small number of the fantasizers that had heightened scores. Absorption is positively correlated with hypochondriacal concerns (McClure & Lilienfeld, 2002) and with panic attacks (Lilienfeld, 1997), but most of the absorbers with these concerns and anxieties are also high in negative emotionality. This suggests that it is the interaction of absorption and negative emotionality that makes hypochondriacal anxiety and panic attacks more likely (McClure & Lilienfeld, 2002).

Ayers et al. (1999) suggested that people who are high in absorption may be more sensitive to their environments than non-absorbers. This makes sense since high absorbers can lose themselves, and transform themselves, in response to their surroundings. This leads to the notion that children who are high in absorption may be more sensitive to their upbringings. In other words, a smaller trauma that may not have affected another child might have an effect on a child high in absorption. These children may also have become more sensitive to their environments, and higher in absorption, due to their damaging upbringings. Lynn and Rhue (1988) found that there are two developmental pathways to fantasy proneness: parental encouragement of creativity, and isolation or trauma. It seems likely that parental encouragement would lead to a positive expression of absorption, and trauma and isolation would lead to a negative expression of absorption, which would include an increased likelihood of dissociation.

Many researchers have found a positive correlation between child abuse and measures of absorption and dissociation (Chu & Dill, 1990; Eisen & Carlson, 1998; Irwin, 1999; Sandberg & Lynn, 1992). Irwin (1994) also found that familial loss in childhood can lead to dissociation. Studies show that dissociation is moderately correlated with absorption (Eisen & Carlson, 1998; Hunt et al., 2002). Dissociation, like absorption, has both positive and negative expressions. For example, in its positive expression, dissociation has been associated with creativity (e.g., Domino, Short, Evans, & Romano, 2002). The focus in this study will be on the negative expressions that have been the focus of clinical studies, as elaborated in the next paragraph.

According to Bernstein and Putnam (1986), dissociation is a deficit in the normal integration of thoughts, feelings, and experiences into the stream of consciousness and memory. Spiegel (1986)

reported that dissociation is a defense mechanism that is used to deal with the pain caused by trauma. Dissociation separates consciousness from the immediate effects of fear and pain. Although it may be helpful at the time of trauma, dissociation may become an integral part of one's makeup and may cause psychological dysfunctions such as Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). One study reported that 97 percent of people with DID have a history of child abuse (Putnam et al., 1986). Studies found that the more severe the abuse, whether it be sexual, physical, or psychological, the higher people's score on measures of dissociation (Chu & Dill, 1990; Sandberg & Lynn, 1992). Waller and Ross (1997) found that 3.3% of the general population has some form of pathological dissociation, and they argue that that is often due to environmental influences as opposed to genetics.

Waller, Putnam, and Carlson (1996) concluded that absorption correlates with dissociation because most questionnaires that measure dissociation include both pathological and non-pathological aspects of dissociation. When describing children high in dissociation, Irwin (1994) stated that they "commonly exhibit intense *absorption* in an activity" (p. 456). Another opinion was expressed by Hunt (2000), who suggested that transformative states and dissociation may be different manifestations of absorption. He also mentioned that positive transformative states often happen following some personal trauma (as cited in Almaas, 1986). The conclusion to his study was that a middle range of pain and isolation in childhood might be most conducive to positive transformative states such as mystical experience. This also suggests that a mild level of trauma could lead to absorption; however, if the trauma were severe, then dissociation would predominate. A curvilinear relationship between childhood maltreatment and absorption, forgiveness, and empathy was, therefore tested in this study.

There is reason to believe that dissociation would interfere with empathy, and therefore, with forgiveness as well. There is insufficient data on the direct correlation between empathy and dissociation, but studies have found a negative correlation between empathy and child abuse, which is related to dissociation (Ranney, 1996). Furthermore, Spiegel and Cardena (1991) state that dissociation can greatly affect social functioning.

Child Abuse

Childhood abuse has many detrimental effects on people. As summarized by Cole and Putnam (1992), it has been associated with an increased likelihood for developing borderline personality disorder, eating disorders, substance abuse, identity confusion, and dissociative disorders. Child abuse victims also have lower self-esteem, more depression, more anxiety, and more guilt (Cole & Putnam, 1992; Gagnon & Hersen, 2000; Spiegel & Cardena, 1991). There are several studies that show that victims of child abuse are more likely to be victimized later in life (Arata & Lindman, 2002; Kessler & Bieschke, 1999; Levendosky et al., 2002; Murray, 2002). There have been many explanations for this. One is that those who are abused have a tendency to internalize the pain, and begin to believe that they are bad and deserving of punishment (Kessler & Bieschke, 1999; Straus, 1988). Some other possible reasons are learned helplessness, poor social adjustment, a lack of knowledge of what is normal, and staying in a dangerous situation because it is at least predictable (Harter, Alexander, & Neimyer, 1988).

Another reason victims repeat the pattern of being in an abusive relationship is because they believe that repeating the events that caused the pain may help them to gain control over it. This tendency to repeat past experiences was first reported by Freud (1952), who called it repetition-compulsion. Carl Jung (1953) took this idea further and theorized that not only do people repeat patterns, but these patterns are presented to them on an unconscious level until they can learn from them. He used the term synchronicity to represent how events seem to “fall into place” given what people need to learn at the moment. Another explanation of repetition-compulsion was given by Celani (1999) who used Fairbairn’s object relations theory to explain the dynamics of the battered woman. He argued that abused children develop unrealistic part ego structures as a result of their impoverished relationship with their parents. As a result, they seek out partners with similarly fragmented ego structures with whom they can re-enact the original relationship that created them.

In order to stop repeating negative patterns, whether in a lifetime or between generations, several things need to take place. According to Strauss (1988), the first thing that must happen is for the victim

to stop using negative coping methods such as drugs or alcohol, become separated from violent relationships, and take steps to empowerment such as taking control of the healing process.

Forgiveness may also be a chief element in breaking patterns of abuse. It helps reduce anger that is detrimental to attaining social support. Social support is important in that it has been found to mediate the relationship between abuse and re-victimization (Levendosky et al., 2002). In other words, the more social support one receives, the less likely one is to be revictimized.

Forgiveness may be especially helpful for survivors of childhood abuse because they tend to internalize the blame and develop shame; they often feel that the abuse was to some extent their fault (Kessler & Bieschke, 1999). In fact, Strauss has suggested that accepting the blame is one of the hardest things for a victim to change. Going through the process of forgiveness as outlined by Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991) may provide a means for reducing this sense of self blame. If self blame can be reduced, then one can focus on forgiving the one who is to blame. If forgiveness can rescue one from blaming oneself, then perhaps self-esteem can be improved and inner conflict could be reduced.

McCullough (1998) reports, however, that people who experience excessive negative feelings and images due to hurtful events are less likely to forgive. This includes people who tend to ruminate about hurtful situations. Another barrier to forgiveness is that victims of child abuse often come from homes that lack empathy (Mayer, 1985). This may be disadvantageous to their learning of empathic behaviour. Given that empathy is another major step to forgiveness, child abuse victims may be less likely to forgive than people without abuse histories. This is unfortunate because given the consequences of forgiveness, child abuse victims may benefit tremendously from forgiveness.

Reasons to Forgive

One final dimension of forgiveness that will be explored is the reasons people forgive. People's motivations to forgive are important to examine because when people participate in studies on forgiveness, they may say they forgive, but their motivations may be highly variable. If people are responding to questionnaires on forgiveness with different reasons to forgive, then the variability of the

study increases and the results are more difficult to interpret. In their content analysis study on the nature of forgiveness, Belicki et al. (2003) found that there are, in fact, many reasons people forgive. Some of the reasons they found were pragmatic, such as the desire to reestablish a peaceful work environment and end hostilities with a colleague; some were to benefit the forgiver, such as the desire to increase well-being; others were out of obligation or for religious reasons; and finally, some were more altruistic such as to promote peace or to benefit the offender. Altruistic motivations to forgive could include forgiving to help the perpetrator forgive him or herself for the hurt that was done. Another example would be forgiving with the knowledge that every kind act helps increase the well-being of society in general. Including the people's reasons to forgive will help decipher some of the variability that is expected to happen between the numerous variables. For example, different motivations to forgive may be related to different personality variables. Knowing which motivation is associated with which personality types will contribute to an understanding of who forgives and when they forgive.

Trainer (1984) has made a preliminary attempt at distinguishing different motivations to forgive. Trainer's original questionnaire can be found in Table 1. First of all, she asked people why they forgive or why not, and these questions were content analyzed. Based on this content analysis, she came up with three different types of forgiveness: Intrinsic Forgiveness, Role-Expected Forgiveness, and Expedient-Forgiveness. Trainer described Intrinsic Forgiveness as, "a gradual interactive process effecting an inner change of heart (feeling) and mind toward the one who is perceived as the source of the hurt" (Trainer, 1984, p. 68). This type of forgiveness involves the motivation to rid oneself of negative feelings and behaviours, and to move oneself towards regaining positive feelings towards the offender. It also involves reconciliation both within the self and between the self and the offender. Intrinsic Forgiveness requires an openness to receive and respond to the offender's attempts at reconciliation. The second type of forgiveness, Role-Expected Forgiveness, was described as a response to the perceived expectations of others, including God. This type of forgiveness is strongly motivated by the fear of disapproval and by negative consequences. The final type, Expedient-Forgiveness, is motivated by pragmatic reasons. This type of forgiveness happens for reasons that are practical, such as looking "better" than the other person.

Table 1. *Trainer's Original Types of Forgiveness Questionnaire*

Intrinsic Forgiveness Items

I was moved by God (or a power beyond myself) to respond to () in a kind and forgiving way.
 Despite the deep hurt, my affection for () has not lessened across time. I still love him/her deeply.
 I felt compassion toward () and reverence when I realized how much he/she had suffered.
 I didn't want hard feelings between us anymore. I wanted to be friends.
 I felt it was the right thing to do.
 When () acknowledged the wrong he/she's done, I no longer wanted to hold the past against him/her.
 Both () and I participated in the hurting process. I felt drawn to mutually forgive and be forgiven by ().
 Although () wronged me, I understand him/her better now and I have no desire to condemn () anymore.
 I couldn't keep the hate in my heart. I wanted to let go of it and felt better when I did.
 I realize that () is human like me. We all make mistakes.
 I felt called to enter into the difficult struggle to forgive in order to be true to my faith values.
 I did not force forgiveness, rather it gradually flowed from me in response to God's healing power.
 There is more to () than was evident in our hurtful encounters. He/She has a good side too.
 I see () in a new light. He/She has changed for the better since our hurtful encounters.

Role-Expected Forgiveness Items

I am the kind of person who never harbors resentment against someone who hurts me.
 Persons I look up to (priest, minister, rabbi) told me I should.
 I felt I had to do away with my hostile feelings and make myself love () to live up to God's expectations.
 I feared others would look down on me and therefore should forgive immediately.
 I deserved whatever hurt I got; () is a much better person than I.
 I am the kind of person who automatically turns the other cheek when someone wrongs me.
 What else could I do? Expressing my true feelings would only make things worse. I had to forgive.
 I felt I should make myself forgive right away since God expects us to.
 I was afraid God would hold my faults against me if I didn't forgive.

Expedient Forgiveness Items

I didn't want to end up with ulcers or other ill-effects on my health.
 By rising above the hurt, I could show () that I was still "on top".
 By forgiveness, I could show that I was morally superior to ().
 Forgiveness was my best revenge.
 I pitied (). He/She is such a weak person, one who can't help the harm he/she does.
 I don't need to "get even". God will even up the score for me.
 I felt () was not worth my attention, upset, and anger anymore.
 I forgave but I won't forget and I won't let () forget what he/she did to me.
 I am a much bigger person than () and can afford to forgive him/her.
 I was to my practical advantage to forgive.

Trainer's delineation of the three types of forgiveness with associated motivations was a promising start, but it seems as if her categories could be subdivided. Intrinsic Forgiveness includes

motivations that are different enough to suggest they belong in separate categories. For example, Trainer's Intrinsic Forgiveness included three separate motivations: forgiving for altruistic reasons, forgiving to feel better, and forgiving to promote reconciliation. Trainer's Role-Expected Forgiveness includes items that have nothing to do with expectations and seem to fit better as examples of intrinsic of altruistic forgiveness. Finally, Expedient Forgiveness shows considerable diversity among its items. At least one item, "I didn't want to end up with ulcers or other ill-effects on my health", seems to better reflect a desire to feel better.

In this study, a new questionnaire was developed, derived from Trainer's, to assess five categories of motivations: Altruistic Forgiveness, Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation, Forgiveness to Feel Better, Forgiveness out of a Felt Obligation to Forgive, and Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority over the Injurer. The first three are primarily derived from the motivations associated with Trainer's Intrinsic Forgiveness; Forgiveness out of a Felt Obligation to Forgive is derived from the motivation associated with Trainer's Role-Expected Forgiveness; and Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority over the Injurer is derived from the motivation associated with some of the items in Expedient-Forgiveness. Altruistic Forgiveness basically means forgiving due to a felt oneness with others. It is an understanding that everyone makes mistakes, and therefore, everyone deserves forgiveness. It is forgiving for the good of everyone involved, and feeling that forgiveness is the right thing to do. Spiritual Forgiveness could be another fitting title. Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation is being motivated to forgive to preserve a relationship. Forgiveness to Feel Better is the motivation to forgive for the psychological and physical benefits for oneself. Forgiveness out of a Felt Obligation to Forgive is being motivated to forgive due to perceived expectations of others, including God. Finally, Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority over the Injurer is the motivation to try and prove that one is morally superior to the injurer.

Some examples of changes that were made in this study are as follows. Trainer included the statement, "I didn't want hard feelings between us anymore. I wanted to be friends" (p. 70), in the Intrinsic Forgiveness subscale. This item seems to fit more logically in the subscale of Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation. Trainer placed the statement "I am the kind of person who automatically turns

the other cheek when someone wrongs me” (p. 72) in the Role-Expected Forgiveness subscale. This item was moved into the Altruistic Forgiveness Subscale. Finally, Trainer’s item “I didn’t want to end up with ulcers or other ill-effects on my health” (p. 73) was moved out of the Expedient Forgiveness, and into Forgiveness to Feel Better. One item was deleted from Trainers original questionnaire, which was “when () acknowledged the wrong he/she’d done, I no longer wanted to hold the past against him/her” (p. 70). This item seems to be dependent on a certain situation, that is, whether or not the offender apologized for the transgression. Another item was altered, more specifically, the words priest, minister and rabbi were removed from the item, “persons I look up to told me I should”, to make that item more generalizable to other authorities such as parents or teachers. Other items were constructed in order to have a comparable number of items in each subscale. Some examples of new items are “I forgave so that I would no longer be depressed” for Forgiveness to Feel Better, “I forgave so that my grudge wouldn’t drive () away from me” for Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation, and “I forgave not only for the other person and myself, but also for the good of the whole” for Altruistic Forgiveness.

These different motivations were expected to correlate with different personality factors. It was expected that Altruistic Forgiveness would correlate positively with the propensity to mystical experiences. As mentioned above, people who have mystical experiences are more likely to have experienced a felt oneness with the rest of humanity. This feeling would theoretically lead one to altruistic actions that would promote the world being a better place. Furthermore, because the propensity to mystical experience is correlated with absorption, it might be that absorption would also correlate with Altruistic Forgiveness. It was also expected that Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation would correlate with agreeableness and extraversion, Forgiveness out of a Felt Obligation to Forgive would correlate with agreeableness, and Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority over the Injurer would correlate with negative emotionality.

Different motivations to forgive should be associated with varying capacities to forgive, as Enright has defined it. Enright et al. (1998, pp. 46-47) defined forgiveness as “a willingness to abandon one’s right to resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behavior toward one who unjustly hurt us,

while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward him or her”.

For example, a person high on Altruistic Forgiveness may well be able to feel compassion for an undeserving offender, while someone who forgives out of a desire to demonstrate their moral superiority, or someone who is forgiving simply to follow an order, would be less likely to feel such compassion.

Another possibility is that one would be more likely to forgive if there is hope that the motivation will be fulfilled. Some motivations are dependent on the situation; for example, reconciliation motives are dependent on the response of the offender to be fulfilled. In contrast, altruistic motives for forgiveness are self-fulfilling because if you forgive, the motive will be satisfied. Altruistic Forgiveness, therefore, may show a higher correlation with forgiveness than motivations that are less certain of being fulfilled.

Summary of Hypotheses

- 1) The first goal of this study was to replicate the finding of a relationship between empathy and forgiveness. There is strong evidence for a relation between state forgiveness and state empathy, that is, forgiveness of a specific event when one feels empathy for the perpetrator. Less is known about the relations between dispositional forgiveness and dispositional empathy; therefore, the broader relations among state and trait measures were examined.
- 2) Second, the role of personality in both forgiveness and empathy was considered. It was predicted that agreeableness, emotionality, absorption, and propensity for mystical experiences would correlate positively with both forgiveness and empathy, while dissociation would correlate negatively. It was also expected that some of these variables may correlate with impression management; therefore, it was partialled out in the cases in which it was correlated to make sure that there was a correlation between the variables over and above their relation to impression management.
- 3) The extent to which empathy mediates the relations between the personality variables and forgiveness was examined. It was expected that, in general, empathy would at least partially mediate these relations. There are, however, direct relations independent of empathy that were expected to be found between forgiveness and traits such as propensity to mystical experiences, agreeableness and

emotionality. It was also expected that mystical experience would partially mediate the relations between absorption and both empathy and forgiveness.

- 4) The role of a situational factor, specifically severity of the offense, in this case operationally defined as degree of childhood maltreatment, was examined in relation to the personality variables. It was expected that the degree of childhood maltreatment would be related to openness to experience, absorption, and dissociation, but not related to propensity to mystical experiences. It was expected that the strongest relation would be with dissociation, especially when absorption was partialled out. The relations of childhood maltreatment to forgiveness and empathy were also examined. It was expected that those who have experienced childhood abuse would be lower on dispositional forgiveness and dispositional empathy. The relation of childhood maltreatment to state forgiveness and empathy was explored. If such a relation was observed, the possibility that it was mediated by dispositional forgiveness or empathy was examined. Whether there was a curvilinear relation between childhood maltreatment and absorption, forgiveness, and empathy was tested. Specifically, it was hypothesized that those who had experienced moderate levels of maltreatment would be higher in absorption and be more forgiving and empathic.
- 5) If the factors of Altruistic Forgiveness, Forgiveness out of a Felt Obligation to Forgive, Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation, Forgiveness to Feel Better, and Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority over the Injurer emerged from factor analysis, then it was expected that Altruistic Forgiveness would correlate positively with absorption and the propensity to mystical experiences, that Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation would correlate positively with agreeableness and extraversion, and finally that Forgiveness out of a Felt Obligation to Forgive would correlate positively with agreeableness.

Method

Participants

The participants were 142 undergraduate students recruited from the first year psychology class at Brock University; 75% were either 18 or 19 years of age, with a mean of 19.29 years, standard deviation of 3.96, and a range of 18 to 57 years. There were 119 women, 22 men, and 1 of undeclared sex. The students received two hours of research participation credit as part of their three hours course assignment.

Measures

Copies of all the measures can be found in Appendix A. Each participant's age, sex, religious background, marital status, education, living arrangements, citizenship status, and number of siblings and children were obtained for demographic purposes.

The participants filled out Paulhus' (1988) Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding that included both questions that measured self-deceptive positivity (this is the tendency to give self-reports that are honest but positively biased) and others that measured impression management (this is the deliberate self-presentation to an audience). Both measures have 20 items each, and both are rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from definitely false to definitely true. The coefficient alpha for self-deceptive positivity ranges from .68 to .80, and .75 to .86 for impression management (Paulhus, 1988). Paulhus also conducted a test-retest trial in a five-week period and found the correlations to be .65 to .69.

They also completed Lee and Ashton's (2004) HEXACO-PI, which measures what they argue are the six basic dimensions of personality: Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Honesty, Emotionality, Extraversion, and Openness. This questionnaire has 96 items, 16 for each subscale. A five-point Likert scale ranging from definitely false to definitely true was used to rate the items. According to a study by Lee and Ashton (2004), the coefficient alphas for the individual sub-scales are quite high, ranging from .89 to .92. They also found that the questionnaire showed adequate convergent validities with similar questionnaires. For the purposes of this study, three items were then removed from the agreeableness section of the personality questionnaire because of their overlapping content with the forgiveness measures. The removed items were as follows:

1. I rarely hold a grudge, even against people who have badly wronged me.
2. My attitude toward people who have treated me badly is “forgive and forget”.
3. I find it hard to fully forgive someone who has done something mean to me.

Presence and severity of childhood maltreatment was assessed using a shortened version of Bernstein et al.’s (1994) Childhood Trauma Questionnaire. This new scale, devised by Bernstein et al. (2003) has 28 items, and measures five factors of childhood maltreatment: physical abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, and sexual abuse. Each subscale has five items, and three items measure minimization and denial. Items are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from never true to very often true. The shortened version was used to reduce the effects of fatigue, given the number of questionnaires in this study. Bernstein et al. (2004) found that the original questionnaire had Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .79 to .94 for the five factors. They also found that the shortened version had good criterion-related validity in a subgroup of psychiatrically referred adolescents on whom corroborative data were collected.

Dispositional empathy was assessed using Mehrabian and Epstein’s (1972) measure of empathy. This questionnaire was used because it encompasses the two definitions of empathy adopted in this study: the ability to cognitively recognize the feelings of others, and the capability to share other’s emotions. There are 33 items in this questionnaire, and all items are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from definitely false to definitely true. Macaskill et al. (2002) found it to have a satisfactory Cronbach’s alpha of .81.

State empathy was measured using a nine-item state empathy scale devised for this study. It was developed using words that are similar in meaning to empathy, such as compassion, understanding, and sympathy. All of the items are provided in Table 2. Participants were asked to think of someone who had hurt them deeply in the past and think of this individual when they answered the questions. The items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from definitely false to definitely true. Because it is a questionnaire devised for this study, no psychometric data from previous research are available.

Table 2. *Items of Situational Empathy Questionnaire*

-
1. I feel empathic toward this individual (i.e. I understand him/her).
 2. I feel concerned about this individual.
 3. I feel moved by the situation of this individual.
 4. I feel vengeful toward this individual.
 5. I feel sympathetic to this individual.
 6. I feel compassionate toward this individual.
 7. I feel hostile toward this individual.
 8. I understand why the individual did what he/she did.
 9. I think I could put myself in the individual's shoes.
-

The participants then completed two measures of dispositional forgiveness. Brown's (2003) Tendency to Forgive Scale (TTF) consists of four items that ask participants about their general tendencies towards forgiving. The items were rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Brown (2003) found good convergent and discriminant validity evidence for the TTF. Berry, Worthington, Parrot, O'Connor, and Wade's (2001) Transgression-Related Narrative Test of Forgiveness (TNTF) consists of five scenarios that participants are asked to read and try to imagine. They are then asked to decide to what extent they would forgive the offender in each scenario by placing a check-mark on one response in a five-point scale from definitely not forgive to definitely forgive. This measure was also found to have good construct validity, as well as very good test-retest reliability (Berry, Worthington, Parrot, O'Connor, & Wade, 2001). Brown (2003) found that these two measures were correlated with each other, but the correlation was low ($r = .39$).

Situational forgiveness was measured using a version of McCullough et al.'s (1998) Transgression-related interpersonal motivations inventory (TRIM) that was revised by McCullough and Hoyt in 2002. This is a nineteen-item questionnaire that measures three types of responses that people have when they have been injured. The participants were asked to think of someone who has deeply hurt them and answer questions regarding their revenge motivations (five items), their avoidance motivations (seven items), and their compassionate motivations (seven items). The items are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from definitely false to definitely true. Revenge and avoidance scores are reversed so that they represent forgiveness scores. McCullough et al. (1998) found that this measure has good

internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$ to $.93$), and moderate test-retest reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$ to $.86$). They also found it had adequate validity because it correlated moderately with other measures of forgiveness.

The participants were then asked to fill out a questionnaire designed to measure five separate motivations to forgive. This was a 53-item questionnaire that included items from Trainer's (1984) questionnaire designed to measure three different types of forgiveness: intrinsic forgiveness, role-expected forgiveness, and expedient forgiveness. The present questionnaire was designed to measure five different motivations to forgive: Altruistic Forgiveness, Fulfilling a Felt Obligation to Forgive, Promoting Reconciliation, Forgiveness to Feel Better, and Asserting Moral Superiority over the Injurer. For this questionnaire, the participants were again asked to think of someone who has hurt them, and whom they have forgiven, and indicate why they had forgiven the individual by rating the items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from definitely false to definitely true.

Absorption was measured using Tellegen and Atkinson's (1974) widely used Tellegen Absorption Scale (TAS). It contains 34 true/false items that inquire about individual differences in responding to engaging stimuli, vividness of imagery, cross-modal experiences, and experiences in altered states of consciousness. The true/false rating was switched to a five-point Likert scale to be consistent with the rest of the questionnaires. The scale ranged from definitely false to definitely true. According to Tellegen (1982), the TAS with the true/false rating has an internal consistency of $r = .88$, and a 30-day test-retest reliability of $r = .91$.

The Hood Questionnaire of Mystical Experiences (Hood, 1975) was employed in this study to measure the amount of mystical experience experienced by the participants. The 32 items on this questionnaire measure states such as feelings of unity, bliss, eternity, and subjective perspectives of time. It was rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from definitely false to definitely true. Hood (1975) reported that the scale had adequate item-total correlation coefficients and concurrent validity. He did not provide a reliability coefficient.

Dissociation was measured using Bernstein and Putnam's (1986) Dissociative Experiences Scale. This scale, intended to measure and detect dissociative disorders, is a self-report measure that contains 28 items concerning the frequency of an individual's dissociative experiences. The items include experiences such as amnesia for certain events, discontinuities in awareness, depersonalization, derealization, and imaginative involvement. According to Bernstein and Putnam (1986), the DES score test-retest reliability coefficient is 0.84. They also found that the questionnaire has good construct and criterion-related validity. The original version of this questionnaire provided a bar on which the participants would mark the extent to which the question applied to them. To simplify scoring, the rating scales on this questionnaire were modified into a five point Likert scale ranging from definitely false to definitely true. This, of course might affect the reliability, and lessen its comparability to other studies.

For the calculation of all the measures, the reversed items were first recoded so that for all items, a high score indicated having more of the quality being measured. The mean for each measure was calculated, and this mean became the score for each participant on a given measure. The mean was used rather than the sum to provide a pro-rated score for those individuals who failed to answer one or more items.

The participants also completed five questionnaires concerning health, and one questionnaire concerning social support, for the purposes of another study.

Procedure

Participants completed the questionnaires in groups varying from one to forty, depending on the size of the room that was available. The researcher was present in all the sessions. Prior to filling out the questionnaires, the participants were each given a letter of information, and then asked to sign two letters of informed consent. The participants were asked to provide their e-mail address or a self-addressed envelope so that they could receive a debriefing letter when the study was completed (see Appendix B). When they handed back one of the signed letters of informed consent, they were handed the questionnaires, and asked to answer them as honestly and accurately as possible. No time limit was

given, although the questionnaires took them approximately one and a half hours to complete. They had the option to terminate the study at any time if they did not feel comfortable; however, none did so.

The questionnaires were given in two different orders, so that not always the same questionnaires were filled out last, when the participants may have been getting tired. Both orders began with the demographics questionnaire, which was followed by the personality questionnaire, and then the social desirability questionnaire. The first order then proceeded as follows: health, absorption, mystical experiences, dissociation, childhood maltreatment, empathy, and forgiveness. The second order proceeded as follows: childhood maltreatment, empathy, forgiveness, health, absorption, mystical experiences, and dissociation. An issue was also raised that filling out the childhood maltreatment questionnaire might affect the subsequent filling out of the absorption, mystical experiences, and dissociation questionnaires. The orders were chosen carefully, so that childhood maltreatment did not always come before these measures. An envelope was provided for the completed questionnaires so that they remained anonymous to the researcher. In this way, the anonymity of all participants' responses was ensured throughout the procedure.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

The data for all the questionnaires were entered into SPSS, version 12.0 for Windows. Preliminary analyses were then conducted in order to check for missing data, and to obtain the internal consistency of each questionnaire. Two participants missed two entire pages. One of these participants missed the last 12 questions on the Big Six, the entire social desirability questionnaire, and the entire childhood maltreatment questionnaire. The other one missed all of the empathy questionnaires, and all of the forgiveness questionnaires. In addition, when the data collection first began, two of the questionnaires were missing the response scales. The problem was corrected promptly; however, it still cost the data of seven people on the motivations to forgive questionnaire and eight people on the dispositional forgiveness questionnaire. Missing cases were deleted listwise on all of the multiple regression analyses, pairwise for bivariate analyses, and individual missing items were handled by using means rather than sums. The final sample size ranged from 132-142, depending on what variables were being analyzed.

Since the questionnaires were given with two different orders, the data were then examined to test for order effects by correlating the order variable with all the other variables in the study. No order effects were found. Correlations among all the variables can be viewed in Appendix C.

Distributions for Normality. All of the distributions of the variables were relatively normal with the exception of the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire. According to Georgee and Mallery (2003), both skewness and kurtosis are excellent if they fall within the range of -1 to +1. All the questionnaires with the exception of childhood maltreatment fell within this range. The skewness for childhood maltreatment fell between the range of 1.37 and 4.57, and the kurtosis fell between the range of 1.13 and 25.66. The levels of child abuse in the sample were very low, and thus produced a very positively skewed distribution. Several attempts were made at transforming the data so that it would more closely approximate a normal distribution. No transformation substantially improved the skewness; therefore, the original data were used in the data analysis. Because it is so skewed, the results that include the childhood maltreatment questionnaire have to be interpreted with caution.

Reliability Analyses. The Cronbach's alpha values and the descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) of all the measures can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency of the Questionnaires.*

| Variables | n | # Items | Mean | Standard Deviation | Cronbach's Alpha | Inter-Item Correlation Mean |
|---------------------------|-----|---------|------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Impression Management | 141 | 20 | 2.84 | .60 | .84 | .21 |
| Self-Deceptive Positivity | 141 | 20 | 3.03 | .41 | .69 | .10 |
| Agreeableness | 142 | 13 | 2.91 | .61 | .84 | .29 |
| Honesty | 142 | 16 | 3.35 | .64 | .86 | .27 |
| Emotionality | 142 | 16 | 3.62 | .54 | .80 | .20 |
| Extraversion | 142 | 16 | 3.38 | .65 | .89 | .33 |
| Conscientiousness | 142 | 16 | 3.40 | .54 | .81 | .22 |
| Openness | 142 | 16 | 3.33 | .59 | .81 | .22 |
| Absorption | 142 | 34 | 3.18 | .60 | .93 | .27 |
| Mystical Experience | 142 | 32 | 3.27 | .62 | .92 | .23 |
| Dissociation | 142 | 27 | 2.82 | .64 | .90 | .25 |
| Child Abuse | 141 | 28 | 1.41 | .49 | .84 | .20 |
| Dispositional Empathy | 141 | 33 | 3.70 | .33 | .77 | .10 |
| Situational Empathy | 141 | 9 | 2.93 | .81 | .85 | .39 |
| Tendency to Forgive Scale | 133 | 4 | 3.31 | 1.22 | .73 | .40 |
| Forgiveness (TNTF) | 141 | 5 | 3.15 | .68 | .72 | .34 |
| TRIM | 141 | 19 | 3.38 | .79 | .93 | .41 |
| TRIM – Revenge | 141 | 5 | 4.16 | .80 | .85 | .55 |
| TRIM – Avoidance | 141 | 7 | 2.86 | 1.05 | .90 | .57 |
| TRIM – Compassion | 141 | 7 | 3.13 | .92 | .87 | .48 |

The self-deceptive positivity subscale of the Social Reliability Questionnaire was removed from the study due to its low Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = .69$). The impression management subscale was then solely used for the analyses. Despite the fact that three items were removed from the Agreeableness questionnaire, due to its overlapping content with forgiveness, the alpha still remained adequate for the abbreviated agreeableness subscale ($\alpha = .84$).

As can be seen in Table 3, the reliability for the subscales of the TRIM ranged from .85 to .90, which was slightly lower than the reliability for the entire scale ($\alpha = .93$). The subscales were also quite highly correlated (correlations ranging from .48 to .71); therefore, the total TRIM score was used in the analyses.

Factor Analysis of Motivations to Forgive Questionnaire. An exploratory principal axis factor analysis was conducted on the Motivations to Forgive Questionnaire to see how many and which factors will emerge. An oblique rotation, Promax with Kaiser Normalization, was used because it was anticipated that the factors would be correlated. The structure matrix was used to interpret the data. Altogether, there were 14 factors with an eigenvalue greater than one. An inspection of the scree plot revealed that an eight factor solution was appropriate. When the eight factor solution was done, four strong factors emerged that accounted for 44.63% of the variance. In addition, there was an additional grouping of four factors, and together, the eight factors accounted for 58.07 % of the variance. The eight-factor solution produced factors that were conceptually meaningful and had adequate internal consistency. Two of the factors, however, had only two items loading on them, and were, therefore, not used in calculating the scores.

Several criteria were used to determine item placements. First, only items with factor loadings greater than .40 were included. Second, conceptual clarity was used. For example, when an item ended up on a scale on which it did not fit theoretically, it was dropped. Third, an item was dropped when it loaded on too many factors, or when it lowered the internal consistency of the final subscale.

Six factors were retained that were similar, but not identical to the original five that were theorized. The factor loadings can be viewed in Table 4, those in bold representing the items that appear

on the final questionnaire. Table 5 reveals the original and final placements of each item in the final questionnaire. The 21 items that were dropped from the final questionnaire are included at the bottom of the table. The six factors that emerged were Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation, Religious Forgiveness, Forgiveness to Feel Better, Altruistic Forgiveness, Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority over the Injurer, and Forgiveness out of Fear. These were slightly different from the five factors that were originally hypothesized. Four of the factors, namely, Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation, Altruistic Forgiveness, Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority over the Injurer, and Forgiveness to Feel Better emerged as predicted, although not all of the predicted items loaded onto the final scale. For example, Altruistic Forgiveness had many hypothesized items, but only ended up with four. The other items either had a factor loading smaller than .40, decreased the alpha of the final scale, or loaded more highly on a factor where they did not fit conceptually. One of the items factored into the Religious Forgiveness subscale, but loaded almost as highly on the Altruistic Forgiveness subscale, and also increased the alpha on the Altruistic Forgiveness subscale. Instead of the hypothesized factor, Forgiveness out of a Felt Obligation to Forgive, two other factors were obtained. One of the factors was Religious Forgiveness, since all of the items that grouped together referred to forgiving for religious purposes, and the other was Forgiveness out of Fear. The items on this scale suggested that the participant forgave so that things would not get worse, or so that the offender would not get angry. The descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alphas for all of the new subscales can be found in Table 6. The correlations among the final subscales were mostly significant, and can be found in Table 7. The significance of the correlations indicates that although the subscales load on different factors, they are not completely independent.

Table 4. Factor Analysis Loadings for Motivations to Forgive (Structure Matrix)

| Disposition of Items | Factor Loading | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------|------------|------|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| () is very important to me, so by forgiving, I didn't want to lose the relationship. | .81 | .02 | .37 | -.21 | .13 | .19 | .05 | .13 |
| I forgave () because I still want him/her in my life. | .79 | -.03 | .55 | -.18 | .03 | .13 | -.04 | .13 |
| Despite the deep hurt, my affection for () was not lessened across time. I still love him/her. | .79 | -.02 | .31 | -.35 | -.05 | .10 | -.02 | .07 |
| I forgave () because I love the offender. | .69 | .14 | .31 | -.18 | .13 | .17 | .12 | .07 |
| I forgave so that my grudge wouldn't drive () away from me. | .63 | .24 | .39 | .01 | .30 | .29 | .13 | .18 |
| I realize that () is human like me. We all make mistakes. | .62 | .19 | .55 | -.36 | -.06 | .39 | -.13 | .26 |
| I forgave () because I wanted to keep peace in the relationship. | .60 | .21 | .50 | -.08 | .37 | .27 | .12 | .05 |
| There is more to () than was evident in our hurtful encounters. He/she has a good side too. | .57 | -.22 | .38 | -.35 | -.02 | .01 | -.21 | .17 |
| I felt compassion toward () when I realized how much he/she has suffered. | .57 | .21 | .36 | -.21 | -.02 | .47 | .07 | .38 |
| Both () and I participated in the hurting. I felt drawn to mutually forgive and be forgiven. | .47 | .22 | .36 | -.02 | -.03 | .43 | .04 | .45 |
| I felt I should make myself forgive right away since God (or a higher power) expects us to. | .13 | .84 | .24 | .24 | .19 | .49 | .21 | .03 |
| I was moved by God (or a power beyond myself) to respond to () in a kind and forgiving way. | .17 | .79 | .30 | -.02 | -.01 | .35 | .06 | .22 |
| I had to do away with hostile feelings and love () to live up to God's expectations of me. | .13 | .78 | .23 | .24 | .08 | .38 | .26 | .03 |
| I felt called to enter into the difficult struggle to forgive in order to be true to my faith values. | .03 | .76 | .35 | .09 | .19 | .37 | -.06 | .36 |
| I was afraid that if I didn't forgive, God (or a higher power) wouldn't forgive me. | -.02 | .69 | .11 | .22 | .25 | .29 | .02 | .32 |
| I did not force forgiveness, it flowed in response to my moral beliefs or God's healing power. | .05 | .67 | .27 | .02 | -.05 | .24 | -.07 | .29 |
| I believe that everyone deserves forgiveness because we are all connected. | .42 | .57 | .53 | -.06 | -.05 | .56 | .08 | .43 |
| Persons I look up to told me I should forgive (). | .18 | .46 | .24 | -.03 | .01 | .28 | .08 | .34 |
| I am told that forgiveness is the right thing to do. | .08 | .41 | .39 | .09 | .09 | .30 | .07 | .23 |
| I forgave so that I could let go of the hurt. | .45 | .27 | .76 | -.08 | .02 | .35 | -.11 | .26 |
| I felt that forgiving () was the right thing to do. | .64 | .20 | .71 | -.35 | -.05 | .34 | -.07 | .15 |
| I forgave so that I could have a clear mind and move on. | .33 | .24 | .67 | .12 | .14 | .29 | -.03 | .16 |
| I didn't want hard feelings between us anymore. | .55 | .05 | .66 | -.32 | .23 | .26 | -.25 | .26 |
| Although () wronged me, I understand now and I have no desire to condemn () anymore. | .44 | .04 | .62 | -.32 | .08 | .15 | -.38 | .42 |
| I couldn't keep the hate in my heart. I wanted to let go of it. | .19 | .44 | .61 | -.02 | .07 | .29 | -.13 | .46 |
| Forgiveness makes you feel better in general. | .23 | .33 | .57 | .01 | .01 | .24 | .12 | .24 |
| Forgiveness helped reduce the stress I was feeling due to the incident. | .42 | .24 | .56 | -.11 | .15 | .28 | -.29 | .44 |
| I see () in a new light. | .52 | .21 | .54 | -.20 | -.14 | .15 | .20 | .39 |
| I wanted to stop going over the incident in my mind, so I forgave. | .40 | .21 | .53 | .11 | .31 | .19 | -.04 | .16 |
| I pitied (). He/she is such a weak person and couldn't help the harm done. | -.34 | -.02 | -.38 | .31 | .10 | .02 | -.16 | .22 |
| By forgiving (), I could show that I was morally superior to (). | -.18 | .01 | .04 | .77 | .24 | .06 | -.03 | .09 |

Table 4. *Factor Analysis Loadings for Motivations to Forgive(Continued)*

| Disposition of Items | Factor Loading | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|------|------|------------|------------|------------|------|------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| By rising above the hurt, I could show () that I was still "on top". | -.17 | .18 | -.04 | .76 | .24 | .18 | .01 | .07 |
| I am a much bigger person than () and can afford to forgive him/her. | -.09 | .16 | -.13 | .64 | .15 | .30 | -.16 | .13 |
| I don't need to "get even". God (or Karma) will even up the score for me. | -.09 | .38 | .07 | .54 | .09 | .13 | .09 | .16 |
| I felt () wasn't worth my attention, upset, or anger anymore. | -.37 | -.01 | -.10 | .52 | .01 | -.03 | -.03 | .09 |
| Forgiveness is my best Revenge. | -.02 | .37 | .06 | .50 | .18 | .18 | .06 | .16 |
| I forgave but I won't forget and I won't let () forget what he/she did to me. | -.18 | -.16 | -.31 | .39 | .15 | -.17 | -.00 | -.03 |
| I forgave because I didn't want to rock the boat. | .17 | .22 | .19 | .24 | .71 | .33 | .07 | .19 |
| Expressing my true feelings would only make things worse. I had to forgive. | .03 | .25 | .09 | .31 | .60 | .22 | .29 | .07 |
| I didn't want () to be mad at me. | .39 | .11 | .26 | -.19 | .56 | .14 | .08 | .21 |
| I feared others would look down on me as bitter and resentful if I didn't forgive. | .02 | .25 | -.05 | .35 | .48 | .44 | -.05 | .18 |
| It was my practical advantage to forgive. | .04 | .16 | .13 | .42 | .44 | .14 | -.20 | .21 |
| I am the kind of person who never harbors resentment against someone who hurt me. | .12 | .32 | .31 | -.12 | -.03 | .63 | .13 | .16 |
| I forgave () because every good act helps make the world a better place. | .31 | .53 | .54 | .16 | .21 | .58 | .07 | .44 |
| Forgiveness of one person helps everyone because we are all one. | .29 | .48 | .46 | .08 | -.03 | .54 | .03 | .50 |
| I am the kind of person who automatically turns the other cheek when someone wrongs me. | .05 | .31 | .16 | .16 | .21 | .50 | .18 | .14 |
| I felt I would lose ()'s friends as well if I didn't forgive. | .14 | .11 | -.05 | .34 | .35 | .46 | -.17 | .11 |
| I forgave so that I would no longer be depressed. | .30 | .15 | .32 | .15 | .25 | .45 | -.00 | .15 |
| I deserved whatever hurt I got; () is a much better person than I. | .09 | .09 | -.01 | .00 | .13 | .06 | .72 | -.10 |
| I felt I was mostly to blame and therefore should forgive immediately. | .22 | .09 | .03 | -.03 | .18 | .21 | .64 | .13 |
| I forgave not only for the other person and myself, but also for the good of the whole. | .20 | .51 | .37 | .14 | .14 | .55 | -.19 | .67 |
| I forgave to avoid bad Karma. | .02 | .20 | .07 | .30 | .27 | .11 | .09 | .47 |
| I didn't want to end up with ulcers or other ill effects on my health. | -.16 | .10 | .02 | .21 | .27 | .07 | .08 | .30 |



Table 5. Placement of Items from Factor Analysis

| Item | Type of Forgiveness | |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| | Original Subscale | Final Subscale |
| () is very important to me, so by forgiving, I didn't lose the relationship. | Reconciliation | Reconciliation |
| I forgave () because I still want him/her in my life. | Reconciliation | Reconciliation |
| Despite the deep hurt, my affection for () was not lessened across time. I still love him/her. | Reconciliation | Reconciliation |
| I forgave () because I love the offender. | Reconciliation | Reconciliation |
| I forgave so that my grudge wouldn't drive () away from me. | Reconciliation | Reconciliation |
| I forgave () because I wanted to keep peace in the relationship. | Reconciliation | Reconciliation |
| I felt I should make myself forgive right away since God (or a higher power) expects us to. | Obligation | Religious |
| I was moved by God (or a power beyond myself) to respond to () in a kind and forgiving way. | Altruistic | Religious |
| I had to do away with my hostile feelings and love () in order to live up to God's expectations of me. | Obligation | Religious |
| I felt called to enter into the difficult struggle to forgive in order to be true to my faith values. | Altruistic | Religious |
| I was afraid that if I didn't forgive, God (or a higher power) wouldn't forgive me. | Expectation | Religious |
| I did not force forgiveness, it flowed in response to my moral beliefs or God's healing power. | Altruistic | Religious |
| I forgave so that I could let go of the hurt. | Feel Better | Feel Better |
| I forgave so that I could have a clear mind and move on. | Feel Better | Feel Better |
| I didn't want hard feelings between us anymore. | Reconciliation | Feel Better |
| I couldn't keep the hate in my heart. I wanted to let go of it. | Altruistic | Feel Better |
| Forgiveness makes you feel better in general. | Feel Better | Feel Better |
| Forgiveness helped reduce the stress I was feeling due to the incident. | Feel Better | Feel Better |
| I wanted to stop going over the incident in my mind, so I forgave. | Feel Better | Feel Better |
| By forgiving (), I could show that I was morally superior. | Superiority | Superiority |
| By rising above the hurt, I could show () that I was still "on top". | Superiority | Superiority |
| I am a much bigger person than () and can afford to forgive him/her. | Superiority | Superiority |
| I don't need to "get even". God (or Karma) will even up the score for me. | Superiority | Superiority |
| I felt () was not worth my attention, upset, or anger anymore. | Superiority | Superiority |
| Forgiveness is my best revenge. | Superiority | Superiority |
| I forgave because I didn't want to rock the boat. | Superiority | Superiority |
| Expressing my true feelings would only make things worse. I had to forgive. | Reconciliation | Fear |
| I didn't want () to be mad at me. | Obligation | Fear |
| I feared others would look down on me as bitter and resentful if I didn't forgive. | Reconciliation | Fear |
| I forgave () because every good act helps make the world a better place. | Reconciliation | Fear |
| Forgiveness of one person helps everyone because we are all one. | Altruistic | Altruistic |
| | Altruistic | Altruistic |

Table 5. *Placement of Items from Factor Analysis(Continued)*

| Item | Type of Forgiveness | |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| | Original Subscale | Final Subscale |
| I forgave not only for the other person and myself, but also for the good of the whole. | Altruistic | Altruistic |
| I believe that everyone deserves forgiveness because we are all connected. | Altruistic | Altruistic |
| I felt compassion toward () when I realized how much he/she had suffered. | Altruistic | Deleted |
| I see () in a new light. | Altruistic | Deleted |
| I felt that forgiving () was the right thing to do. | Altruistic | Deleted |
| Although () wronged me, I understand him/her better now and I have no desire to condemn him/her. | Altruistic | Deleted |
| I realize that () is human like me. We all make mistakes. | Altruistic | Deleted |
| I forgave so that I would no longer be depressed. | Feel Better | Deleted |
| I am told that forgiveness is the right thing to do. | Obligation | Deleted |
| Both () and I participated in the hurting process. I felt drawn to mutually forgive and be forgiven by (). | Altruistic | Deleted |
| Persons I look up to told me I should forgive (). | Obligation | Deleted |
| It was my practical advantage to forgive. | Superiority | Deleted |
| I deserved whatever hurt I got; () is a much better person than I. | Altruistic | Deleted |
| I felt I was mostly to blame and therefore should forgive immediately. | Altruistic | Deleted |
| I am the kind of person who never harbors resentment against someone who hurt me. | Altruistic | Deleted |
| I am the kind of person who automatically turns the other cheek when someone wrongs me. | Altruistic | Deleted |
| I felt I would lose ()'s friends as well if I didn't forgive. | Reconciliation | Deleted |
| I pitied (). He/she is such a weak person and couldn't help the harm done. | Superiority | Deleted |
| I forgave to avoid bad Karma. | Feel Better | Deleted |
| I didn't want to end up with ulcers or other ill effects on my health. | Feel Better | Deleted |
| There is more to () than was evident in our hurtful encounters. He/she has a good side too. | Altruistic | Deleted |
| I forgave but I won't forget and I won't let () forget what he/she did to me. | Superiority | Deleted |

Table 6. *Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency of the Subscales (n = 134)*

| Variables | # Items | Mean | Standard Deviation | Cronbach's Alpha | Inter-Item Correlation Mean |
|-----------------------------|---------|------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Reconciliation Forgiveness | 6 | 3.50 | .99 | .87 | .53 |
| Religious Forgiveness | 6 | 2.34 | 1.00 | .89 | .57 |
| Forgiveness to Feel Better | 7 | 3.74 | .73 | .81 | .38 |
| Forgiveness for Superiority | 6 | 2.56 | .86 | .79 | .39 |
| Forgiveness out of Fear | 4 | 2.59 | .89 | .71 | .38 |
| Altruistic Forgiveness | 4 | 3.00 | .99 | .82 | .53 |

Table 7. *Correlations Between Subscales of Motivations to Forgive Scale (based on the summation of chosen items)*

| Subscales | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Forgiveness for Reconciliation | --- | .09 | .27** | .48** | -.18* | .29** |
| 2. Religious Forgiveness | | --- | .27** | .38** | .25** | .59** |
| 3. Forgiveness out of Fear | | | --- | .28** | .20* | .29** |
| 4. Forgiveness to Feel Better | | | | --- | .11 | .59** |
| 5. Forgiveness for Moral Superiority | | | | | --- | .26** |
| 6. Altruistic Forgiveness | | | | | | --- |

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; two-tailed

Relations of Variables with Impression Management. As can be seen in Table 8, there were several personality traits that correlated with impression management, specifically honesty, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and dissociation. All three forgiveness measures and situational empathy correlated with it as well, which means that some of the correlations that may occur between the variables could be due to their relations with impression management. Impression management will, therefore, have to be partialled out in all cases where it correlates with one of the variables.

Table 8. *Correlations with Impression Management (N.B. As noted above, for this table, and all others reporting bivariate analyses, missing data was deleted pairwise)*

| Impression Management (n) | | Impression Management (n) | |
|---------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Honesty | .43** (141) | Dispositional Empathy | -.05 (140) |
| Emotionality | -.02 (141) | Situational Empathy | .19* (140) |
| Extraversion | -.08 (141) | Dispositional Forgiveness (TTF) | .28** (132) |
| Agreeableness | .46** (141) | Dispositional Forgiveness (TNTF) | .36** (140) |
| Conscientiousness | .33** (141) | Situational Forgiveness (TRIM) | .17* (140) |
| Openness | .06 (141) | Reconciliation Forgiveness | -.01(133) |
| Absorption | -.10 (141) | Religious Forgiveness | .48** (133) |
| Mystical Experiences | -.03 (141) | Forgiveness to Feel Better | .26** (133) |
| Dissociation | -.38** (141) | Forgiveness for Moral Superiority | -.02 (133) |
| Total Abuse | -.12 (141) | Forgiveness out of Fear | .05 (133) |
| | | Altruistic Forgiveness | .29** (133) |

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; two-tailed

Hypothesis 1: Relations Between Empathy and Forgiveness.

Due to the large number of correlations in this study, the primary focus will be on those that were predicted in the hypotheses. The correlations that were not predicted will be interpreted with extreme caution. The first correlations that were examined pertained to the relationships among situational empathy, dispositional empathy, situational forgiveness, and dispositional forgiveness (see Table 9). First, dispositional empathy was not significantly correlated with situational empathy. Dispositional empathy was not related to either measure of dispositional forgiveness, but only to situational forgiveness (TRIM). Situational empathy, on the other hand, positively correlated with both dispositional and situational forgiveness. These correlations remained significant when impression management was partialled out. The three measures of forgiveness were all positively correlated with each other, although only moderately.

Table 9. *Correlations Between Empathy and Forgiveness (With Partial Correlations, Controlling for Impression Management in Parentheses) (All have an n= 141, except all correlations with dispositional forgiveness have an n= 133)*

| | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Dispositional Empathy | --- | .14 | .02 | .15 | .32* (.33*) |
| 2. Situational Empathy | | --- | .35* (.32*) | .31* (.27*) | .63* (.62*) |
| 3. TTF Dispositional Forgiveness | | | --- | .42* (.37*) | .29* (.26*) |
| 4. TNTF Dispositional Forgiveness | | | | --- | .33* (.29*) |
| 5. TRIM Situational Forgiveness | | | | | --- |

* $p < .01$; two-tailed

Hypothesis 2. Relations Between Empathy, Forgiveness and Personality Variables

The correlations for all of the personality variables can be found in Table 10. Out of 36 comparisons, 13 were significant, the strongest intercorrelations being among openness, absorption, mystical experiences, and dissociation. Many relations were found when correlating the personality variables with empathy and forgiveness (see Table 11). First, dispositional empathy was positively correlated with honesty, emotionality, and extraversion. Because honesty was correlated with impression management, impression management was partialled out to see whether the correlation remained. In this case, it did not. Supporting the main hypothesis in this study, dispositional empathy was also related to absorption and mystical experiences; however, contrary to the hypothesis, dissociation was also positively related to dispositional empathy. Dissociation was negatively correlated with impression management; nevertheless, the correlation between dispositional empathy and dissociation remained when impression management was partialled out. A regression analysis was conducted that partialled dissociation out of the relation between absorption and empathy to see if absorption would become a better predictor of dispositional empathy. The partial correlation, however, was lower (went from $r = .29$ to $pr = .21$).

Situational empathy was only related to agreeableness; it was not related to absorption, mystical experiences, or dissociation. Since situational empathy and agreeableness were also related to impression management, impression management was partialled out, and a significant relation remained.

Table 10. *Correlations Between All Personality Variables (n = 142)*

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|------|-------|------|--------|-------|-------|--------|
| 1. Honesty | --- | .16 | -.03 | .43** | .09 | .12 | -.01 | .02 | -.15 |
| 2. Emotionality | | --- | .07 | -.13 | .21* | -.30** | -.05 | .07 | -.02 |
| 3. Extraversion | | | --- | -.02 | -.07 | .07 | .13 | .22** | .02 |
| 4. Agreeableness | | | | --- | .08 | .18* | .09 | .12 | -.08 |
| 5. Conscientiousness | | | | | --- | -.18* | -.18 | -.10 | -.28** |
| 6. Openness | | | | | | --- | .59** | .38** | .29** |
| 7. Absorption | | | | | | | --- | .71** | .61** |
| 8. Mystical Experiences | | | | | | | | --- | .47** |
| 9. Dissociation | | | | | | | | | --- |

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; two-tailed

Table 11. *Correlations Between Empathy, Forgiveness, and Personality Variables (With Partial Correlations, Controlling for Impression Management in Parentheses) (All have an n= 141, except all correlations with dispositional forgiveness have an n = 133)*

| | Dispositional Empathy | Situational Empathy | TTF Dispositional Forgiveness | TNTF-Dispositional Forgiveness | TRIM-Situational Forgiveness |
|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Honesty | .21* (.14) | .14 | .24** (.14) | .17* (.19*) | .24* (.19*) |
| Emotionality | .61** | -.01 | -.18* (.21*) | .00 | .19* |
| Extraversion | .18* | -.09 | .06 | -.05 | .08 |
| Agreeableness | .01 | .27** (.21*) | .64** (.60**) | .47** (.36**) | .30** (.26**) |
| Conscientiousness | .03 | -.03 | .05 | .03 | .12 |
| Openness | .04 | .10 | .06 | .11 | .02 |
| Absorption | .29** | .13 | -.07 | .12 | .11 |
| Mystical Experience | .37** | .14 | .05 | .16 | .14 |
| Dissociation | .21* (.21*) | .10 | -.09 | .09 | .06 |

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; two-tailed

None of the forgiveness measures correlated with absorption, mystical experiences, or dissociation. There were, however, many correlations between them and other personality traits. Dispositional forgiveness (TTF) was related to honesty, but not after impression management was partialled out. Contrary to the hypothesis, it was also negatively related to emotionality, even after partialling out impression management. Dispositional forgiveness was highly related to agreeableness.

Since both variables were also positively correlated with impression management, it was partialled out, and the correlation remained.

The other measure of dispositional forgiveness (TNTF) was positively related to honesty and agreeableness. Both correlations remained when impression management was partialled out. The TRIM was positively related to honesty, agreeableness, and emotionality. All three correlations remained when impression management was partialled out.

Hypothesis 3. Empathy as a Mediator Between the Personality Variables and Forgiveness

All of the personality variables that correlated with forgiveness also correlated with dispositional or situational empathy. In the cases where a measure of empathy was significantly related to both a personality measure and a forgiveness measure, empathy was partialled out to see if the correlations between the personality variables and forgiveness remained. To do this, hierarchical multiple regressions were calculated with the relevant forgiveness measure as criterion, first entering impression management on the first step, then empathy, and finally the personality variable on the third step. This analysis provided the partial correlation controlling for impression management. If the partial correlation was significant, then a Sobel test (Preacher, 2004) was calculated to see if empathy partially mediated the relation. The correlations among empathy, forgiveness, and the personality variables can be seen in Table 11. This table also contains the partial correlations, controlling for impression management in parentheses. First, dispositional empathy was partialled out of the TRIM (situational forgiveness) and honesty. The partial correlation was not significant ($pr = .11$); therefore, the relation between the TRIM and honesty was completely mediated by dispositional empathy. Dispositional empathy was then also partialled out the relation between the TRIM and emotionality. Again, the partial correlation was not significant ($pr = -.01$), which indicated that the relation between the TRIM and emotionality was completely mediated by dispositional empathy. Situational empathy was partialled out of the relation between the TTF (dispositional forgiveness) and agreeableness. The partial correlation was significant ($pr = .58$), and the Sobel test indicated that situational empathy did not mediate the relation between the TTF and agreeableness (Sobel = 1.90, $p = .058$). Situational empathy was then partialled out of the

relation between the TRIM and agreeableness. The partial correlation was significant ($pr = .17$); and again, the Sobel test indicated that the relation between the TRIM and agreeableness was partially mediated by situational empathy (Sobel = 2.42, $p = .015$). Last, situational empathy was partialled out of the relation between the TNTF and agreeableness. Again, the partial correlation was significant ($pr = .33$); but the Sobel test indicated that situational empathy did not mediate the relation between the TNTF and agreeableness (Sobel = 1.78, $p = .074$).

Hypothesis 4. Relations Between Childhood Maltreatment and Other Variables

The situational variable, childhood maltreatment, was positively related to openness to experience, absorption, and dissociation, as was predicted (see Table 12). Partial Correlations, controlling for impression management, can also be seen in Table 12. Although impression management was negatively correlated with dissociation, the correlation between childhood maltreatment and dissociation remained significant. As predicted, childhood maltreatment was not related to mystical experience. It was then predicted that the relation between dissociation and childhood maltreatment would be stronger if absorption were partialled out; however, this was not the case (r went from .30 to $pr = .19$). The only significant correlation found between childhood maltreatment and empathy or forgiveness was a negative correlation between childhood maltreatment and dispositional forgiveness. This correlation remained when impression management was partialled out. This was also in agreement with the hypotheses and with previous studies. It was predicted that childhood maltreatment and empathy would be negatively correlated, however, no such relation was found. The possibility of a curvilinear relation between childhood maltreatment and absorption, forgiveness, and empathy was then examined by calculating a multiple regression with forgiveness as the criterion, childhood maltreatment entered on the first step, and childhood maltreatment squared entered the second step; however, no such relation was found.

Table 12. *Correlations Between Childhood Maltreatment and Other Variables (With Partial Correlations, Controlling for Impression Management in Parentheses)*

| | n | Abuse |
|----------------------------------|-----|---------------|
| Openness | 141 | .28* |
| Absorption | 141 | .25* |
| Dissociation | 141 | .30* (.28*) |
| Mystical Experiences | 141 | .15 |
| Dispositional Empathy | 140 | .06 |
| Situational Empathy | 140 | -.04 |
| Dispositional Forgiveness (TTF) | 132 | -.26* (-.23*) |
| Dispositional Forgiveness (TNTF) | 140 | .08 |
| Situational Forgiveness (TRIM) | 140 | .00 |

* $p < .01$; two-tailed

Hypothesis 5. Relations Between Motivations to Forgive and Other Variables

As can be seen in Table 13, different motivations for forgiveness significantly correlated with different measures of forgiveness. This table also contains partial correlations, controlling for impression management. Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation was positively related to the TRIM (situational forgiveness). Because the TRIM was related to impression management, it was partialled out to see if the correlation remained, and it did. Religious Forgiveness was positively correlated with the TTF (dispositional forgiveness), but only before impression management was partialled out. It was related as well to the TNTF (dispositional forgiveness), and remained related when impression management was partialled out. Forgiveness to Feel Better was positively related to all three measures of forgiveness. These correlations remained when impression management was partialled out. Altruistic Forgiveness was also related to all three measures of forgiveness, and these correlations also remained when impression management was partialled out. In contrast, Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority over the Injurer and Forgiveness out of Fear were not associated with any measure of forgiveness.

The different motivations for forgiveness also correlated with many of the personality variables (see Table 13). Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation was positively correlated with emotionality and with dispositional empathy. Both correlations remained when impression management was partialled out.

Table 13. *Correlations Between Motivations for Forgiveness and Other Variables (With Partial Correlations, Controlling for Impression Management in Parentheses)*

| | n | Motivations for Forgiveness | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|---|-------------------------|------------------------|
| | | Forgiveness To Promote Reconciliation | Religious Forgiveness | Forgiveness to Feel Better | Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority | Forgiveness out of Fear | Altruistic Forgiveness |
| TTF | 133 | -.00 | .24** (.13) | .25** (.15) | -.10 | .07 | .26** (.24**) |
| TNTF | 134 | .13 | .36** (.26**) | .30** (.23**) | -.14 | -.01 | .30** (.28**) |
| TRIM | 134 | .29** | .17 (.10) | .29** (.23**) | -.13 | .05 | .29** (.22*) |
| Disp. Empathy | 134 | .35** | .13 | .43** | -.26** | -.00 | .32** |
| Sit. Empathy | 134 | .07 | .17 | .14 | -.08 | -.01 | .24** (.19*) |
| Honesty | 134 | .13 | .35** (.18*) | .22* (.12) | -.18* | -.05 | .30** (.23**) |
| Emotionality | 134 | .25** | .20* | .32** | -.05 | .00 | .21* |
| Extraversion | 134 | -.06 | .02 | .09 | .20* | -.12 | .07 |
| Agreeableness | 134 | .07 | .25** (.06) | .23** (.14) | -.05 | .20* | .31** (.25**) |
| Conscientiousness | 134 | .05 | .09 | .20* (.16) | -.00 | .05 | .09 |
| Openness | 134 | -.03 | -.07 | .02 | -.11 | -.20 | .09 |
| Absorption | 134 | .10 | .04 | .21* | .00 | -.16 | .30** |
| Myst. Experiences | 134 | .05 | .17* | .18* | -.05 | -.13 | .35** |
| Dissociation | 134 | .15 | -.07 | .10 | .00 | -.12 | .07 |

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; two-tailed

Religious Forgiveness was positively correlated with honesty, emotionality, and propensity to mystical experiences, and these correlations remained significant when impression management was partialled out. It was also related to agreeableness, but did not remain significant when impression management was partialled out.

Forgiveness to Feel Better was positively related to honesty, emotionality, agreeableness and conscientiousness; however, honesty, agreeableness and conscientiousness were no longer related when impression management was partialled out. Absorption and propensity to mystical experiences were also related to Forgiveness to Feel Better, and these positive correlations remained when impression management was partialled out. Forgiveness to Feel Better was positively related to dispositional empathy, and this relation remained significant when impression management was partialled out.

Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority over the Injurer was related positively to extraversion, and negatively to honesty and dispositional empathy. Impression management did not affect these relations.

Altruistic forgiveness was positively correlated with honesty, emotionality, agreeableness, absorption, and the propensity to mystical experiences, and these correlations remained when impression management was partialled out. Altruistic forgiveness was also positively related to both measures of empathy. This correlation remained significant when impression management was partialled out.

Last, Forgiveness out of Fear was positively related to agreeableness, and negatively related to openness. Impression management did not affect these relations.

Discussion

This study dealt with personality and situational variables that influence forgiveness. It first examined the relations between measures of dispositional and situational forgiveness, then between empathy and forgiveness. It then looked at the relations of empathy and forgiveness to personality variables, namely the Big Five personality traits, honesty, absorption, the propensity to mystical experiences, and dissociation. Empathy and forgiveness were then examined in relation to a situational variable, specifically childhood maltreatment. Finally, six different motivations to forgive were examined in relation to the personality variables.

The Relations Among the Forgiveness Measures

Although the three forgiveness measures were significantly correlated, they were only moderately so. The correlations between the measure of situational forgiveness and the two measures of dispositional forgiveness were especially small. These correlations, however, may offer some insight into what the scales are actually measuring. For one thing, the average inter-item correlation for the TNTF was quite high, which signifies that people are generally quite consistent in their forgiveness from one imaginary scenario to another. This correlation is also comparable to the correlations between the dispositional measures and the situational measure? Together, this suggests that there may be a disposition of forgiveness, but it may not be predictive of whether people forgive in actual situations. Of course, this might have also have been dependent on the severity of the situation that was recalled during the completion of the situational forgiveness questionnaire. For example, people may have been more forgiving in general when the offense was not as severe, regardless of their scores on the dispositional measures. There is also the possibility, however, that the measures of dispositional forgiveness measure something other than one's disposition to forgive. All three of the measures of forgiveness were correlated with impression management, which may suggest that the questionnaires were not only measuring forgiveness, but also the willingness to look more forgiving. Clearly, more work is needed on the measurement of dispositional forgiveness, if there is even such a thing.

The Relation Between Empathy and Forgiveness

One interesting finding in this study was that dispositional empathy was not significantly related to situational empathy. The general ability to understand the perspectives of others does not seem to be related to the ability to understand the perspective of a specific offender. This might have partially been due to the types of measures employed in this study. For example, some of the items of the dispositional measure include, “some songs make me happy”, and “I often find public displays of affection annoying”. It may even be the case that the two questionnaires measure different aspects of empathy. The dispositional measure of empathy tends to ask more emotional questions like the ones mentioned above; therefore, it might be measuring the emotional side of empathy rather than the perspective taking side, or cognitive empathy. On the other hand, the situational empathy questionnaire ask questions such as, “I understand why the individual did what he/she did”, which might be more geared toward cognitive empathy. This type of empathy, taking the perspective of the perpetrator, seems closer to the one that Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991) were talking about when they were discussing the necessary steps towards forgiveness.

It was theorized that the relation between empathy and forgiveness would be replicated in this study. A high correlation was predicted due to the fact that one aspect of empathy is an understanding of the perspective from the point of view of the offender. This, according to Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991), is one of the essential steps towards forgiveness.

The relation between empathy and forgiveness, however, was only partially replicated in this study. Situational empathy was positively related to both dispositional and situational forgiveness; however, dispositional empathy was only related to situational forgiveness. This replicates McCullough et al.’s (1997) findings of a positive relation between situational empathy and situational forgiveness, but not Macaskill et al.’s (2002) findings of a positive relation between dispositional empathy and dispositional forgiveness. If the measure of empathy does, in fact, only measure the emotional side of empathy, that is, the capability to feel what the offender feels, then maybe it was not related to dispositional forgiveness because the type of empathy that Enright and the Human Development Study

Group (1991) describes is the ability to understand the perspective of the offender, which would be closer to cognitive empathy. Furthermore, the study by Macaskill et al. (2002) used the same measure of dispositional empathy as this one, but used a different measure of forgiveness. She used Mauger et al's (1992) Forgiveness of Others measure, in which most questions focus on revenge, whereas the dispositional measures in this study focus on asking directly about forgiveness itself. This study found that dispositional empathy correlates with situational forgiveness, which also focuses on motivations such as revenge rather than asking directly about forgiveness. Since the questionnaire that were used focused on emotional empathy, then perhaps experiencing the emotions of the perpetrator leads to less revenge, but more understanding is needed in order to truly forgive him or her in the way described by Enright et al. (1991). Future studies will have to measure perspective-taking versus emotional empathy more carefully and separately, in order to sort out these findings.

The Relations Between the Personality Variables, Empathy and Forgiveness

The second hypothesis predicted that empathy and forgiveness would be related to the personality traits of agreeableness, emotionality, absorption, the propensity for mystical experiences, and negatively related to dissociation. Most of the studies focus on the relation between forgiveness and personality variables (e.g., Ashton et al., 1998; Mauger, 2003; McCullough, 2001); however, because of the correlation between empathy and forgiveness, empathy was predicted to be related to the same personality variables as forgiveness. There exists some evidence to support such a prediction. For example, there has been a relation found between absorption and dispositional empathy (Wickramasekera and Szlyk, 2002). The relation was first proposed by Tellegen and Atkinson (1974), who argued that it is possible for someone to get so highly absorbed in another person that they can experience the other's emotions. The absorption in an object that is not the self, or subject, would seemingly be less egotistical than being focused or absorbed solely on oneself. Understanding another's perspectives, or experiencing another's emotions would also require a less egocentric position.

Absorption might also be related to forgiveness by being related to the propensity to mystical experiences. Mystical experiences are often accompanied by feelings of oneness with humanity, which

may in turn, lead people to the realization that we all make mistakes and that we all deserve to be forgiven. According to James (1902), mystical experiences can also foster a sort of “charity” that leads to more prosocial behaviour towards others; consequently, this prosocial behaviour could come also in the form of forgiveness.

The predictions made for the relations between empathy and the personality variables were mostly confirmed, but not all of the characteristics correlated with both dispositional and situational empathy. Dispositional empathy was highly and positively related to emotionality. This confirms the findings of Ashton et al. (1998), who also found that these two variables were positively related. They argued from their findings that if one was low in emotionality, then he or she would have more difficulty experiencing the emotions of another.

Dispositional empathy was also related to extraversion. This relation seems logical, since people who are extraverted focus more on the external, and therefore, may be more likely to pay attention to the feelings of others.

Furthermore, openness to experience correlated with neither type of empathy, which is consistent with the results found by Walker and Gorsuch (2002). This may suggest that openness to experience is not related to the propensity to take on the perspectives of others nor experience their emotions.

Supporting the main hypotheses in this study, and in contrast to the finding with openness to experience, dispositional empathy was related to absorption and to mystical experiences. This is an exciting finding, indeed, for it replicates the first studies to find such a relationship (Wertz, 2001; Wickramasekera & Szlyk, 2002). Although many studies have found a relation between openness to experience and absorption (e.g. Hunt et al., 2002), absorption seems to be a more narrow concept, perhaps even one aspect of openness to experience. If that is the case, then it may only be the absorption component in openness to experience that is related to dispositional empathy. This supports the notion put out by Tellegen and Atkinson (1974) that people who are high in absorption and who tend to get highly absorbed in attentional stimuli may also have the ability to become highly absorbed in other people to the point that they are better able to perceive the other’s perspective and empathize with him or her.

Dispositional empathy was also related to dissociation, which was expected to go in the opposite direction. Additionally, when dissociation was partialled out of a regression analysis that predicted dispositional empathy from absorption, absorption became a slightly poorer predictor of dispositional empathy. Hence, there seems to be a direct relation between the ability to empathize and the tendency to dissociate from reality; however, this relation seems unlikely, and is most likely due to a lack of discriminant validity between the absorption and the dissociation measures. Perhaps in future research, the absorption and dissociation measures themselves would have to be revised in order to differentiate better between them.

Situational empathy was positively related to agreeableness, which supports the predictions made in this study. It was not related to absorption, mystical experiences, or dissociation. The traits of absorption, the propensity for mystical experiences, and dissociation, therefore, seem to be related to the capability to empathize in general, but not with the ability to empathize with a particular injurer. It was mentioned previously that those high in absorption may be more sensitive to their environments, which may render them more hurt by negative circumstances, and perhaps less likely to understand when someone inflicts harm upon them. In contrast, agreeable people are more able to empathize with an offender because agreeable people have a tendency toward kindness and prosocial behaviour, which might give them the inclination to experience empathy for an injurer. According to McCullough (2001), people high in agreeableness may also be inclined to perceive the hurtful behaviours as less intentional and less severe, and, therefore, their injurers as more likeable.

Dispositional forgiveness was negatively related to emotionality. This relation contradicted the finding of Ashton et al. (1998). This, however, was also a rather small correlation. Due to the large number of correlations calculated in this study, and also to the fact that no correction was done to control for Type I errors, this may be a spurious finding. It should not merit any further attention unless replicated in future studies.

Dispositional forgiveness was positively correlated with agreeableness, which also supported previous findings (Ashton et al., 1998; Mauger, 2003). McCullough (2001) describes highly agreeable

people as those who thrive in the social realm, and who experience less conflict than less agreeable people. They tend to be more trusting, and therefore more forgiving, because they would be more likely to trust that the offender would not repeat the offense. There exists also the probability that agreeableness is related to forgiveness because if someone is agreeable, then that person might conceivably also be more likely to agree with another's reasoning to react a certain way, given his or her circumstances.

The other measure of dispositional forgiveness, the TNTF, consisted of five scenarios that the participants were asked to read and try to imagine. They were then asked to decide to what extent they would forgive the offender in each scenario. This measure was related to honesty and agreeableness. Its relation to honesty can perhaps be explained by the notion that people who are honest may trust that others are also honest. If someone were not honest, he or she would probably not trust others either. Furthermore, it seems as if forgiveness requires some level of trust, at least to the point that the victim believes that there will be no recurrence of the offence. Mauger (2003) concluded from his research that people who are high in forgiveness are, in fact, more trusting than people who are less forgiving. Forgiveness and honesty are also traits that often involve a certain level of morality; of course, it could also be that honest people like to see themselves as being more forgiving, or moral. The relation between honesty and the first measure of dispositional forgiveness, however, was lost with the partialling out of impression management. This suggests that honest people may also want to portray themselves as more forgiving than they actually are. The relation of the TNTF to agreeableness could be explained in the same way as the relation of agreeableness to the other measure of dispositional forgiveness, the TTF.

An interesting fact is that absorption, the propensity for mystical experience, and dissociation were related to dispositional empathy, but not to situational or dispositional forgiveness. It is, however, also the case that dispositional empathy did not predict forgiveness very well. As mentioned above, this could mean that people high in absorption may understand the perpetrator, but not necessarily want to forgive him or her, or as discussed below.

The TRIM (situational forgiveness) was related to honesty, emotionality, and agreeableness. Perhaps the high correlation between emotionality and dispositional empathy can explain why people

high in emotionality forgive more in actual situations. Being emotional must help understand the emotional of others, and subsequently, help them be able to forgive. Forgiveness may be one way to see a difference between the trait of neuroticism and emotionality. Emotionality does not contain the anger component, which would seem to impede forgiveness, but does include sensitivity, which may foster it. People who have forgiven a specific offense seem to be honest and agreeable, just like those who tend to be higher in dispositional forgiveness.

The relation between forgiveness and extraversion reported by Ross et al. (2004) was not replicated in this study. This finding was not surprising because in most studies, extraversion is not found to be related to forgiveness. (McCullough, 2001; Walker and Gorsuch, 2002). Ross et al.'s (2004) study used a measure of forgiveness that focused on the revenge motivation. It is possible, therefore, that extraversion may be related more to the revenge motivation to not forgive than to the other motivations such as avoidance or failure to act prosocially towards the transgressor. Further research would have to be done, however, to confirm this hypothesis.

Empathy as a Mediator Between Forgiveness and the Personality Variables

Due to the fact that several of the personality variables that positively correlated with forgiveness were also related to empathy, mediational models with empathy as the mediator were examined. These types of mediational relations have not been examined in previous studies, so no predictions have been made. It seemed as if the correlation between honesty and situational forgiveness was completely mediated by dispositional empathy. Honest people, therefore, do not necessarily forgive more in actual situations, but may be better at experiencing the emotions of others, and in turn, this leads them to forgive more. Impression management, however, must have played a part in reducing the correlation between honesty and situational forgiveness, since the relation between honesty and dispositional empathy was made no longer significant when impression management was partialled out. Dispositional empathy also completely mediated the relation between emotionality and situational forgiveness. This suggests that the one reason that emotionality is related to forgiveness is because of its relation to empathy. This makes sense since most of the explanations for the relation between emotionality and forgiveness are referring to

the capacity to empathize with others. For example, Ashton et al. (1998) stated that people high in emotionality are more susceptible to negative emotions, and may, therefore, be more hurt by an offense. This would most likely act as a barrier to the ability to forgive an offender. However, the case might also be that people who are low in emotionality are not able to experience the emotions of others, and therefore have difficulty empathizing with them. The extremely high correlation between emotionality and dispositional empathy might even suggest that they are measuring similar phenomena. The relation between agreeableness and either measure of dispositional forgiveness was not mediated by situational empathy, so agreeableness as a correlate of dispositional forgiveness still holds strong. Dispositional empathy, however, partially mediated the relation between agreeableness and situational forgiveness. In actual forgiving situations, therefore, the ability of people high in agreeableness to feel the emotions of the transgressor is partially what leads them to forgive.

The Relations Between Child Maltreatment and Other Variables

Due to the skewness of the distribution of the childhood maltreatment measure, all the results in this section must be interpreted with caution. As predicted, childhood maltreatment was negatively related to dispositional forgiveness. This may be due to the extreme severity of the injury, making it especially difficult to forgive, and then leaving the victim with less developed skills or a lack of will to forgive across different situations. In this study, it was predicted that abuse victims would forgive less due to a lack of the ability to empathize. The lack of a negative correlation between childhood maltreatment and empathy, however, did not support this reasoning. Childhood maltreatment was positively related to openness to experience, absorption, and dissociation from reality. This also replicated results from previous studies (Chu & Dill, 1990; Eisen & Carlson, 1998; Irwin, 1999; Sandberg & Lynn, 1992). Childhood maltreatment, however, did not predict the propensity for mystical experiences. As mentioned above, Lynn and Rhue (1988) found two developmental pathways to absorption, one being childhood trauma, and the other being parental encouragement of imaginative activity. Hunt (2000) later argued that that these two pathways could lead to two different manifestations

of absorption, namely, a holistic and a dissociative type. This would explain why childhood maltreatment was related to absorption and dissociation, but not to the propensity to mystical experiences.

Hunt et al. (2002) also predicted that a middle range of emotional pain in childhood might be a precursor to integrative transpersonal states. This is based on Almaas' (as cited in Hunt et al. 2002) notion that mystical experiences are often preceded by experiences of personal deficit. The prediction was then made that there might be a curvilinear relationship between childhood maltreatment and absorption, forgiveness, and empathy. Specifically, those with moderate levels of maltreatment may be higher in absorption and more forgiving and empathic. No curvilinear relationship, however, was found. Nevertheless, it was mentioned earlier that the distribution for the childhood maltreatment was far from being normal, but was extremely positively skewed. Because of this, perhaps no curvilinear relationship could have been found in the first place. The measure used in this study was chosen because it measures abuse as a continuous variable, from severely abused to non-abused people. It was chosen over measures that are more dichotomous, in other words, measures that differentiate between abused and non-abused people. It was chosen in the hopes of obtaining mid-range scores test Hunt's (2002) hypothesis. However, there were very few mid-range scores, therefore, there was no normal distribution. This inquiry would have to be replicated using either a different, less homogenous sample, or a questionnaire that better measures a range of childhood experiences, from mildly unpleasant to severely abusive.

The Relations Among Motivations to Forgive and Other Variables

The Relations Among the Motivations to Forgive and the Forgiveness Measures. Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation was only related to situational forgiveness. This suggests that people who forgive for the purposes of reconciliation may have forgiven their perpetrators for the purposes of keeping the relationship, but they do not necessarily have a general tendency to forgive. It may also be the case the people who are motivated to Forgive to Promote Reconciliation are only motivated to forgive those with whom they have a valued friendship. Measures of dispositional forgiveness determine how people respond to all offenders, including strangers. Perhaps people who are motivated to forgive for the sake of reconciliation do not forgive all offenders.

Religious Forgiveness was not related to situational forgiveness, but was related to both measures of dispositional forgiveness, replicating previous findings of a relation between being religious and seeing oneself as forgiving (McCullough & Worthington, 1999). Only the relation between Religious Forgiveness and the TNTF remained, however, when impression management was partialled out. Pargament and Rye (1998) mention that one way that religion can contribute to the willingness to forgive is because forgiveness is a highly valued aspect of many religions. People who forgive for religious purposes, however, might see themselves as more forgiving than they actually are in order to stay true to their religion. This is supported by the fact that Religious Forgiveness did not correlate with situational forgiveness. This also argues that the dispositional measures at least in part measure people's self-concept about being forgiving rather than their actual propensity to forgive.

Forgiveness to Feel Better was positively related to all three measures of forgiveness. The relation between Forgiveness to Feel Better and one of the measures of dispositional forgiveness was lost when impression management was partialled out, which indicates that even if these people know that forgiving will make them feel better, they may not always be as forgiving as they like to think they are.

It is interesting to note that both Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority over the Injurer and Forgiveness out of Fear were not related to any actual measure of forgiveness. This suggests that as motivations to forgive, they are not very motivating!

As predicted, Altruistic Forgiveness was also the type of forgiveness that correlated most highly with forgiveness, although not significantly more so than the other motivations. It was the only motivation that correlated with all three measures of forgiveness, even after impression management was partialled out. Perhaps Altruistic Forgiveness is the strongest motivation to forgive, or at least the one that will lead to the most actual forgiveness, both across situations and in actual situations. Altruistic Forgiveness seems to be a motivation that would require a higher level of morality, and perhaps people higher in morality would have a greater disposition of forgive. As mentioned before, it also a self-fulfilling motivation. In other words, the act of forgiving itself satisfies the motivation to do so. This

contrasts other motivations, which depend on specific situations to be fulfilled. For example, Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation depends on whether the relationship will be restored, in order to be satisfied.

When the question of why people forgive a specific offense is asked, altogether, these results suggest they do so for altruistic reasons, to feel better, and to reconcile the relationship with the perpetrator. Forgiving for religious reasons may even be a motivator for seeing oneself as a forgiving person, but necessarily living up to that fantasy. When the motivations associated with describing oneself as a forgiving person are considered, the results suggest that people do so for altruistic and religious reasons, and to feel better. The other motivations, namely, forgiving out of fear or forgiving to assert moral superiority over the injurer are not strong motivators to forgive or even describe oneself as a forgiving person.

The Relations Among the Motivations to Forgive and the Personality Variables. These relations are mostly all post hoc, and therefore, would have to be replicated in order to be stated with more confidence. First, Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation was related to emotionality. This study found that people high on emotionality tend to be better able at experiencing the emotions of others, and therefore, may be more motivated to maintain relationships with those they can relate to.

Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation was also related to dispositional empathy. This may be because people who are motivated to preserve relationships are more likely to experience the emotions of others. Of course, there is also the possibility that emotionality is measuring a similar phenomenon as dispositional empathy, as was mentioned above. One interesting finding was that Forgiveness to Promote Reconciliation was not related to extraversion. One would expect people high in extraversion, who seem to thrive in the social realm, to be more highly motivated to preserve relationships than others.

Religious forgiveness was related to honesty, emotionality, and agreeableness. The strongest correlations were with honesty and agreeableness. It seems as if the morality that goes together with many religions would include these two characteristics. When impression management was partialled out, however, the correlation between Religious Forgiveness and agreeableness disappeared. This

signifies that either people who forgive for religious reasons like to see themselves as agreeable, or agreeable people like to believe they would always forgive for religious purposes.

Religious Forgiveness was also related to the propensity to mystical experiences. Interestingly, however, it was not related to absorption, a concept that usually goes hand in hand with the propensity to mystical experiences. This suggests that there may be an aspect of mystical experiences that has nothing to do with an openness to altered states of consciousness. The deep involvement and commitment to a religion must somehow in itself increase one's likelihood of having mystical experiences. Nevertheless, and contrary to the absorption scale, the mystical experiences scale does contain some religious content, which could have also accounted for this correlation. Religious Forgiveness was not related to empathy, which means that people who forgive for religious reasons do not necessarily do so because they are higher in empathy.

Forgiveness to Feel Better was related to honesty, emotionality, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. The relations of Forgiveness to Feel Better to both agreeableness and to conscientiousness, however, disappeared when impression management was partialled out. This suggests that people who forgive to feel better would only like to see themselves as more agreeable and conscientious since it might logically make sense to be so in order to avoid conflicts or emotions that would make one feel bad. On the other hand, they could also find "Forgiveness to Feel Better" as self enhancing to their self image. It is possible that part of the essence of agreeableness is the desire to be socially desirable. The strongest remaining correlation was between Forgiveness to Feel Better and emotionality. Perhaps if someone were more emotional, then would be more motivated to forgive to feel better and rid themselves of their access of negative emotions.

Forgiveness to Feel Better was moderately related to both absorption and the propensity to mystical experiences. Again, the theory that people high in absorption are more sensitive to their environments may apply here in the sense that they may feel more distress due to a transgression, and may be, therefore, more likely to be motivated to forgive in order to rid themselves of those negative emotions.

Forgiveness to Feel Better was related to dispositional empathy. If one is higher in dispositional empathy, and better able to experience the feelings of others, then it might be easier to forgive, especially with the knowledge that it can make one feel better. People high in affective empathy may be more attuned to emotions, and may find the notion that forgiveness can make one feel better more attractive. In addition, if one knows that forgiveness will make him or her feel better, then it seems like that in itself is a strong reason to forgive more.

Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority over the Injurer was negatively related to honesty, and positively related to extraversion. Its negative relation to honesty seems self-explanatory, since forgiving to assert moral superiority does not seem like an honest thing to do. It is more like pretending to forgive, but for reasons that are deceitful. The correlation between Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority over the Injurer and extraversion was surprising due to Watson and Clark's (1992) finding that extraversion is related to prosocial forms of behaviour. The correlation, however, was quite small. Due to the large number of correlations, it might have been spurious, or the result of a Type I error. There was also a strong negative correlation between Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority over the Injurer and dispositional empathy. If one is motivated to forgive only to show the injurer that he or she is the "better one", then that in itself does not indicate any understanding on the part of the injured party. In addition, the high correlation between dispositional empathy and emotionality might mean that if people feel good, then they do not need to put others down, including offenders, in order to make them feel better themselves.

Forgiveness out of Fear was only related to agreeableness. It seems logical that if one were in a position in which one were forced to forgive, being high in agreeableness would make forgiveness more probable in that situation. Perhaps fear is even one of the reasons some are more agreeable than others. If this was the case, then forgiveness may be one of the ways to alleviate that fear. Having this motivation to forgive may alleviate the fear of having others angry with one.

Altruistic Forgiveness was correlated to many things, such as honesty, emotionality, and agreeableness. People who would forgive for altruistic reasons would most likely also be higher in

prosocial behaviours than people who do not. It would be logical, then, that they would also possess other prosocial characteristics such as honesty and agreeableness. The relation between emotionality and Altruistic Forgiveness could also be explained by emotionality's high correlation with dispositional empathy. People who are better at experiencing the emotions of others may be more likely to feel the pain of others when they are not forgiven, and this, in turn, might increase the chances of forgiveness, and the motivation to forgive for altruistic reasons.

Some of the more striking findings in this study were the high correlations between Altruistic Forgiveness and absorption and the propensity to mystical experiences. To see if Altruistic Forgiveness was directly related to the propensity to mystical experiences, or if the relation was mediated by absorption, a post hoc regression analysis was conducted. A correlation remained between Altruistic Forgiveness and the propensity to mystical experiences, when controlling for absorption, which suggests that both people high in absorption and people high in the propensity to mystical experiences are motivated to forgive for altruistic reasons. This study did find a correlation between absorption and dispositional empathy, and both types of empathy were correlated with Altruistic Forgiveness. If high absorbers are empathic, then that might be one reason they are more likely motivated to be forgiving for altruistic reasons. Furthermore, it was mentioned that people who have a propensity to mystical experiences are more likely to have experienced a sense of oneness with the rest of humanity, and this would often produce prosocial changes in their behaviour (James, 1902). The propensity to forgive for altruistic reasons could be one such prosocial behaviour. It is interesting that people high in absorption are only high in Altruistic Forgiveness and Forgiveness to Feel Better. Altruistic Forgiveness seems more in line with the definition of forgiveness mentioned at the beginning of the study, since the definition included the altruistic action of compassion and even positive behaviour towards someone who inflicted harm.

The correlation between the propensity to mystical experiences and with both Altruistic Forgiveness and Religious Forgiveness is consistent with previous theorizing. For example, Richards and Bergin (1997) posited that forgiveness could encourage a greater sense of a transcendent consciousness

and more inner experiences of communion with God. Another interesting finding in this study was that both absorption and the propensity to mystical experiences were related to Altruistic Forgiveness, but dissociation was not. The measures of absorption and dissociation often overlap, as is the case in the abuse literature, but they were clearly distinguished by this finding. These findings suggest that, together, absorption, mystical experiences and religion may be one route to developing an altruistic motivation to forgive. Of course, absorption may not necessarily lead to prosocial actions such as forgiveness, however, a sense of oneness would certainly sway one in that direction.

Altruistic Forgiveness was positively correlated with both dispositional and situational empathy, even after impression management was partialled out. It seems as if one is motivated to forgive for altruistic reasons, then one must have some idea about either taking the perspective or feeling the emotions of the other. Neither forgiving for altruistic reasons or empathy are egocentric qualities, they both require some sort of stepping outside oneself, or being aware of others, other than oneself.

Conclusions and Future Research

The results in this study have helped to clear up some of the ambiguity regarding the nature and measurement of forgiveness. First, the significant but low correlation between dispositional and situational forgiveness suggests that the disposition to see oneself as forgiving across situations is not strongly predictive of forgiveness in specific situations. Of course, participants were asked to recall especially difficult situations, ones that were most likely the hardest to forgive. Severity of the transgressions affects the likelihood of forgiveness (Girard & Mullet, 1997), and conceivably may moderate dispositional and situational forgiveness. The fact that severity was not taken into account was perhaps one of the limitations of this study. The results also revealed that the forgiveness questionnaires might also be picking up one's self concept of how forgiving one is, in addition to an actual disposition towards forgiving. This is apparent by the fact that the religious motivation for forgiveness, which itself was strongly related to impression management, was correlated with the dispositional forgiveness measures, particularly the TNTF, but not with situational forgiveness. Further evidence that the dispositional measures are picking up on self concept, is the fact that the positive correlation between the TTF and Religious Forgiveness was eliminated by the partialling out of impression management. This was also the case for the correlation between the TTF and Forgiveness to Feel Better.

This study largely replicated previous findings regarding the relations between forgiveness and personality variables in the Big 5. It replicated the findings that people who tend to forgive more across situations and in specific situations are consistently more empathic, and agreeable. It also found that emotional people tend to forgive more, although the relation of forgiveness and emotionality seemed to be mediated by empathy. This study also added that people who forgive more are more honest. This study failed to replicate the predicted relations between both absorption and the propensity to mystical experiences and forgiveness, but it did find a relation between empathy and absorption, and a relation between both absorption and the propensity for mystical experiences and the motivation to forgive for altruistic reasons. The sample in this study, was, however, limiting. The majority of the participants were 18 or 19 years of age, and were all enrolled in an introductory psychology course. There might be some

qualities specific to psychology students that may not generalize to others. Furthermore, forgiveness is known to generally increase with age (Girard & Mullet, 1997), and that is another reason a younger sample was not representative of the population as a whole. Age might have also affected the outcome of mystical experiences. Speaking from personal experience, any experience of a felt oneness with humanity I might have had that might have led to prosocial behaviour, happened in my twenties. The teenage years seem to be characterized by a more egocentric view of the world and a more rebellious attitude. Future research would benefit by replicating the findings with participants of different ages.

The results show that people who have a history of childhood maltreatment have more difficulty forgiving across situations. The fact that only university students participated in this study, however, might have affected the level of maltreatment in the sample. University students are clearly not representative of the population in general, since people who have experienced the greatest degree of abuse may be less likely to attend university in the first place. The maltreatment questionnaire itself proved to be a problem in this study; therefore, future research should employ a questionnaire that samples a broader range of unpleasant experiences from mild to severe, in which high levels of abuse would be the extreme of a normal distribution. This would allow the exploration of the possibility of moderate negative experiences facilitating absorption. If one wanted to examine abuse alone, one would have to recognize that abuse is not a normally distributed quality, and therefore, plan one's measurement and statistical strategies accordingly. Perhaps using a discrete measure that distinguished between abused and non-abused people would be more appropriate.

Previous studies have examined the relations among the personality variables and forgiveness. The question remained, however, whether people with different personality traits are motivated to forgive for the same reasons. This study's exploratory analyses provide some hypotheses concerning this question; however, the findings would have to be replicated in order to be stated with more confidence. Previous studies have most often found that forgiveness correlates with agreeableness (McCullough, 2001). As well as confirming this finding, this study also found that people who score high on agreeableness tend to forgive mostly for altruistic reasons, and to a lesser extent, out of fear. This

suggests that agreeable people forgive for prosocial reasons and perhaps also to avoid anger in others. People high in emotionality tend to forgive for altruistic and religious reasons, to feel better, and for reconciliation, and people high in honesty tend to forgive for both religious and altruistic reasons. Extraversion was only associated with the motivation to forgive to assert moral superiority over the injurer. This is not surprising due to the fact that neither extraversion nor Forgiveness to Assert Moral Superiority over the Injurer were correlated with any measure of forgiveness. Clearly, more work needs to be done to improve the motivations to forgive questionnaire. The two additional factors that emerged from the factor analysis would also be worthwhile to explore, and should have additional items added. Correlations could then be conducted to explore how the motivations relate to other constructs. For example, they may not only be predictive of forgiveness, but also to well-being, in other words, some of the motivations may increase well-being, whereas others may not.

Using only self-report questionnaires in this study could have also posed as a problem. One limitation of this is that the participant's responses were constrained by the limits imposed by the questions. For example, there may be motivations to forgive that were not even tapped due to the constraints of the questions that were asked. Furthermore, when asking someone how much he or she forgives, it is hard to obtain an accurate answer because of such factors as impression management, wishful thinking, and even selective memory. The imagined scenarios are also, and evidently, based on fiction. In order to obtain data of whether one really forgives or not one would either have to set up an experimental paradigm in which the participant would either choose to forgive or not, one would have to obtain data from a family member or friend who is familiar with the participant's forgiving behaviour, or finally, one would have to instruct the participant to keep a diary of transgressions and keep track of emotions and behaviours that deal with forgiveness. Supplementary interviews could be another helpful way for future research to obtain a more accurate depiction of not only forgiveness, but also of absorption and mystical experiences, and how the participant perceives these to influence their forgiving tendencies. Interviews would be very helpful in finding out what people mean when they say they have forgiven.

People may say they are forgiving in self-report questionnaires, but as was noted above, forgiveness means different things to different people (Belicki et al., 2003).

Identifying the associations of personality traits with forgiveness provides information about what types of people forgive. The benefits of forgiveness are many, for example, the reduction of negative emotion, the restoration of well-being, the restoration of personal power, the reconciliation of broken relationships, and relief from chronic pain and cardiovascular problems (e.g., McCullough and Worthington, 1994); however, more theorizing would have to be done to determine how to implement this knowledge and to help people become more forgiving.

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Appendix A. Copies of all the Questionnaires

Demographics Questionnaire

LET'S BEGIN WITH SOME INFORMATION ABOUT YOU. PLEASE PLACE A ✓ IN THE BOX NEXT TO THE ANSWER THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOU.

Gender: ☐ 1. female

☐ 2. male

Citizenship status:

- ☐ 1. Canadian
☐ 2. Landed Immigrant
☐ 3. Visitor Visa

Religious Background:

- ☐ 1. Catholic
☐ 2. Protestant
☐ 3. Eastern (Hindu, Sikh)
☐ 4. Islam
☐ 5. Jewish
☐ 6. Spiritual but no religion
☐ 7. Atheist

Marital Status:

- ☐ 1. Single ☐ 4. Separated
☐ 2. Married ☐ 5. Widowed
☐ 3. Divorced ☐ 6. Common-Law

Importance of religion in daily life:

- ☐ 1. Very important
☐ 2. Somewhat important
☐ 3. Not important

Education:

- ☐ 1. Grade 12 – Ontario
☐ 2. Grade 12 – Other province
☐ 3. OAC – Ontario
☐ 4. College
☐ 5. University degree

Which best describes where you live?

- ☐ 1. Residence
☐ 2. Parent's home
☐ 3. Relative's home
☐ 4. Boarding house
☐ 5. Off campus – Alone
☐ 6. Off campus – with other students
☐ 7. Off campus – with non students
☐ 8. Off campus – students and others
☐ 9. Off campus – with partner or spouse

Age: ____

Number of siblings: ____

Number of children: ____

Social Desirability Scale (Self-Deceptive Positivity: 1-20 and Impression Management: 21-40)

USING THE FOLLOWING SCALE, WRITE A NUMBER BESIDE EACH STATEMENT TO INDICATE HOW MUCH YOU AGREE WITH IT.

1 = Definitely false 2 = Mostly false 3 = Neutral 4 = Mostly true 5 = Definitely true

- ___ 1. My first impressions of people usually turn out to be right.
- ___ 2. It would be hard for me to break any of my bad habits.
- ___ 3. I don't care to know what other people really think of me.
- ___ 4. I have not always been honest with myself.
- ___ 5. I always know why I like things.
- ___ 6. When my emotions are aroused, it biases my thinking.
- ___ 7. Once I've made up my mind, other people can seldom change my opinion.
- ___ 8. I am not a safe driver when I exceed the speed limit.
- ___ 9. I am fully in control of my own fate.
- ___ 10. It's hard for me to shut off a disturbing thought.
- ___ 11. I never regret my decisions.
- ___ 12. I sometimes lose out on things because I can't make up my mind soon enough.
- ___ 13. The reason I vote is because my vote can make a difference.
- ___ 14. My parents were not always fair when they punished me.
- ___ 15. I am a completely rational person.
- ___ 16. I rarely appreciate criticism.
- ___ 17. I am very confident of my judgments.
- ___ 18. I have sometimes doubted my ability as a lover.
- ___ 19. It's all right with me if some people happen to dislike me.
- ___ 20. I don't always know the reasons why I do the things I do.
- ___ 21. I sometimes tell lies if I have to.
- ___ 22. I never cover up my mistakes.
- ___ 23. There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone.
- ___ 24. I never swear.
- ___ 25. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.
- ___ 26. I always obey the law, even if I'm unlikely to get caught.
- ___ 27. I have said something bad about a friend behind his or her back.
- ___ 28. When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening.
- ___ 29. I have received too much change from a salesperson without telling him or her.
- ___ 30. I always declare everything at customs.
- ___ 31. When I was young I sometimes stole things.
- ___ 32. I have never dropped litter on the street.
- ___ 33. I sometimes drive faster than the speed limit.
- ___ 34. I never read sexy books or magazines.
- ___ 35. I have done things that I don't tell other people about.
- ___ 36. I never take things that don't belong to me.
- ___ 37. I have taken sick-leave from work or school even though I wasn't really sick.
- ___ 38. I have never damaged a library book or store merchandise without reporting it.
- ___ 39. I have some pretty awful habits.
- ___ 40. I don't gossip about other people's business.

*HEXACO-PI Questionnaire***USE THE SCALE TO RATE HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE STATEMENTS.**

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

1. ____ I would be quite bored by a visit to an art gallery.
2. ____ I clean my office or home quite frequently.
3. ____ I rarely hold a grudge, even against people who have badly wronged me.
4. ____ My style of speaking is often quite dramatic.
5. ____ I would feel afraid if I had to travel in bad weather conditions.
6. ____ If I want something from a person I dislike, I act very nicely toward that person in order to get it.
7. ____ I'm interested in learning about the history and politics of other countries.
8. ____ When working, I often set ambitious goals for myself.
9. ____ People sometimes tell me that I am too critical of others.
10. ____ I rarely express my opinions in group meetings.
11. ____ I sometimes can't help worrying about little things.
12. ____ If I knew that I could never get caught, I would be willing to steal a million dollars.
13. ____ I would like a job that requires following a routine rather than being creative.
14. ____ I often check my work over repeatedly to find any mistakes.
15. ____ People sometimes tell me that I'm too stubborn.
16. ____ I avoid making "small talk" with people.
17. ____ When I suffer from a painful experience, I need someone to make me feel comfortable.
18. ____ Having a lot of money is not especially important to me.
19. ____ I think that paying attention to radical ideas is a waste of time.
20. ____ I make decisions based on the feeling of the moment rather than on careful thought.
21. ____ People think of me as someone who has a quick temper.
22. ____ I am energetic nearly all the time.
23. ____ I feel like crying when I see other people crying.
24. ____ I am an ordinary person who is no better than others.
25. ____ I wouldn't spend my time reading a book of poetry.
26. ____ I plan ahead and organize things, to avoid scrambling at the last minute.
27. ____ My attitude toward people who have treated me badly is "forgive and forget".
28. ____ I tend to speak very excitedly.
29. ____ I don't mind doing jobs that involve dangerous work.
30. ____ I wouldn't use flattery to get a raise or promotion at work, even if I thought it would succeed.
31. ____ I enjoy looking at maps of different places.
32. ____ I often push myself very hard when trying to achieve a goal.
33. ____ I generally accept people's faults without complaining about them.
34. ____ In social situations, I'm usually the one who makes the first move.
35. ____ I worry a lot less than most people do.
36. ____ I would be tempted to buy stolen property if I were financially tight.
37. ____ I would enjoy creating a work of art, such as a novel, a song, or a painting.
38. ____ When working on something, I don't pay much attention to small details.
39. ____ I am usually quite flexible in my opinions when people disagree with me.
40. ____ I enjoy having lots of people around to talk with.
41. ____ I can handle difficult situations without needing emotional support from anyone else.
42. ____ I would like to live in a very expensive, high-class neighbourhood.
43. ____ I like people who have unconventional views.
44. ____ I make a lot of mistakes because I don't think before I act.
45. ____ I rarely feel anger, even when people treat me quite badly.

46. ____ On most days, I feel cheerful and optimistic.
47. ____ When someone I know well is unhappy, I can almost feel that person's pain myself.
48. ____ I wouldn't want people to treat me as though I were superior to them.
49. ____ If I had the opportunity, I would like to attend a classical music concert.
50. ____ People often joke with me about the messiness of my room or desk.
51. ____ If someone has cheated me once, I will always feel suspicious of that person.
52. ____ My style of conversation is very low-key.
53. ____ When it comes to physical danger, I am very fearful.
54. ____ If I want something from someone, I will laugh at that person's worst jokes.
55. ____ I would be very bored by a book about the history of science and technology.
56. ____ Often when I set a goal, I end up quitting without having reached it.
57. ____ I tend to be lenient in judging other people.
58. ____ When I'm in a group of people, I'm often the one who speaks on behalf of the group.
59. ____ I rarely, if ever, have trouble sleeping due to stress or anxiety.
60. ____ I would never accept a bribe, even if it were very large.
61. ____ People have often told me that I have a good imagination.
62. ____ I always try to be accurate in my work, even at the expense of time.
63. ____ When people tell me that I'm wrong, my first reaction is to argue with them.
64. ____ I prefer jobs that involve active social interaction to those that involve working alone.
65. ____ Whenever I feel worried about something, I want to share my concern with another person.
66. ____ I would like to be seen driving around in a very expensive car.
67. ____ I think of myself as a somewhat eccentric person.
68. ____ I don't allow my impulses to govern my behaviour.
69. ____ Most people tend to get angry more quickly than I do.
70. ____ People often tell me that I should try to cheer up.
71. ____ I feel strong emotions when someone close to me is going away for a long time.
72. ____ I think that I am entitled to more respect than the average person is.
73. ____ Sometimes I like to just watch the wind as it blows through the trees.
74. ____ When working, I sometimes have difficulties due to being disorganized.
75. ____ I find it hard to fully forgive someone who has done something mean to me.
76. ____ People think of me as someone who doesn't get very excited.
77. ____ Even in an emergency I wouldn't feel like panicking.
78. ____ I wouldn't pretend to like someone just to get that person to do favours for me.
79. ____ I've never really enjoyed looking through an encyclopedia.
80. ____ I do only the minimum amount of work needed to get by.
81. ____ Even when people make a lot of mistakes, I rarely say anything negative.
82. ____ I tend to feel quite self-conscious when speaking in front of a group of people.
83. ____ I get very anxious when waiting to hear about an important decision.
84. ____ I'd be tempted to use counterfeit money, if I were sure I could get away with it.
85. ____ I don't think of myself as the artistic or creative type.
86. ____ People often call me a perfectionist.
87. ____ I find it hard to compromise with people when I really think I'm right.
88. ____ The first thing that I always do in a new place is to make friends.
89. ____ I rarely discuss my problems with other people.
90. ____ I would get a lot of pleasure from owning expensive luxury goods.
91. ____ I find it boring to discuss philosophy.
92. ____ I prefer to do whatever comes to mind, rather than stick to a plan.
93. ____ I find it hard to keep my temper when people insult me.
94. ____ Most people are more upbeat and dynamic than I generally am.
95. ____ I remain unemotional even in situations where most people get very sentimental.
96. ____ I want people to know that I am an important person of high status.

Tellegen Absorption Scale

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ASK YOU TO THINK ABOUT EXPERIENCES YOU MAY HAVE HAD IN THE PAST. PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE TO INDICATE HOW TRUE THESE STATEMENTS ARE FOR YOU.

1 = Definitely false 2 = Mostly false 3 = Neutral 4 = Mostly true 5 = Definitely true

- ☐ 1. Sometimes I feel and experience things as I did when I was a child.
- ☐ 2. I can be greatly moved by eloquent or poetic language.
- ☐ 3. While watching a movie, or a T.V. show, I may become so involved that I forget about myself and my surroundings and experience the story as if it were real and I were taking part in it.
- ☐ 4. If I stare at a picture and then look away from it, I can sometimes "see" an image of the picture, almost as if I were still looking at it.
- ☐ 5. Sometimes I feel as if my mind could envelop the whole world.
- ☐ 6. I like to watch cloud shapes change in the sky.
- ☐ 7. If I wish, I can imagine some things so vividly that they hold my attention as a good movie or story does.
- ☐ 8. I think I really know what some people mean when they talk about mystical experiences.
- ☐ 9. I sometimes "step outside" my usual self and experience an entirely different state of being.
- ☐ 10. Textures such as wool, sand, or wood sometimes remind me of colours or music.
- ☐ 11. Sometimes I experience things as if they were doubly real.
- ☐ 12. When I listen to music I can get so caught up in it that I don't notice anything else.
- ☐ 13. If I wish, I can imagine that my body is so heavy that I could not move it if I wanted to.
- ☐ 14. I can sometimes sense the presence of another person before I actually see or hear her/him.
- ☐ 15. The crackling and flames of wood fire stimulate my imagination.
- ☐ 16. It is sometimes possible for me to be completely immersed in nature or in art and to feel as if my whole state of consciousness has somehow been temporarily altered.
- ☐ 17. Different colours have distinctive and special meanings for me.
- ☐ 18. I am able to wander off into my own thoughts while doing a routine task and actually forget that it is like living that I am doing the task, and then find a few minutes later that I have completed it.
- ☐ 19. I can sometimes recollect certain past experiences in my life with such clarity and vividness them again or almost so.
- ☐ 20. Things that might seem meaningless to others often make sense to me.
- ☐ 21. While acting in a play, I think I could really feel the emotions of the character and "become" her/him for the time being, forgetting both myself and the audience.
- ☐ 22. My thoughts often don't occur as words but as visual images.
- ☐ 23. I often take delight in small things (like the five-pointed star shape that appears when you cut an apple across the core, or the colours in soap bubbles).
- ☐ 24. When listening to organ music or other powerful music, I sometimes feel as if I am being lifted.
- ☐ 25. Sometimes I can change noise into music by the way I listen to it.
- ☐ 26. Some of my most vivid memories are called up by scents and smells.
- ☐ 27. Certain songs or pieces of music remind me of pictures or changing colour patterns.
- ☐ 28. I often know what someone is going to say before he or she says it.
- ☐ 29. I often have "physical memories"; for example, after I've been swimming I may still feel as if I'm in the water.
- ☐ 30. The sound of a voice can be so fascinating to me that I can just go on listening to it.
- ☐ 31. At times I somehow feel the presence of someone who is not physically there.
- ☐ 32. Sometimes thoughts and images come to me without the slightest effort on my part.
- ☐ 33. I find that different odours have different colours.
- ☐ 34. I can be deeply moved by a sunset.

Hood Mysticism Scale

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ASK YOU TO THINK ABOUT EXPERIENCES YOU MAY HAVE HAD IN THE PAST. PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE TO INDICATE HOW TRUE THESE STATEMENTS ARE FOR YOU.

1 = Definitely false 2 = Mostly false 3 = Neutral 4 = Mostly true 5 = Definitely true

- ___ 1. I have had an experience which was both timeless and spaceless.
- ___ 2. I have never had an experience that cannot be expressed in words.
- ___ 3. I have had an experience in which something greater than myself seems to absorb me.
- ___ 4. I have had an experience in which everything seems to disappear from my mind until I was aware only of a void.
- ___ 5. I have experienced profound joy.
- ___ 6. I have never had an experience in which I felt myself to be absorbed as one with all things.
- ___ 7. I have never experienced a perfectly peaceful state.
- ___ 8. I have never had an experience in which I felt as if all things were alive.
- ___ 9. I have never had an experience which seemed holy to me.
- ___ 10. I have never had an experience in which all things seemed to be aware.
- ___ 11. I have had an experience in which I had no sense of time and space.
- ___ 12. I have had an experience in which I realize the oneness of myself with all things.
- ___ 13. I have had an experience in which a new view of reality was revealed to me.
- ___ 14. I have never experienced anything to be divine.
- ___ 15. I have never had an experience in which time and space were non-existent.
- ___ 16. I have never experienced anything that I could call ultimate reality.
- ___ 17. I have had an experience in which I felt that all was perfection at that time.
- ___ 18. I have had an experience in which I felt that all was perfection to me.
- ___ 19. I have had an experience in which I felt everything in the world to be part of the same whole.
- ___ 20. I have had an experience which I knew to be sacred.
- ___ 21. I have never had an experience which I was unable to express adequately through language.
- ___ 22. I have had an experience which left me with a feeling of awe.
- ___ 23. I have had an experience that is impossible to communicate.
- ___ 24. I have never had an experience in which my own self seemed to merge into something greater.
- ___ 25. I have never had an experience which left me with a feeling of wonder.
- ___ 26. I have never had an experience in which deeper aspects of reality were revealed to me.
- ___ 27. I have never had an experience in which time, place, and distance were meaningless.
- ___ 28. I have never had an experience in which I became aware of a unity of all things.
- ___ 29. I have had an experience in which all things seemed to be conscious.
- ___ 30. I have never had an experience in which all things seemed to be unified into a single whole.
- ___ 31. I have had an experience in which I felt nothing is ever really dead.
- ___ 32. I have never had an experience which was incapable of being expressed by words.

Dissociative Experience Scale

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ASK YOU TO THINK ABOUT EXPERIENCES YOU MAY HAVE HAD IN THE PAST. PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE TO INDICATE HOW TRUE THESE STATEMENTS ARE FOR YOU.

1 = Definitely false 2 = Mostly false 3 = Neutral 4 = Mostly true 5 = Definitely true

- ___ 1. I've had the experience of driving a car and suddenly realizing that I don't remember what has happened during all or part of the trip.
- ___ 2. Sometimes I find that I'm listening to someone talk and realize suddenly that I did not hear part or all of what was just said.
- ___ 3. I have had the experience of finding myself in a place and having no idea how I got there.
- ___ 4. I have had the experience of finding myself in clothes that I didn't remember putting on.
- ___ 5. I have had the experience of finding new things in my belongings that I do not remember buying.
- ___ 6. I sometimes find that I am approached by people that I do not know who insist that they have met me before.
- ___ 7. I sometimes have the experience of feeling as though I am standing next to myself or watching myself do something, and I actually see myself as if I was looking at another person.
- ___ 8. I am told that I sometimes do not recognize friends or family members.
- ___ 9. I find that I have no memory for some important events in my life (for example, a wedding).
- ___ 10. I have had the experience of being accused of lying when I do not think that I lied.
- ___ 11. I have had the experience of looking in the mirror and not recognizing myself.
- ___ 12. I sometimes have the experience of feeling that other people, objects, and the world around me are not real.
- ___ 13. I sometimes have the experience of feeling that my body does not seem to belong to me.
- ___ 14. I sometimes have the experience of remembering a past event so vividly that I feel as if I am reliving that event.
- ___ 15. I have had the experience of not being sure whether things that I remember happening really did happen or whether I just dreamed them.
- ___ 16. I sometimes have the experience of being in a familiar place but find it strange and unfamiliar.
- ___ 17. When I watch television or a movie, I get so absorbed in the story that I am unaware of events going on around me.
- ___ 18. I sometimes find that I become so involved in a fantasy or daydream that it feels as if it was really happening to me.
- ___ 19. I sometimes find that I am able to ignore pain.
- ___ 20. I sometimes find that I sit staring off into space, thinking of nothing, and I am not aware of the passage of time.
- ___ 21. I sometimes find that when I am alone I talk out loud to myself.
- ___ 22. I find that in one situation I might act so differently compared with another situation that I feel almost as if I was two different people.
- ___ 23. I find that in certain situations I am able to do things with amazing ease and spontaneity that would usually be difficult for me (for example, sports, work, social situations, etc.)
- ___ 24. I sometimes find that I cannot remember whether I have done something or just thought about doing it (e.g., not knowing whether I just mailed a letter or have just thought about mailing it).
- ___ 25. I sometimes find writings, drawings, or notes among my things that I must have done but do not remember doing.
- ___ 26. I sometimes find that I hear voices inside my head that tell me to do things or comment on what I am doing.
- ___ 27. I sometimes feel as if I am looking at the world through a fog so that people and objects appear far away or unclear.

Childhood Trauma Questionnaire

THESE QUESTIONS ASK ABOUT SOME OF YOUR EXPERIENCES GROWING UP AS A CHILD AND A TEENAGER. PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE TO INDICATE HOW TRUE THESE STATEMENTS ARE FOR YOU. ALTHOUGH SOME OF THESE QUESTIONS ARE OF A PERSONAL NATURE, PLEASE TRY TO ANSWER AS HONESTLY AS YOU CAN. YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

1 – Never true 2 – Rarely true 3 – Sometimes true 4 – Often true 5 – Very often true

When I was growing up, ...

- ☐ 1. I didn't have enough to eat.
- ☐ 2. I knew there was someone to take care of me and protect me.
- ☐ 3. People in my family called me things like "stupid", "lazy", or "ugly".
- ☐ 4. My parents were too drunk or high to take care of the family.
- ☐ 5. There was someone in my family who helped me feel important or special.
- ☐ 6. I had to wear dirty clothes.
- ☐ 7. I felt loved.
- ☐ 8. I thought that my parents wished I had never been born.
- ☐ 9. I got hit so hard by someone in my family that I had to see a doctor or go to the hospital.
- ☐ 10. There was nothing I wanted to change about my family.
- ☐ 11. People in my family hit me so hard that it left me with bruises or marks.
- ☐ 12. I was punished with a belt, a board, a cord, or some other hard object.
- ☐ 13. People in my family looked out for each other.
- ☐ 14. People in my family said hurtful or insulting things to me.
- ☐ 15. I believe that I was physically abused.
- ☐ 16. I had the perfect childhood.
- ☐ 17. I got hit or beaten so badly that it was noticed by someone like a teacher, neighbour, or doctor.
- ☐ 18. I felt that someone in my family hated me.
- ☐ 19. People in my family felt close to each other.
- ☐ 20. Someone tried to touch me in a sexual way, or tried to make me touch them.
- ☐ 21. Someone threatened to hurt me or tell lies about me unless I did something sexual with them.
- ☐ 22. I had the best family in the world.
- ☐ 23. Someone tried to make me do sexual things or watch sexual things.
- ☐ 24. Someone molested me.
- ☐ 25. I believe that I was emotionally abused.
- ☐ 26. There was someone to take me to the doctor if I needed it.
- ☐ 27. I believe that I was sexually abused.
- ☐ 28. My family was a source of strength and support.

Dispositional Empathy Questionnaire

PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE TO INDICATE HOW THESE STATEMENTS APPLY TO YOU.

1 = Definitely false 2 = Mostly false 3 = Neutral 4 = Mostly true 5 = Definitely true

- ___ 1. It makes me sad to see a lonely stranger in a group.
- ___ 2. People make too much of the feelings and sensitivity of animals.
- ___ 3. I often find public displays of affection annoying.
- ___ 4. I am annoyed by unhappy people who are just sorry for themselves.
- ___ 5. I become nervous if others around me seem to be nervous.
- ___ 6. I find it silly for people to cry out of happiness.
- ___ 7. I tend to get emotionally involved with a friend's problems.
- ___ 8. Sometimes the words of a love song can move me deeply.
- ___ 9. I tend to lose control when I am bringing bad news to people.
- ___ 10. The people around me have a great influence on my moods.
- ___ 11. Most foreigners I have met seemed cool and unemotional.
- ___ 12. I would rather be a social worker than work in a job training centre.
- ___ 13. I don't get upset just because a friend is acting upset.
- ___ 14. I like to watch people open presents.
- ___ 15. Lonely people are probably unfriendly.
- ___ 16. Seeing people cry upsets me.
- ___ 17. Some songs make me happy.
- ___ 18. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel.
- ___ 19. I get very angry when I see someone being ill-treated.
- ___ 20. I am able to remain calm even though those around me worry.
- ___ 21. When friends talk about their problems, I try to steer the conversation to something else.
- ___ 22. Another's laughter is not catching for me.
- ___ 23. Sometimes at the movies I am amused by the amount of crying and sniffing around me.
- ___ 24. I am able to make decisions without being influenced by people's feelings.
- ___ 25. I cannot continue to feel OK if people around me are depressed.
- ___ 26. It is hard for me to see how some things upset people so much.
- ___ 27. I am very upset when I see an animal in pain.
- ___ 28. Becoming involved in books or movies is a little silly.
- ___ 29. It upsets me to see helpless old people.
- ___ 30. I become more irritated than sympathetic when I see someone's tears.
- ___ 31. I become very involved when I watch a movie.
- ___ 32. I often find that I can remain cool in spite of the excitement around me.
- ___ 33. Little children sometimes cry for no apparent reason.

Situational Empathy Questionnaire

NOW THINK OF SOMEONE WHO HAS HURT YOU DEEPLY IN THE PAST. PLEASE THINK OF THIS PERSON AS YOU ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

1 = Definitely false 2 = Mostly false 3 = Neutral 4 = Mostly true 5 = Definitely true

- ___ 1. I feel empathic toward this individual (i.e. I understand him/her).
- ___ 2. I feel concerned about this individual.
- ___ 3. I feel moved by the situation of this individual.
- ___ 4. I feel vengeful toward this individual.
- ___ 5. I feel sympathetic to this individual.
- ___ 6. I compassionate toward this individual.
- ___ 7. I feel hostile toward this individual.
- ___ 8. I understand why the individual did what he/she did.
- ___ 9. I think I could put myself in the individual's shoes.

Tendency to Forgive Scale

FOLLOWING ARE SOME QUESTIONS THAT ASK ABOUT HOW YOU REACT WHEN SOMEONE HURTS YOU. READ EACH ITEM AND THEN INDICATE HOW YOU TYPICALLY RESPOND BY USING THE FOLLOWING SCALE.

1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Moderately disagree 3 = Slightly disagree 4 = Neither agree nor disagree 5 = Slightly agree 6 = Moderately agree 7 = Strongly agree

- ___ 1. I tend to get over it quickly when someone hurts my feelings.
- ___ 2. If someone wrongs me, I often think about it a lot afterward.
- ___ 3. I have a tendency to harbour grudges.
- ___ 4. When people wrong me, my approach is just to forgive and forget.

Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory

FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, PLEASE THINK AGAIN ABOUT THE PERSON WHO DEEPLY HURT YOU. USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE TO INDICATE YOUR AGREEMENT WITH EACH QUESTION.

1 = Definitely false 2 = Mostly false 3 = Neutral 4 = Mostly true 5 = Definitely true

- ___1. I'll make him/her pay.
- ___2. I keep as much distance between us as possible.
- ___3. Even though his/her actions hurt me, I still have goodwill for him/her.
- ___4. I'm going to get even.
- ___5. I live as if he/she doesn't exist, isn't around.
- ___6. I want us to bury the hatchet and move forward with our relationship.
- ___7. I want to see him/her hurt and miserable.
- ___8. I don't trust him/her.
- ___9. I have given up my hurt and resentment.
- ___10. I avoid him/her.
- ___11. I find it difficult to act warmly toward him/her.
- ___12. I forgive him/her for what he/she did to me.
- ___13. I want him/her to get what he/she deserves.
- ___14. I have released my anger so I could work on restoring our relationship to health.
- ___15. Despite what he/she did, I want us to have a positive relationship again.
- ___16. I cut off the relationship with him/her.
- ___17. Although he/she hurt me, I put the hurts aside so that we could resume our relationship.
- ___18. I withdraw from him/her.
- ___19. I wish that something bad would happen to him/her.

Motivation to Forgive Questionnaire

NOW THINK OF A TIME WHEN SOMEONE HURT YOU AND YOU FORGAVE HIM/HER. WHEN YOU SEE THE (), PLEASE THINK OF THIS PERSON. RATE HOW TRUE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE TO YOU.

1 = Definitely false 2 = Mostly false 3 = Neutral 4 = Mostly true 5 = Definitely true

- ___ 1. I was moved by God (or a power beyond myself) to respond to () in a kind and forgiving way.
- ___ 2. Persons I look up to told me I should forgive ().
- ___ 3. I forgave () because I still want him/her in my life.
- ___ 4. I wanted to stop going over the incident in my mind, so I forgave.
- ___ 5. I felt that forgiving () was the right thing to do.
- ___ 6. By forgiving (), I could show that I was morally superior to ().
- ___ 7. Although () wronged me, I understand him/her better now and I have no desire to condemn him/her anymore.
- ___ 8. I realize that () is human like me. We all make mistakes.
- ___ 9. I was afraid that if I didn't forgive, God (or a higher power) wouldn't forgive me.
- ___ 10. I didn't want hard feelings between us anymore.
- ___ 11. I forgave so that I could let go of the hurt.
- ___ 12. I see () in a new light.
- ___ 13. Forgiveness is my best revenge.
- ___ 14. I felt I was mostly to blame and therefore should forgive immediately.
- ___ 15. I forgave to avoid bad karma.
- ___ 16. I am the kind of person who never harbours resentment against someone who hurts me.
- ___ 17. By rising above the hurt, I could show () that I was still "on top".
- ___ 18. I didn't want () to be mad at me.
- ___ 19. Despite the deep hurt, my affection for () has not lessened across time. I still love him/her.
- ___ 20. Forgiveness helped reduce the stress I was feeling due to the incident.
- ___ 21. I felt called to enter into the difficult struggle to forgive in order to be true to my faith values.
- ___ 22. I believe that everyone deserves forgiveness because we are all connected.
- ___ 23. I deserved whatever hurt I got; () is a much better person than I.
- ___ 24. I forgave () because I wanted to keep peace in the relationship.
- ___ 25. Expressing my true feelings would only make things worse. I had to forgive.
- ___ 26. It was to my practical advantage to forgive.
- ___ 27. I feared others would look down on me as bitter and resentful if I didn't forgive.
- ___ 28. I felt compassion toward () when I realized how much he/she had suffered.
- ___ 29. () is very important to me, so by forgiving I didn't lose the relationship.
- ___ 30. I felt () was not worth my attention, upset, or anger anymore.
- ___ 31. I did not force forgiveness, rather it gradually flowed from me in response to my moral beliefs or God's healing power.
- ___ 32. I forgave () because I love the offender.
- ___ 33. I forgave because I didn't want to rock the boat.
- ___ 34. I felt I should make myself forgive right away since God (or a higher power) expects us to.
- ___ 35. I feared I would lose ()'s friends as well if I didn't forgive.
- ___ 36. I am a much bigger person than () and can afford to forgive him/her.
- ___ 37. I felt I had to do away with my hostile feelings and make myself love () immediately in order to live up to the expectations God (or a higher power) has of me.
- ___ 38. I forgave so that I would no longer be depressed.
- ___ 39. I forgave () because every good act helps make the world a better place.
- ___ 40. Forgiveness makes you feel better in general.

- ___41. There is more to () than was evident in our hurtful encounters. He/She has a good side too.
- ___42. I forgave so that I could have a clear mind and move on.
- ___43. Forgiveness of one person helps everyone, because we are all one.
- ___44. I couldn't keep the hate in my heart. I wanted to let go of it.
- ___45. I forgave so that my grudge wouldn't drive () away from me.
- ___46. Both () and I participated in the hurting process. I felt drawn to mutually forgive and be forgiven by ().
- ___47. I forgave not only for the other person and myself, but also for the good of the whole.
- ___48. I pitied (). He/She is such a weak person and couldn't help the harm done.
- ___49. I don't need to "get even". God (or karma) will even up the score for me.
- ___50. I am the kind of person who automatically turns the other cheek when someone wrongs me.
- ___51. I forgave but I won't forget and I won't let () forget what he/she did to me.
- ___52. I didn't want to end up with ulcers or other ill-effects on my health.
- ___53. I am told that forgiveness is the right thing to do.

Transgression-Related Narrative Test of Forgiveness

BELOW ARE SEVERAL SITUATIONS IN WHICH PEOPLE MIGHT FIND THEMSELVES. PEOPLE RESPOND IN DIFFERENT WAYS TO THESE SITUATIONS IN TERMS OF WHAT THINGS THEY WILL FORGIVE. PLEASE READ THE SITUATIONS, IMAGINE THEY ARE HAPPENING TO YOU AND INDICATE HOW YOU WOULD RESPOND.

1. Someone you occasionally see in a class has a paper due at the end of the week.. You have already completed the paper for the class and this person says he or she is under a lot of pressure and asks you to lend him or her your paper for some ideas. You agree, and this person simply retypes the paper and hands it in. The professor recognizes the paper, calls both of you to her office, scolds you and says you are lucky she doesn't put you both on academic probation. Imagine yourself in such a situation and indicate how likely you are to forgive the person who borrowed your paper.

☐ Definitely not forgive ☐ Not likely to forgive ☐ Maybe forgive ☐ Likely forgive ☐ Definitely forgive

2. A fairly close friend tells you that he or she needs some extra money for an upcoming holiday. You know a married couple who needs a babysitter for their 3-year old and you recommend your friend. Your friend is grateful. On the first night, the child gets out of bed and, while your friend has fallen asleep watching television, drinks cleaning fluid. The child is taken to the hospital and stays there for 2 days. The married couple will not speak to you. Imagine yourself in such a situation and indicate how likely you are to forgive your friend.

☐ Definitely not forgive ☐ Not likely to forgive ☐ Maybe forgive ☐ Likely forgive ☐ Definitely forgive

3. A friend offers to drop off a job application for you at the post office by the deadline for submission. A week later, you get a letter from the potential employer that your application could not be considered because it was postmarked after the deadline and they had a very strict policy about this. Your friend said that he or she met an old friend, went to lunch, and lost track of time. When he or she remembered the package, it was close to closing time at the post office and he or she would have to have rushed frantically to get there; he or she decided that deadlines usually aren't that strictly enforce so he or she waited until the next morning to deliver the package. Imagine yourself in such a situation and indicate how likely you would forgive.

☐ Definitely not forgive ☐ Not likely to forgive ☐ Maybe forgive ☐ Likely forgive ☐ Definitely forgive

4. You just started a new job and it turns out that a classmate from high school works there too. You think this is great. Even though the classmate wasn't part of your crowd, there is at least a face you recognize. You two hit it off right away and talk about old times. A few weeks later, you are having lunch in the cafeteria and you overhear some of your coworkers talking about you and laughing, one even snide and hostile toward you. You discover that your old classmate told them about something you did back in high school that you were ashamed of. Imagine yourself in such a situation and indicate how likely you are to forgive your old classmate.

☐ Definitely not forgive ☐ Not likely to forgive ☐ Maybe forgive ☐ Likely forgive ☐ Definitely forgive

5. A distant cousin you haven't seen since childhood calls you one day and asks if he can stay with you while he looks for work and an apartment. You say sure. He asks you to pick him up from the bus station that night and you do so. Your cousin is just like you fondly remember him; you reminisce for hours. The next day you go about your business. That night you come home to see your cousin arguing in front of your place with your neighbour. Your cousin is very drunk, cursing, and out of control. You ask what's going on, and without taking time to recognize you, your cousin throws a bottle at you, cutting the side of your head. The police come get your cousin, and you're taken to emergency to get stitches. Next day, your cousin calls you from the police station. He says he is really sorry about the whole scene and that it was not like him but he was upset about being turned down from 3 jobs. Imagine yourself in that situation and indicate how likely you would forgive your cousin.

☐ Definitely not forgive ☐ Not likely to forgive ☐ Maybe forgive ☐ Likely forgive ☐ Definitely forgive

Appendix B. *Debriefing Letter*

Dear Participant,

I am writing to thank you for your participation in our study entitled, "The Role of Personality and Childhood Experiences in Forgiveness and Health". Your assistance in filling out the questionnaires is greatly appreciated. Thank you very much!

This study dealt with the personality and situational variables that correlate with forgiveness. First of all, this study replicated the relationship between forgiveness and empathy. Specifically, people who can see other people's perspectives are more likely to be forgiving. Correlations between other personality variables such as openness, agreeableness, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and honesty were examined. We found that people who scored high on agreeableness were more likely to forgive, as were people who scored high on emotional stability and honesty.

A particular focus of the study was on the relation between forgiveness and absorption (the tendency to become imaginatively involved in aesthetic or mystical experiences). We believed that the two concepts should be correlated because those high in absorption have also been found to become absorbed into others, and may, therefore, be better able to take on their perspectives, in other words, be more empathic. In addition, people high in absorption are more likely to experience mystical experiences, which are often associated with a belief in the oneness of humanity. As we expected, high absorbers were more empathic towards the people who hurt them and therefore more likely to forgive them. You may recall that one of the questionnaires asked about *why* you forgave a person who hurt you. As expected, people who were high in absorption were more likely to forgive for altruistic, and to feel better (in contrast to reasons such as wanting to preserve a relationship, and for religious reasons).

In addition to personality, the situational variable that was examined was that of childhood maltreatment. Not surprisingly, it was found that the greater the maltreatment one has experienced, the harder it was for that person to be forgiving.

In summary, this study has taught us a bit more about who forgives and why. We plan to follow this up with further research.

Thanks again for your participation!

Sincerely,

Kerri Michalica (kittykerri@hotmail.com)
Masters student

Kathy Belicki (kbelicki@spartan.ac.brocku.ca)
Faculty supervisor

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Brock Research Ethics Board. (File #03-050)

Appendix C. *Correlations Among all the Variables*

| Items (n) | 1. | 2 | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. | 10. | 11. |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|------|-------|------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| 1. Honesty (142) | --- | .16 | -.03 | .43** | .09 | .12 | .43** | -.02 | .21* | .14 | .24** |
| 2. Emotionality (142) | | --- | .07 | -.13 | .21* | -.30** | -.02 | -.05 | .61** | -.01 | -.18* |
| 3. Extraversion (142) | | | --- | -.02 | -.07 | .07 | -.08 | -.16 | .18* | -.09 | .06 |
| 4. Agreeableness (142) | | | | --- | .08 | .18* | .46** | -.13 | .01 | .27** | .64** |
| 5. Conscientiousness (142) | | | | | --- | -.18* | .33** | -.08 | .03 | -.03 | .05 |
| 6. Openness (142) | | | | | | --- | .06 | .28** | .04 | .10 | .06 |
| 7. Impression Manage. (141) | | | | | | | --- | -.12 | -.05 | .19* | .28** |
| 8. Childhood Maltreat. (141) | | | | | | | | --- | .06 | -.04 | -.26** |
| 9. Dispositional Emp. (141) | | | | | | | | | .14 | .02 | .35** |
| 10. Situational Emp. (141) | | | | | | | | | | --- | --- |
| 11. TTF (133) | | | | | | | | | | | --- |

*p < .05; **p < .01; two-tailed

| Items (n) | 1. | 2 | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. | 10. | 11. |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| 12. TNTF (141) | .31** | .00 | -.05 | .47** | .03 | .11 | .36** | .08 | .15 | .31** | .42** |
| 13. TRIM (141) | .24** | .19* | .08 | .30** | .12 | .02 | .17* | .00 | .32** | .63** | .29** |
| 14. Absorption (142) | -.01 | -.05 | .13 | .09 | -.18* | .59** | -.10 | .25** | .29** | .13 | -.07 |
| 15. Mystical Experiences (142) | .02 | .07 | .22** | .12 | -.10 | .38** | -.03 | .15 | .37** | .14 | .05 |
| 16. Dissociation (142) | -.15 | -.02 | .02 | -.08 | -.28** | .29** | -.38** | .30** | .21* | .10 | -.09 |
| 17. Reconciliation Forg. (134) | .13 | .25** | -.06 | .07 | .04 | -.03 | -.01 | -.01 | .35** | .07 | -.003 |
| 18. Religious Forgiveness (134) | .35** | .20* | .02 | .25** | .09 | -.07 | .48** | -.07 | .13 | .17 | .24** |
| 19. Forg. to Feel Better (134) | .16 | .32** | .06 | .23** | .22* | .03 | .24** | .04 | .39** | .11 | .21* |
| 20. Superiority Forg. (134) | -.18* | -.05 | .20* | -.05 | -.00 | -.11 | -.02 | -.03 | -.26** | -.01 | -.10 |
| 21. Altruistic Forgiveness (134) | .31** | .22* | .11 | .33** | .13 | .12 | .26** | -.09 | .40** | .23** | .29** |
| 22. Forg. Out of Fear (134) | -.03 | -.00 | -.15 | .20 | .06 | -.16 | .08 | .06 | .01 | .02 | .08 |

*p < .05; **p < .01; two-tailed

| Items | 12. | 13. | 14. | 15. | 16. | 17. | 18. | 19. | 20. | 21. | 22. |
|--------------------------------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 12. TNTF | --- | .33** | .12 | .16 | .09 | .13 | .36** | .29** | -.14 | .28** | .01 |
| 13. TRIM | | --- | .11 | .14 | .06 | .29** | .17 | .27** | -.13 | .31** | .07 |
| 14. Absorption | | | --- | .71** | .61** | .09 | .04 | .22* | .00 | .31** | -.14 |
| 15. Mystical Experiences | | | | --- | .47** | .05 | .17* | .18* | -.05 | .36** | -.15 |
| 16. Dissociation | | | | | --- | .14 | -.07 | .12 | .00 | .11 | -.08 |
| 17. Reconciliation Forgiveness | | | | | | --- | .09 | .52** | -.18 | .45** | .32** |
| 18. Religious Forgiveness | | | | | | | --- | .34** | .25** | .52** | .23** |
| 19. Forgiveness to Feel Better | | | | | | | | --- | .12 | .64** | .32** |
| 20. Superiority Forgiveness | | | | | | | | | --- | .13 | .11 |
| 21. Altruistic Forgiveness | | | | | | | | | | --- | .27** |
| 22. Forgiveness Out of Fear | | | | | | | | | | | --- |

*p < .05; **p < .01; two-tailed

