

## Module: Forgiveness



### In a nutshell:

Forgiveness does not equal to letting the transgressor off the hook. It is not a passive avoidant approach. Psychologists commonly see forgiveness as a way to reduce the victim's own emotional distress whereby the victim consciously chooses to distance oneself from the negative emotions, thoughts and behaviors triggered by the hurtful event.

### Scientific Facts:

A survey on 266 undergraduate students shows that forgiving others and forgiving self correlates with better perceived physical health (Wilson & Milosevic, 2008). Forgiveness is also found to be related with better health as forgiveness correlates with reduction in stress, lower negative affect and better conflict management (Lawler and Younger, 2005).

Self-forgiveness can help in academic performance. A recent study on university students show that students who have higher level of self-forgiveness on procrastinating studies in the first examination are less likely to procrastinate in the second examination followed (Wohl and Pychyl, 2010). Self-forgiveness again reduces negative affect which helps to reduce future procrastination.

Apology made by couples with more satisfied relationships is perceived as more sincere and in turn leads to better chance of forgiveness according to a recent study by Stanford University (Schumann, 2012). But how can we flex our muscle in forgiveness? One study on undergraduate college students suggests mindfulness-based stress management practice can actually reduce stress as well as increases forgiveness among students (Oman & Shapiro, 2008).

### Exercise One:

1. Have you ever conducted some wrongful acts which have been forgiven by others? Revisit how you felt when you were forgiven by others. What did you say to yourself when you received a pardon? Did you feel relieved and grateful?
2. Write a **forgiving note** to the person who has hurt you. You can choose to send it out or keep it to yourself. See how you feel after doing this exercise.

### Exercise Two:

1. Apologizing can be a powerful way to manage conflict and to reconcile our relationship. Write an **apology note** to the person whom you might have hurt. You can choose to send it out or keep it to yourself. See how you feel after writing the note. Notice any differences in your feelings, thoughts and behaviours thereafter.
2. You may write a short **reply note** to your apology note as if you were the victim receiving your apology. See how you feel after writing the reply. Notice any differences in your feelings, thoughts and behaviours thereafter.

**Here are some relaxation and mindfulness scripts!**

**Please visit the RESOURCES box for videos and texts!**

### References

Lawler, K.A. and Younger, J.W. et al. (2005). The unique effort of forgiveness on health: An exploration of pathways. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 28 (2), 157-167.

Oman, D and Shapiro, S.L. et al. (2008). Meditation lowers stress and support forgiveness among college students: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of American College Health*, 56 (5), 569-578.

Schumann, K. (2012). Does love mean never having to say you're sorry? Association between relationship satisfaction, perceived apology sincerity and forgiveness. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationship* , 29 (7),997-1010

Wilson, T. and Milosevic, A. et al. (2008). Physical health status in relation to self-forgiveness and other-forgiveness in healthy college students. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 13 (6), 798-803.

Wohl, M. and Pychyl, T. et al. (2010). I forgive myself, now I can study: How self-forgiveness for procrastinating can reduce future procrastination. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 48 (7), 803-808.

## 課題：原諒寬恕

### 簡介：

原諒寬恕不等於認同不對的行為或放過作惡者，更不是被動和怕事。心理學家一般相信原諒能使受害者減低情緒困擾，是受害者有意識地選擇遠離受到傷害後的負面情緒、思想和行為。

### 科學實証：

一個向 266 名本科生作的調查指出能原諒自己及他人的人，會感到自己的身體比較健康(Wilson & Milosevic, 2008)。原諒寬恕與身體健康有正向關係是由於寬恕能減低壓力，緩和負面情緒和能讓衝突得到更好的處理(Lawler and Younger, 2005)。

原諒自己有助學習表現。近年有研究發現能原諒自己曾在第一次考試中拖延溫習的大學生，會較少機會在其後第二次考試中再度拖延溫習(Wohl and Pychyl, 2010)。原因是原諒自己能減少負面情緒，繼而減低再次拖延溫習的情況。

在人際關係上，史丹福大學有研究發現情侶之間的基本關係愈好，他們在遇到衝突不和時的道歉會較容易被視為誠懇的，故此亦較易得到對方的原諒(Schumann, 2012)。我們怎樣能加強原諒寬恕的能力呢？有研究發現靜觀減壓方法不只能減輕大學生的壓力，同時能增加他們原諒寬恕的能力(Oman & Shapiro, 2008)。

### 練習一：

3. 你過往有沒有犯錯後被原諒？試回想別人原諒你時你有什麼感受？你對自己說了什麼？你可有感到如釋重負和十分感謝？
4. 寫下一則**原諒便條**給曾傷害你的人。你可選擇把便條寄出或收藏。細味你完成練習後的感覺。

### 練習二：

3. 道歉是非常有力的解決衝突方法，亦可修補我們的人際關係。寫下一則**道歉便條**給你曾傷害過的人。你可選擇把便條寄出或收藏。細味你完成練習後的感覺，留心自己的感受、想法和行為有沒有改變。

4. 你可嘗試從受傷害的人的角度回覆這則道歉便條。細味你完成練習後的感覺，留心自己的感受、想法和行為有沒有改變。

鬆弛記練習！

請到資源庫收看短片或延伸閱讀！