

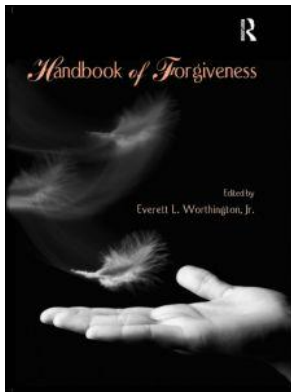
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## Handbook of Forgiveness

Everett L. Worthington, Jr.

### Personality and Its Effects on Resentment, Revenge, Forgiveness, and Self-Forgiveness

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Etienne Mullet, Félix Neto, Sheila Rivière

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## Chapter Eleven

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# Personality and Its Effects on Resentment, Revenge, Forgiveness, and Self-Forgiveness

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Etienne Mullet  
Félix Neto  
Sheila Rivière

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Previous research shows that the decision to forgive depends on numerous factors, such as: (a) situational factors (intention of harm, repetition of offense, severity of the consequences, cancellation or not of the consequences, presence of apologies, and/or compensation from the offender [e.g., Mullet & Girard, 2000]), (b) relational factors (offender's identity and his or her proximity with the victim, his or her hierarchical status, his or her attitude after the offense, and environmental pressures [e.g., Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2001]), and (c) personality factors (McCullough & Worthington, 1999). This chapter will focus on the latter group of factors. What are the personality traits that could predict the duration and intensity of the post-offense resentment, the choice of forgiveness (self-forgiveness or forgiveness of others), or the choice of revenge?

Examining the impact of personality factors on forgiveness and revenge is important for reasons that are both theoretical and practical. On the theoretical level, it is essential, for instance, to understand how the personality influences attitudes and decisions at crucial moments of our lives, such as in the face of opposition, arguments, and conflicts of interest; and in reaction to adversity or offense. It is often in these particular moments that important—often irreversible—decisions are made. Such decisions can impact a person's entire life. It is, therefore, essential to investigate the role of personality factors to identify those that are the most important in these critical life situations.

On the practical level for psychologists and other practitioners, when dealing with therapies aimed at healing and forgiveness, it is essential to know how and to what extent to take into the account the personality of the patient (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000). Indeed, the method used by the practitioner needs to be adapted to the

personality of the patient. It wouldn't be conceivable to apply the same method with a highly neurotic patient as with a stable one. Knowledge of the patient's personality would thus inform the practitioner as to the nature of the resentment (intensity and duration), the willingness to forgive, or the tendency to seek revenge.

### PERSONAL ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT FORGIVENESS, REVENGE, AND RESENTMENT

We define *forgiveness* as the overcoming of resentment toward an offender, not by denying the right to such feelings but by endeavoring to view the offender with compassion. *Revenge* is defined as the infliction of harm to an offender in return for perceived wrong. *Resentment* is defined as a cold, emotional complex consisting of bitterness, hostility, residual fear, and residual anger in response to perceived harm from an offender.

Different instruments have been devised for measuring forgiveness in particular circumstances and dispositional forgiveness (also called *forgivingness*; Roberts, 1995). A careful study of these different instruments reveals that not all exclusively measure the intended dimension. For instance, the scale Forgiveness-Nonretaliation (Ashton, Paunonen, Helmes, & Jackson, 1998) includes four categories of items. Some refer to forgiveness (e.g., "My attitude toward people who have tried to harm me is 'forgive and forget'"). Others focus on revenge (e.g., "When someone treats me really unfairly, I want to 'get even' with them, even if it is inconvenient to do so"). Others focus on lasting resentment (e.g., "I tend to 'hold a grudge' against people who have wronged me"). Others refer more to neuroticism than forgiveness (e.g., "I usually start out by suspecting other people and only trusting them after getting to know them well").

In the same vein, the Forgiveness of Others scale (Mauger et al., 1992) contains items referring to reconciliation (e.g., "I am able to make up pretty easily with friends who have hurt me in some way"), revenge (e.g., "People who criticize me better be ready to take some of their own medicine"), or lasting resentment (e.g., "I have grudges which I have held on to for months or years"). Other items measure attitudes toward forgiveness or revenge (e.g., "I feel that other people have done more good than bad for me"). Others have little to do with forgiveness (e.g., "I often use sarcasm when people deserve it"). Even if factorial analysis may allow us to classify these different elements under the same name, this does not signify that the underlying construct is unitary and nonambiguous.

As illustrated by Wade and Worthington (2003; see also Brown, 2003; Thompson et al., 2005), revenge is not the contrary of forgiveness, and resentment does not necessarily mean absence of forgiveness in the future. When one is the victim of an intentional offense, a feeling of resentment seems logical, the duration of which would usually depend on the circumstances of the offense, the attitude of the offender, and, of course, the personality of the victim. Mullet, Houdbine, Laumonier, and Girard (1998) and Mullet, Barros, Frongia, Usai, and Neto (2003) have shown that individual differences concerning the intensity of resentment are sufficiently notable to help identify a separate factor: lasting resentment (see also McCullough & Hoyt, 2002;

McCullough et al., 1998; Rye et al., 2001). Lasting resentment clearly coincides with the concept of unforgiveness proposed by Worthington and Wade (1999).

The end of the resentment (or unforgiveness) state could take many forms, which are probably directly in relation with the victim and offender's personalities and the environment. Mullet et al. (1998, 2003) have shown that the individual differences in relation with sensitivity to circumstances are sufficiently important to help identify another separate factor: sensitivity to personal and social circumstances. Different forms of resentment naturally end with either forgiveness, revenge, or other types of closure (such as formal complaint or oblivion). Thus, the absence of revenge does not necessarily mean forgiveness. A victim can be still in the resentment mode yet have made a formal complaint or be trying to forget. It is also important to note that the presence of resentment is not synonymous with revenge. Forgiveness can follow the state of resentment, even a long-lasting one. Thus, the presence of (moderate to strong) statistical correlations among reduced forgiveness, revenge, and resentment do not constitute an argument for mixing these three concepts into one scale. These statistical correlations are in fact directly related to the nature of the process that goes from offense to resentment, which would end by either forgiveness or revenge.

Mullet et al. (2003) have argued that it is essential to differentiate these concepts and measure the impact of different personality measures on each component. We described six constructs: enduring resentment toward others, revenge, sensitivity to circumstances, forgiveness of others, forgiveness of self, and forgiveness of situations. We excluded from this classification the measures of forgiveness toward and from God and forgiveness seeking. It should be also noted that categories were not always clear-cut. Some subscales contain items that belong to two or more categories. For instance, the Forgiveness of Others scale (Mauger et al., 1992) was considered, despite its title, as a revenge scale because a majority of this scale's items are more in relation with revenge than with forgiveness. For the more recent scales, the choice of the categories has been more straightforward. The three subscales of state measure Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory (TRIM; McCullough, Bellah, Kilpatrick, & Johnson, 2001), for instance, were without much ambiguity, classified in enduring resentment (avoidance subscale), forgiveness of others (benevolence subscale), and revenge (revenge subscale). Considering that the measures in relation with self-forgiveness are still not numerous, only one category was considered for this construct (despite the fact that the items were not all homogenous).

## MEASURING PERSONALITY: A COMMON FRAMEWORK

To organize the existing data and explore the possible correlations with personality factors, a common framework was needed. The Big Five model of personality was chosen: agreeableness, neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness. We examined those factors and forgiveness-relevant dispositions related to them.

Another factor that has been studied often is religion or spirituality. According to some authors (MacDonald, 2000; Piedmont, 1999), this factor is largely orthogonal to the Big Five. Spirituality is mainly related to the vision that the individual may have of his or her place in time and space and in relation to the world and the universe. Piedmont (1999) has proposed the following facets for this factor: sense of universality, prayer fulfillment, and sense of connectedness. In contrast, religion may be conceived as the strength of one's beliefs in a doctrine and the frequency of participation in activities linked with this doctrine (e.g., regular attendance in church). On *a priori* grounds, it is conceivable that a highly religious or spiritual individual would be much less inclined to lasting resentment and that to the contrary, such an individual would choose more rapidly and more frequently the path to forgiveness as opposed to resentment and revenge (see Rye et al., 2000). With regard to self-forgiveness—although it is more difficult to formulate any hypothesis—it is conceivable that a highly spiritual individual would be more inclined to recognize his or her faults and ask for forgiveness, which in turn could only help the self-forgiveness process.

## REVIEW OF THE THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

A total of 27 studies have been identified on the basis of three criteria: (1) they present a good enough description of the used items; (2) they contain at least one measure among the ones classified into the six categories previously defined; and (3) they contain at least one personality measure. These studies have been marked with an asterisk in the references. We will examine the results for the four measures for which a sufficient number of studies have been identified: resentment, revenge, forgiving others, and forgiving self. For sensitivity to situations and forgiveness of situations, too few studies were identified to tabulate.

In Table 11.1, we present the correlations between personality dimensions and lasting resentment toward others. Correlations between enduring resentment and agreeableness ranged from  $-.10$  to  $-.43$ . The strongest negative correlation was observed for altruism. The correlation between enduring resentment and neuroticism were mostly positive, ranging from  $.24$  to  $.39$ . Depression presented the highest positive correlation with lasting resentment ( $.51$ ), followed by anger, anxiety, and rumination. Extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness were only infrequently related to enduring resentment (see Table 11.1). Measures of religiousness were correlated strongly and negatively with enduring resentment, ranging from  $-.12$  to  $-.46$ . The strongest negative correlation was observed for spirituality and enduring resentment ( $-.46$ ).

In Table 11.2, we present the correlations between personality dimensions and revenge. Correlations between revenge and agreeableness were all strongly negative, ranging from  $-.29$  to  $-.51$ . The correlation between revenge and neuroticism was positive, although weaker than what was observed for agreeableness, ranging from  $.01$  to  $.36$ , with the exception of the Maltby, Macaskill, and Day (2001) study. Hostility presented the highest positive correlation, followed by anger, anxiety, depression, and

rumination.<sup>1</sup> Correlations between revenge and extraversion were negative, ranging from .00 to  $-.36$ . They were especially notable among men. Correlations between revenge and conscientiousness were also negative, ranging from  $-.02$  to  $-.46$ . Responsibility presented the highest negative correlation ( $-.46$ ). Correlations between revenge and openness were the weakest observed. Correlations between revenge and religiousness were all negative and among the highest observed, ranging from  $-.14$  to  $-.39$ .

**TABLE 11.1. Personality and Enduring Resentment**

Personality variable	Personality scale	Resentment scale	<i>r</i>	Study
<b>Agreeableness</b>				
<i>Agreeableness</i>	Big Five Inventory	TTF	$-.43$	Brown (2003)
	Big Five Inventory	TRIM*-A	$-.23, -.10$	McCullough et al. (2001)
<i>Altruism</i>	Batson Empathy Scale	TRIM*-A	$-.52$	Wade et al. (2003)
<i>Emotional empathy</i>	IRI (Empathic concern)	TTF	$-.01$	Brown (2003)
<i>Perspective taking</i>	IRI (Perspective taking)	TTF	$-.29$	Brown (2003)
<i>Attitude toward forgiveness</i>	ATF	TTF	$-.37$	Brown (2003)
<b>Extraversion</b>				
<i>Extraversion</i>	Big Five Inventory	TTF	$-.08$	Brown (2003)
	Big Five Inventory	TRIM*-A	$.02, .04$	Brown (2003)
<i>Shyness</i>	Shyness	FS-R	$-.06^m, .02^f$	Neto & Mullet (2004)
	Embarrassability	FS-R	$-.09^m, -.09^f$	Neto & Mullet (2004)
<i>Independence</i>	Independence	FS-R	$.21^m, .29^f$	Neto & Mullet (2004)
	Interdependence	FS-R	$.02^m, -.16^f$	Neto & Mullet (2004)
<i>Loneliness</i>	Loneliness	FS-R	$.16^m, .10^f$	Neto & Mullet (2004)
<b>Neuroticism</b>				
<i>Neuroticism</i>	Big Five Inventory	TTF	$.39$	Brown (2003)
	Big Five Inventory	TRIM*-A	$.22, .32$	McCullough & Hoyt (2002)
	Big Five Inventory	TRIM*-A	$.36, .24$	McCullough & Hoyt (2002)
<i>Positive affectivity</i>	PANAS	TRIM*-A	$-.12$	McCullough et al. (1998)
<i>Negative affectivity</i>	PANAS	TRIM*-A	$.13$	McCullough et al. (1998)
	PANAS	TRIM*-A	$.28$	McCullough et al. (2001)
<i>Anger</i>	State Anger Scale	RFS*-AN	$.41$	Rye, Loiacono, Folck, Olszewski et al. (2001)
	State Anger Scale	RFS*-AN	$.38$	Rye, Folck, Heim, Olszewski et al. (in press)

TABLE 11.1. Personality and Enduring Resentment (*continued*)

Personality variable	Personality scale	Resentment scale	<i>r</i>	Study
<i>Anger</i>	State Anger Scale	EFI*	.26	Gisi & d'Amato (2000)
	Trait Anger Scale	RFS*-AN	.34	Rye et al. (2001)
	Trait Anger Scale	RFS*-AN	.32	Rye et al. (in press)
	Trait Anger Scale	TTF	.44	Brown (2003)
<i>Paranoid style</i>	Paranoid Personality Scale	FS-R	.30 <sup>f</sup> , .38 <sup>m</sup>	Muñoz Sastre, Vinsonneau, Chabrol, & Mullet (2004)
<i>Anxiety</i>	Anxiety Scale (S+T)	EFI*	.15	Subkoviak, Enright, & Wu (1992)
	State Anxiety Scale	EFI*	.43	Subkoviak et al. (1995)
<i>Depression</i>	CES-D	RFS*-AN	.51	Rye et al. (in press)
	CES-D	TTF	.34	Brown (2003)
<i>Rumination</i>	IES-Rumination	TRIM*-A	.39	McCullough et al. (2001)
	IES-Suppression	TRIM*-A	.37	McCullough et al. (2001)
	IES-Rumination	TRIM*-A	-.08	McCullough et al. (1998)
<i>Self-esteem</i>	RSES	TTF	-.31	Brown (2003)
	RSES	FS-R	-.08 <sup>m</sup> , -.07 <sup>f</sup>	Neto & Mullet (2004)
<b>Conscientiousness</b>				
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	Big Five Inventory	TTF	-.04	Brown (2003)
	Big Five Inventory	TRIM*-A	.08, -.07	McCullough et al. (2001)
<b>Openness</b>				
<i>Openness</i>	Big Five Inventory	TTF	-.07	Brown (2003)
	Big Five Inventory	TRIM*-A	-.13, .07	McCullough et al. (2001)
<i>Self-deception</i>	Self-Deception	TRIM*-A	.12	McCullough et al. (1998)
<b>Religiousness</b>				
<i>Religiousness</i>	Religiosity Scale	EFI*	-.37	Subkoviak et al. (1995)
	RWBS	RFS*-AN	-.20	Rye et al. (2001)
	RWBS	RFS*-AN	-.30	Rye et al. (2001)
	RWBS	RFS*-AN	-.22	Rye et al. (in press)
<i>Spirituality</i>	EWBS	RFS*-AN	-.40	Rye et al. (2001)
	EWBS	RFS*-AN	-.46	Rye et al. (in press)
	Religious Faith	HFS-O	-.30	Edwards et al. (2002)
<i>Hope</i>	HS-Avoid. Hope Threats	RFS*-AN	-.35	Rye et al. (2001)
	Hope Scale	RFS*-AN	-.12	Rye et al. (in press)

**TABLE 11.1. Personality and Enduring Resentment (continued)**

*Note:* ATF = Attitude Towards Forgiveness Scale, CES-D = Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale, EFI\* = Enright Forgiveness Inventory, EWBS = Existential Well-Being Scale, FS-R = Forgiveness Scale-Resentment, HFS-O = Heartland Forgiveness Scale-Others, HS = Hope Scale, IES = Impact of Event Scale, IRI = Interpersonal Reactivity Inventory, PANAS = Positive and Negative Attitude Scale, RRFs-AN = Rye Forgiveness Scale-Absence of Negative, RSES = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, RWBS = Religious Well-Being Scale, TRIM\*-A = Transgression Related Interpersonal Motivations-Avoidance, TTF = Tendency to Forgive Scale. The references to the precise measures of personality used may be found in the reference in the right column.

\*State forgiveness scales; <sup>m</sup> = Male; <sup>f</sup> = Female

**TABLE 11.2. Personality and Revenge**

Personality variable	Personality scale	Revenge scale	<i>r</i>	Study
<b>Agreeableness</b>				
<i>Agreeableness</i>	Big Five Mini-Markers	AFNRS	-.29	Ashton et al. (1998)
	HA-HESC	AFNRS	-.50	Ashton et al. (1998)
	BARS	FOOS	-.51	Leach & Lark (2003)
	Big Five Inventory	FOOS	-.49	McCullough et al. (2001)
	Big Five Inventory	TRIM*-R	-.36, -.50	McCullough et al. (2001)
<i>Altruism</i>	AMAS	AFNRS	-.26	Ashton et al. (1998)
<i>Empathy</i>	Empathy Scale	VS	-.38	Stuckless & Goranson (1992)
<b>Neuroticism</b>				
<i>Neuroticism</i>	BARS	FOOS	.31	Leach & Lark (2003)
	REPQ	FOOS	.09 <sup>m</sup> , -.07 <sup>f</sup>	Maltby et al. (2001)
	Big Five Inventory	FOOS	.36	McCullough et al. (2001)
	Big Five Inventory	TRIM*-R	.06, .01	McCullough et al. (2001)
<i>Emotional stability</i>	Big Five Mini-Markers (-)	AFNRS	.21	Ashton et al. (1998)
<i>Positive affectivity</i>	PANAS (-)	TRIM*-R	.10	McCullough et al. (1998)
<i>Negative affectivity</i>	PANAS	TRIM*-R	.17	McCullough et al. (2001)
	PANAS	TRIM*-R	.32	McCullough et al. (1998)
<i>Anger</i>	SAEI	FOOS	.50	Seybold, Hill, Neuman, & Chi (2001)
	TAEI	FOOS	.62	Seybold et al. (2001)
	Trait Anger Scale	VS	.58	Stuckless & Goranson (1992)
<i>Hostility</i>	CISS-Cynical Hostility	FOOS	.63	Seybold et al. (2001)



TABLE 11.2. Personality and Revenge (*continued*)

Personality variable	Personality scale	Revenge scale	<i>r</i>	Study
<i>Hostility</i>	CISS-Hostile Attribution	FOOS	.65	Seybold et al. (2001)
	CISS-Hostile Affect	FOOS	.64	Seybold et al. (2001)
<i>Anxiety</i>	State Anxiety Scale	FOOS	.54	Seybold et al. (2001)
	Trait Anxiety Scale	FOOS	.55	Seybold et al. (2001)
	GHQ-Anxiety	FOOS	.11 <sup>m</sup> , .16 <sup>f</sup>	Maltby et al. (2001)
<i>Paranoid style</i>	PPSS	FS-V	.39 <sup>f</sup> , .50 <sup>m</sup>	Muñoz Sastre et al. (2005)
<i>Depression</i>	Depression Inventory	FOOS	.49	Seybold et al. (2001)
	MMPI-Depression	FOOS	.16	Mauger et al. (1992)
	GHQ-Depression	FOOS	.37 <sup>m</sup> , .23 <sup>f</sup>	Maltby et al. (2001)
	CES-D	VI	.02	Brown (2003)
<i>Rumination</i>	IES-Rumination	TRIM*-R	.40	McCullough et al. (2001)
	IES-Suppression	TRIM*-R	.19	McCullough et al. (2001)
	IES-Rumination	TRIM*-R	.27	McCullough et al. (1998)
<i>Psychoticism</i>	MMPI-Defective Inhibition	FOOS	.46	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Poignancy	FOOS	.32	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Persecutory Ideas	FOOS	.49	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Need for Affection	FOOS	.53	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Naiveté	FOOS	.45	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Self-Alienation	FOOS	.45	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Social Alienation	FOOS	.54	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Hypochondriasis	FOOS	.12	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Hysteria	FOOS	-.09	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Psychopathy	FOOS	.21	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Paranoia	FOOS	.24	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Psychastenia	FOOS	.26	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Schizophrenia	FOOS	.36	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Hypomania	FOOS	.28	Mauger et al. (1992)
	REPQ	FOOS	.03 <sup>m</sup> , .17 <sup>f</sup>	Maltby et al. (2001)
		<b>Extraversion</b>		
<i>Extraversion</i>	BARS	FOOS	-.23	Leach & Lark (2003)
	MMPI-Social Introversion (-)	FOOS	-.28	Mauger et al. (1992)

**TABLE 11.2. Personality and Revenge (continued)**

Personality variable	Personality scale	Revenge scale	<i>r</i>	Study
<i>Extraversion</i>	REPQ	FOOS	-.25 <sup>m</sup> , -.11 <sup>f</sup>	Maltby et al. (2001)
	Big Five Mini-Markers	FNRS	-.02	Ashton et al. (1998)
	Big Five Inventory	FOOS	.00	McCullough et al. (2001)
	Big Five Inventory	TRIM*-R	-.36, .10	McCullough et al. (2001)
<b>Conscientiousness</b>				
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	BARS	FOOS	-.25	Leach & Lark (2003)
	Big Five Mini-Markers	AFNRS	-.09	Ashton et al. (1998)
	Big Five Inventory	FOOS	-.24	McCullough et al. (2001)
	Big Five Inventory	TRIM*-R	-.36, -.02	McCullough et al. (2001)
<i>Responsibility</i>	JPI-Responsibility	AFNRS	-.46	Ashton et al. (1998)
<i>Self-deception</i>	Self-Deception (-)	TRIM*-R	-.30	McCullough et al. (1998)
<b>Openness</b>				
<i>Openness</i>	BARS	FOOS	-.13	Leach & Lark (2003)
	Big Five Mini-Markers	AFNRS	-.17	Ashton et al. (1998)
	Big Five Inventory	FOOS	-.07	McCullough et al. (2001)
	Big Five Inventory	TRIM*-R	-.08, .07	McCullough et al. (2001)
<b>Religiousness</b>				
<i>Religiousness</i>	RWBS	FOOS	-.39	Leach & Lark (2003)
<i>Spirituality</i>	SCRS	FOOS	-.38	Mauger et al. (1996)
	EWBS	FOOS	-.39	Leach & Lark (2003)
	STS-Universality	FOOS	-.14	Leach & Lark (2003)
	STS-Prayer	FOOS	-.19	Leach & Lark (2003)
	STS-Connectedness	FOOS	-.15	Leach & Lark (2003)

*Note:* AFNRS = Ashton Forgiveness Non Retaliation Scale, AMAS = Altruistic Money Allocation Scale, BARS = Bipolar Adjective Rating Scale, CES-D = Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale, CISS = Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations, EWBS = Existential Well-Being Scale, FOOS = Forgiveness of Others Scale, GHQ = General Health Questionnaire, HA-HESC = High Agreeableness-High Emotional Stability Scale, IES = Impact of Event Scale, JPI = Jackson Personality Inventory, MMPI = Minnesota Multi-phasic Personality Inventory, PANAS = Positive and Negative Attitude Scale, PPSS = Paranoid Personality Style Subscale, REPQ = Revised Eysenk Personality Questionnaire, RWBS = Religious Well-Being Scale, SAEI = State Anger Expression Inventory, SCRS = Spiritual Coping Scale, STS = Spiritual Transcendence Scale, TAEI = Trait Anger Expression Inventory, TRIM\*-R = Transgression Related Interpersonal Motivations-Revenge, VS = Vengeance Scale. The references to the precise measures of personality used may be found in the reference in the right column.

\*State forgiveness scales; <sup>m</sup> = Male; <sup>f</sup> = Female

In Table 11.3, we present the correlations between personality dimensions and forgiveness of others. Correlations between forgiveness of others and agreeableness were all positive, ranging from .25 to .33, with the exception of Walker and Gorsuch's study (2002), which systematically reported lower numbers. Emotional empathy presented the strongest positive correlation, followed by attitude toward forgiveness and perspective taking. Correlations between forgiveness of others and neuroticism were all negative, ranging from  $-.27$  to  $-.32$ , with the exception of the Brown (2003) study, which was made on a small sample. Anger presented the strongest negative correlation, followed by rumination and narcissism. Regarding self-esteem, all correlations were weak, but they did change dramatically with gender. Correlations between forgiveness of others and extraversion were mostly positive, although weaker than for agreeableness and neuroticism, ranging from  $-.02$  to  $.20$ . Interdependence presented the highest correlations with forgiveness (with values higher for women than for men). Correlations between forgiveness of others and conscientiousness were all positive and in the same range as those observed for extraversion ( $.04$  to  $.24$ ). Dutifulness presented the highest positive correlation. Correlations between forgiveness of others and openness were weak. Correlations between forgiveness of others and religiousness were positive and notable, ranging from  $.12$  to  $.29$ , with the exception of the Enright, Santos, and Al-Mabuk (1989) study, in which different instruments were used. Between hope and forgiveness; however, the correlation was weak and negative.

**TABLE 11.3. Personality and Forgiveness of Others**

Personality variable	Personality scale	Forgiveness scale	<i>r</i>	Study
<b>Agreeableness</b>				
<i>Agreeableness</i>	Big Five Inventory	TNTF	.25, .33, .28	Berry et al. (2001)
	Big Five Inventory	TNTF	.27	Brown (2003)
	IPIP	WFS-O	.07	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Warmth</i>	16PF-A	WFS-O	.06	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Sensitivity</i>	16PF-I	WFS-O	.05	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Emotional empathy</i>	Batson Empathy Scale	SIFS	.52	Wade & Worthington (2003)
	Batson Empathy Scale	TNTF	.24	Wade & Worthington (2003)
	IRI (Empathic concern)	TNTF	.16	Brown (2003)
	Emotional Empathy Scale	FI	.43 <sup>m</sup> , .61 <sup>m</sup> , .36 <sup>f</sup> , .49 <sup>f</sup>	Coleman & Byrd (2003)
<i>Perspective taking</i>	IRI	TNTF	.40	Brown (2003)
<i>Gratitude</i>	Gratitude Questionnaire	DTFS	.36	McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang (2002)
	Gratitude Adjectives	DTFS	.30	McCullough et al. (2002)

TABLE 11.3. Personality and Forgiveness of Others (*continued*)

Personality variable	Personality scale	Forgiveness scale	<i>r</i>	Study
<i>Attitude toward forgiveness</i>	ATF	TNTF	.51	Brown (2003)
<b>Extraversion</b>				
<i>Extraversion</i>	Big Five Inventory	TNTF	-.02, .19, -.02	Berry et al. (2001)
	Big Five Inventory	TNTF	.20	Brown (2003)
	IPIP	WFS-O	.02	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Introversion</i>	16PF-Q2 (-)	WFS-O	.16	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Friendliness</i>	16PF-H	WFS-O	.00	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Reserve</i>	16PF-N	WFS-O	-.06	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Gregariousness</i>	16PF-F	WFS-O	-.01	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Assertiveness</i>	16PF-E	WFS-O	-.02	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Independence</i>	Interdependence	FS-F	.11 <sup>m</sup> , .36 <sup>f</sup>	Neto & Mullet (2004)
	Independence (-)	FS-F	.13 <sup>m</sup> , .17 <sup>f</sup>	Neto & Mullet (2004)
<i>Loneliness</i>	Loneliness	FS-F	-.18 <sup>m</sup> , .13 <sup>f</sup>	Neto & Mullet (2004)
<i>Shyness</i>	Shyness (-)	FS-F	.07 <sup>m</sup> , .19 <sup>f</sup>	Neto & Mullet (2004)
	Embarrassability (-)	FS-F	-.06 <sup>m</sup> , .12 <sup>f</sup>	Neto & Mullet (2004)
<b>Neuroticism</b>				
<i>Neuroticism</i>	Big Five Inventory	TNTF	-.29, -.27, -.32	Berry et al. (2001)
	Big Five Inventory	TNTF	-.10	Brown (2003)
	IPIP	WFS-O	-.27	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Emotional stability</i>	16PF-C (-)	WFS-O	-.17	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
	16PF-Q4	WFS-O	-.34	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Distrust</i>	16PF-L	WFS-O	-.21	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Paranoid style</i>	PPSS	FS-F	-.22 <sup>f</sup> , -.40 <sup>m</sup>	Muñoz Sastre et al. (2005)
<i>Anxiety</i>	16PF-O	WFS-O	-.15	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Anger</i>	AQ-Anger	TNTF	-.33, -.35, -.45	Berry et al. (2001)
	State Anger Scale	RFS*-PP	-.11	Rye et al. (in press)
	Trait Anger Scale	TNTF	-.43, -.38, -.43	Berry et al. (2001)
	Trait Anger Scale	TNTF	-.43	Berry & Worthington (2001)

TABLE 11.3. Personality and Forgiveness of Others (*continued*)

Personality variable	Personality scale	Forgiveness scale	<i>r</i>	Study
	Trait Anger Scale	TUFS	-.66	Berry & Worthington (2001)
	Trait Anger Scale	RFS*-PP	-.21	Rye et al. (2001)
	Trait Anger Scale	RFS*-PP	-.09	Rye et al. (in press)
	Trait Anger Scale	FLS	-.31	Rye et al. (2001)
<i>Hostility</i>	AQ-Hostility	TNTF	-.21, -.37, -.32	Berry et al. (2001)
<i>Depression</i>	CES-D	RFS*-PP	-.14	Rye et al. (in press)
<i>Rumination</i>	DRS	TNTF	-.49	Berry et al. (2001)
<i>Self-esteem</i>	Self-Esteem Scale	FS-F	.14 <sup>m</sup> , -.23 <sup>f</sup>	Neto & Mullet (2004)
<i>Narcissism</i>	NPI	DLFS	-.43	Sandage, Worthington, Hight, & Berry (2000)
<b>Conscientiousness</b>				
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	Big Five Inventory	TNTF	.15, .24, .16	Berry et al. (2001)
	Big Five Inventory	TNTF	.04	Brown (2003)
	IPIP	WFS-O	.13	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Dutifulness</i>	16PF-G	WFS-O	.21	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Orderliness</i>	16PF-Q3	WFS-O	.13	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<b>Openness</b>				
<i>Openness</i>	Big Five Inventory	TNTF	.14, .14, .02	Berry et al. (2001)
	Big Five Inventory	TNTF	.11	Brown (2003)
	IPIP	WFS-O	-.02	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Intellect</i>	16PF-B	WFS-O	-.01	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Imagination</i>	16PF-M	WFS-O	-.18	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Complexity</i>	16PF-Q1	WFS-O	.12	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<b>Religiousness</b>				
<i>Religiousness</i>	Religious Belief Scale	Dilemmas	.33, .54	Enright et al. (1989)
	Religiousness Scale	RFS*-PP	.29	Rye et al. (2001)
	Religiousness Scale	FLS	.22	Rye et al. (2001)
	RWBS	RFS*-PP	.23	Rye et al. (2001)
	RWBS	RFS*-PP	.12	Rye et al. (in press)

TABLE 11.3. Personality and Forgiveness of Others (*continued*)

Personality variable	Personality scale	Forgiveness scale	<i>r</i>	Study
<i>Religiousness</i>	Religiosity Scale	DTFS	.27	Sandage et al. (2000)
<i>Spirituality</i>	EWBS	RFS*-PP	.21	Rye et al. (2001)
	EWBS	RFS*-PP	.21	Rye et al. (in press)
<i>Hope</i>	Hope Scale	RFS*-PP	-.05	Rye et al. (in press)

*Note:* 16PF = 16 Primary Factors, AQ = Aggression Questionnaire, ATF = Attitude Towards Forgiveness Scale, CES-D = Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale, DRS = Dissipation Rumination Scale, DTFS = Disposition to Forgive Scale, FS-F = Forgiveness Scale-Forgiveness, IPIP = International Personality Item Pool, IRI = Interpersonal Reactivity Inventory, NPI = Narcissism Personality Inventory, PPSS = Paranoid Personality Style Subscale, RFS\*-PP = Rye Forgiveness Scale-Presence of Positive, TNTF = Transgression Narrative Test of Forgiveness, TUFS = Trait Unforgiveness Forgiveness Scale, WFS-O = Walker Forgiveness Scale-Others. The references to the precise measures of personality used may be found in the reference in the right column.

\*State forgiveness scales; <sup>m</sup> = Male; <sup>f</sup> = Female

In Table 11.4, we present the correlations between personality dimensions and self-forgiveness. Correlations between self-forgiveness and neuroticism were all quite strong and negative. The facets that presented the highest correlations were anxiety, hostility, depression, and anger.<sup>2</sup> Correlations between self-forgiveness and extraversion were weak but positive. Assertiveness presented the highest positive correlation. As regards agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and religiousness, the observed correlations were heterogeneous; therefore, it is premature to draw any conclusions.

To demonstrate that the four constructs are related but similar, an individual study might employ a variety of methods, such as using confirmatory factor analyses and showing that different patterns of predictors connect variables. We have examined patterns of connections for four forgiveness-related variables and personality. We conclude that the patterns are similar in general but are differentiated enough to justify conceptualizing the variables as different from each other. The starkest differences are between forgiveness of self and revenge. The most similar patterns are between resentment and revenge.

We do not want to overemphasize the magnitude, significance, or importance of the correlations. We recognize the perils in comparing across studies. However, we are trying to establish that regardless of different types of samples, sample sizes, and measures, some consistency is apparent. In addition, we acknowledge as a further limitation of our approach that several studies are overrepresented in Tables 11.1 through 11.4 by virtue of their multiple correlations (e.g., Mauger et al., 1992).

TABLE 11.4. Personality and Forgiveness of Self

Personality variable	Personality scale	Forgiveness scale	<i>r</i>	Study
<b>Agreeableness</b>				
<i>Agreeableness</i>	BARS	FOSS	.22	Leach & Lark (2003)
	IPIP	WFS-S	.02	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Warmth</i>	16PF-A	WFS-S	.02	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Sensitivity</i>	16PF-I	WFS-S	.01	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Emotional empathy</i>	EES	FOSS	-.11 <sup>m</sup> , .07 <sup>f</sup>	Macaskill et al. (2002)
<b>Extraversion</b>				
<i>Extraversion</i>	Big Five Inventory	FOSS	.11	Berry et al. (2001)
	IPIP	WFS-S	.14	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Introversion</i>	16PF-Q2 (-)	WFS-S	.10	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Friendliness</i>	16PF-H	WFS-S	.20	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Reserve</i>	16PF-N (-)	WFS-S	.14	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Gregariousness</i>	16PF-F	WFS-S	.13	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Assertiveness</i>	16PF-E	WFS-S	.23	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
	REPQ	FOSS	-.19 <sup>m</sup> , -.05 <sup>f</sup>	Maltby et al. (2001)
<b>Neuroticism</b>				
<i>Neuroticism</i>	BARS	FOSS	-.54	Leach & Lark (2003)
	IPIP	WFS-S	-.12	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Emotional stability</i>	16PF-C (-)	WFS-S	-.52	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
	16PF-Q4	WFS-S	-.52	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Distrust</i>	16PF-L	WFS-S	-.13	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Anxiety</i>	16PF-O	WFS-S	-.44	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
	REPQ	FOSS	-.53 <sup>m</sup> , -.41 <sup>f</sup>	Maltby et al. (2001)
	State Anxiety Scale	FOSS	-.64	Seybold et al. (2001)
	Trait Anxiety Scale	FOSS	-.76	Seybold et al. (2001)
	GHQ-Anxiety	FOSS	-.22 <sup>m</sup> , -.22 <sup>f</sup>	Maltby et al. (2001)
<i>Anger</i>	SAEI	FOSS	-.36	Seybold et al. (2001)
	TAEI	FOSS	-.58	Seybold et al. (2001)
<i>Hostility</i>	CISS-Cynical Hostility	FOSS	-.62	Seybold et al. (2001)
	CISS-Hostile Attribution	FOSS	-.62	Seybold et al. (2001)
	CISS-Hostile Affect	FOSS	-.52	Seybold et al. (2001)
<i>Depression</i>	Depression Inventory	FOSS	-.50	Seybold et al. (2001)
	MMPI-Depression	FOSS	-.46	Mauger et al. (1992)

TABLE 11.4. Personality and Forgiveness of Self (*continued*)

Personality variable	Personality scale	Forgiveness scale	<i>r</i>	Study
<i>Psychoticism</i>	GHQ-Depression	FOSS	-.32 <sup>m</sup> , -.27 <sup>f</sup>	Maltby et al. (2001)
	REPQ	FOSS	.05 <sup>m</sup> , -.08 <sup>f</sup>	Maltby et al. (2001)
	MMPI-Defective Inhibition	FOSS	-.47	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Poignancy	FOSS	-.44	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Need for Affection	FOSS	.44	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Naiveté	FOSS	.27	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Persecutory Ideas	FOSS	-.49	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Social Introversion	FOSS	-.47	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Self Alienation	FOSS	-.69	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Social Alienation	FOSS	-.62	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Hypochondriasis	FOSS	-.23	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Hysteria	FOSS	-.14	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Psychopathy	FOSS	-.40	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Paranoia	FOSS	-.41	Mauger et al. (1992)
	MMPI-Psychastenia	FOSS	-.56	Mauger et al. (1992)
MMPI-Schizophrenia	FOSS	-.49	Mauger et al. (1992)	
MMPI-Hypomania	FOSS	-.16	Mauger et al. (1992)	
<b>Conscientiousness</b>				
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	BARS	FOSS	.30	Leach & Lark (2003)
	IPIP	WFS-S	-.11	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Dutifulness</i>	16PF-G	WFS-S	-.11	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Orderliness</i>	16PF-Q3	WFS-S	-.06	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<b>Openness</b>				
<i>Openness</i>	BARS	FOSS	.16	Leach & Lark (2003)
	IPIP	WFS-S	.12	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Intellect</i>	16PF-B	WFS-S	.22	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Imagination</i>	16PF-M	WFS-S	-.10	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<i>Complexity</i>	16PF-Q1	WFS-S	.12	Walker & Gorsuch (2002)
<b>Religiousness</b>				
<i>Religiousness</i>	RWBS	FOSS	-.02	Leach & Lark (2003)
<i>Spirituality</i>	Religious Faith	HFS-S	.13	Edwards et al. (2002)



TABLE 11.4. Personality and Forgiveness of Self (continued)

Personality variable	Personality scale	Forgiveness scale	<i>r</i>	Study
<i>Spirituality</i>	EWBS	FOSS	.31	Leach & Lark (2003)
	STS-Universality	FOSS	-.01	Leach & Lark (2003)
	STS-Prayer	FOSS	-.13	Leach & Lark (2003)
	STS-Connectedness	FOSS	.01	Leach & Lark (2003)

*Note:* 16PF = 16 Primary Factors, AFNRS = Ashton Forgiveness Non Retaliation Scale, BARS = Bipolar Adjective rating Scale, CISS = Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations, EES = Emotional Empathy Scale, EWBS = Existential Well-Being Scale, FOSS = Forgiveness of Self Scale, GHQ = General Health Questionnaire, HFS-S = Heartland Forgiveness Scale-Self, IPIP = International Personality Item Pool, MMPI = Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, REPQ = Revised Eysenk Personality Questionnaire, RWBS = Religious Well-Being Scale, SAEI = State Anger Expression Inventory, STS = Spiritual Transcendence Scale, TAEI = Trait Anger Expression Inventory, WFS-S = Walker Forgiveness Scale-Self. The references to the precise measures of personality used may be found in the reference in the right column; <sup>m</sup> = Male; <sup>f</sup> = Female

### IMPORTANCE OF PERSONALITY FACTORS AS COMPARED WITH RELATIONAL AND SITUATIONAL FACTORS

McCullough and Hoyt (2002) examined the respective impact of situational, relational, and personal variables in the prediction of resentment, revenge, and forgiveness of others. In a first study, they used fictional and freely evoked (real) situations in which the transgressor was a romantic partner, a same-sex friend, or an opposite-sex friend. The transgressions ranged from less severe to severe. The authors also assessed the personality scores for each participant. Personality accounted for 18% (resentment), 18% (revenge), and 15% (forgiveness) of the variance of the responses (correlations of .42, .42, and .39, respectively). In a second situation, they used the same device but this time the transgressor was the mother, the father, a same-sex friend, or an opposite-sex friend. The transgressions still ranged from less severe to severe. Personality scores for each participant were also assessed using peer ratings. Personality accounted for 30% (resentment), 33% (revenge), and 40% (forgiveness) of the variance of the responses when assessed via self-ratings and 19%, 24%, and 30% of the variance when assessed via peer ratings.

In summary, personality factors explained 20% to 35% of the variance in variables that we examined in this chapter (resentment, revenge, forgiveness of others, and forgiveness of self).

## NEW RESEARCH DIRECTIONS NEEDED IN THE AREA

Despite the existence of an important body of research in this area, it would be essential to continue the research in numerous new directions. A first direction, which is the direct continuation of the studies presented in this chapter, would be to research more systematically the relations between forgiveness (or revenge) and personality by examining different facets of each personality factor. This is an important new direction as the analysis we have proposed in the previous section suggests, and existing research demonstrates that not all facets are equal with regard to their correlations with forgiveness (or revenge). For instance, as shown by Berry, Worthington, Parrott, O'Connor, and Wade (2001) and Walker and Gorsuch (2002), the correlation between extraversion and self-forgiveness is rather low (about .10). However, regarding one of the facets of this factor, assertiveness, this correlation becomes much more notable. It is indeed expected that a more assertive individual would experience less difficulty in coming to self-forgiveness, compared with a less assertive individual. It would therefore be interesting to explore the correlations between self-forgiveness and other facets of extraversion, such as poise or leadership.

Another direction already explored by some researchers would be to study more systematically the influence of gender in the correlations between forgiveness (or revenge) and personality. As shown by Neto and Mullet (2004), some correlations are reversed with gender (see Table 11.3). We could cite here the case of forgiveness and self-esteem. Neto and Mullet (2004) found a negative correlation for women and a positive one for men: Women who scored high on self-esteem were less likely to forgive; whereas for men, this same score correlated positively with forgiveness, although to a lesser extent (see also Maltby et al., 2001).

Another possible approach would be to study the correlations between personality and forgiveness (or revenge) from a developmental standpoint. As shown by Mauger, Saxon, Hamill, and Pannel (1996), the correlations between agreeableness and revenge are notably different in adolescents ( $-.72$ ) and adults ( $-.34$ ). Further studies of these differences may contribute to a better understanding of forgiveness and what motivates it at different ages. One hypothesis would be that forgiveness of others is mainly correlated with agreeableness in childhood and adolescence but that with age it becomes increasingly less correlated with agreeableness and more correlated with neuroticism. It is also possible that this pattern of correlations changes again for the elderly (see also Mullet & Girard, 2000).

A fourth approach would be to study the correlations between personality and forgiveness cross-culturally (for a review, see chapter 4 by Sandage & Williamson). Fu, Watkins, and Hui (2003) found that the correlations between anxiety and forgiveness were quite low in a Chinese sample. This correlation was shown to be one of the strongest in most Western studies (see Seybold et al., 2001). More intercultural studies are

needed to help understand how the impact of personality on forgiveness and revenge vary (and as a result, what they mean) from one cultural context to another. The existing intercultural studies seem to indicate important cultural variations on the willingness to forgive (Fu, Watkins, & Hui, 2003; Kadima Kadiangandu, Mullet, & Vinsonneau, 2001), and these differences merit further analysis (see also Azar & Mullet, 2002).

Another possible approach would be to study more systematically the interactions between personality and situational factors (McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). For instance, how does the correlation between forgiveness and neuroticism vary according to the type (psychological, physical, or material) or the intensity (not severe, moderately severe, severe) of the offense? It could be hypothesized that the correlation between forgiveness and neuroticism is stronger in the case of a psychological offense as compared with a material loss (see Gauché & Mullet, *in press*) and in the case of a mild offense as compared with a severe one (McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). In the same vein, we recommend more systematic study of the interactions between personality and forgiveness as a function of the proximity of the offender (McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). For instance, how does the correlation between agreeableness and revenge vary according to the proximity of the offender? Is this correlation the same for an unknown, a casual relation (e.g., a colleague at work), a distant relative, and a close family member? It could be hypothesized that this correlation is stronger in the first and second cases, compared with the last two.

We suggest extending the study of forgiveness and personality to variables other than the willingness to forgive or revenge. It would be interesting to investigate the extent to which the conceptualizations of forgiveness are related to personality. For instance, what is the relation between agreeableness and the concept that forgiveness implies a change of heart (the replacement of negative emotions toward the offender with more positive emotions)? In other words, do the conceptualizations of forgiveness change as an individual scores higher on agreeableness? Or what is the relation between conscientiousness and the concept that forgiveness is “good and moral?” More generally, is the impact of personality on forgiveness a direct one, or is it more or less “filtered” by each person’s conceptualizations of forgiveness (Mullet, Girard, & Bakhshi, 2004)?

Finally, it would be essential to study the relations between forgiveness and personality using instruments other than those presented in this chapter. Emmons (2000) recommended the use of more diversified instruments. Based on McAdams (1996), he suggested that in addition to the personality measures of Level I “relatively nonconditional, decontextualized, and comparative dimensions of personality called traits” (p. 157), researchers use Level II measures: “contextualized strategies, plans and concerns that enable a person to solve various life tasks and achieve personally important life goals” (p. 158). Also, Emmons suggested that researchers use Level III measures or life narratives: “While constructs at Levels I and II can lead to a healthy understanding of forgiveness, it may be only through incorporation of constructs at Level III that a complete account of forgiveness within personality can be constructed” (p. 171).

This is because “forgiveness is the integrated state of a person who is in right relationship with God, with others, and within himself or herself” (p. 171).

### RELEVANCE FOR CLINICAL AND APPLIED INTERVENTIONS

These results have implications for the practice of forgiveness-oriented counseling. As an example, individuals experiencing more lasting resentment toward others were shown to be the ones who present low scores on agreeableness in general (especially low on altruism and perspective taking and high in cynicism) and religiousness (especially low on spirituality), and high on neuroticism (especially high scores on anger, anxiety, depression, and rumination). As a result, patients facing lasting resentment problems may be systematically invited to express their anger in order to take control of it and to take the perspective of others. Clinicians might also help them overcome depressive tendencies. As another example, vengefulness appeared to be strongly related to neuroticism in general and to a paranoid personality style in particular. An area of concern here is the difficulty of diagnosing paranoid personality disorders or strong paranoid tendencies: Individuals with paranoid personalities may conceal their paranoid tendencies quite well, and the diagnosis can be easily missed. In some cases, strong vengefulness must systematically lead one to consider the possibility of paranoid tendencies or personality disorders and to take them into account in the psychotherapeutic process.

### PERSONAL THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE FIELD

We are currently conducting research in two different directions. First, we examine in a systematic way the relationships between resentment, revenge, forgiveness of others, and the many facets that are subsumed under the neuroticism factor (stability, happiness, calmness, moderation, toughness, impulse control, imperturbability, cool-headedness, and tranquility), as well as the many facets that are subsumed under the agreeableness factor (understanding, warmth, morality, pleasantness, empathy, cooperation, sympathy, tenderness, and nurturance). One of our hypotheses, based on the double nature of forgiveness (intrapersonal and interpersonal), is that the main relationships between forgiveness and personality concern the interpersonal facets of personality (e.g., cooperation, toughness) much more than the intrapersonal, strictly self-referential facets of personality (e.g., happiness, morality). Second, we examine the relationships between conceptualization of forgiveness and personality at the level of the factors as well as at the level of the facets. One of our hypotheses is that the effect of personality on forgiveness is largely mediated by the conceptualizations one has about forgiveness (e.g., implying the replacement of negative emotions toward the offender with more positive emotions).

## CONCLUSION

Forgiveness is a complex “state” for which there is more than one path. It is conceivable that one accesses the state of forgiveness only after integrating multiple data and trying numerous paths, not all straightforward. Indeed, forgiveness is the outer translation of a long and often difficult inner process, a process that is a reflection of the victim’s personality.

## NOTES

1. From a psychopathological standpoint, persecutory ideas, schizophrenia, self-alienation, social alienation, and defective inhibition are aspects of neuroticism that highly correlated with revenge.
2. From a psychopathological standpoint, practically all indices obtained with MMPI highly correlate with self-forgiveness.

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