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INTERPERSONAL FORGIVENESS IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS:  
AN ATTACHMENT PERSPECTIVE

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A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
Psychology:  
General-Experimental Psychology

---

by  
Linda Susan Krajewski  
September 2004

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Linda Susan Krajewski

September 2004

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## ABSTRACT

This research explores the relationship between forgiveness and adult attachment status in close relationships. Two hundred sixty-five undergraduate students were administered a demographic survey, the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) inventory to measure adult attachment status (secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissing) using dimensions of anxiety and avoidance, and the Conflicts in Close Relationships (CCR) inventory adapted from the forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others scales of the Behavior Assessment System. Lack of forgiveness of self had a positive significant relationship with anxiety; lack of forgiveness of others had a positive significant relationship with avoidance. Significant positive relationships were also found between lack of forgiveness of self and avoidance and between lack of forgiveness of others and anxiety. Significant differences in forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others were found among homogeneous subsets of

attachment categories. Two homogenous subsets were found as to forgiveness of self, and three homogenous subsets were found as to forgiveness of others. Implications, limitations and future research are discussed.

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Norbert W. Krajewski (1928-1987) and Annabelle M. Krajewski (1927-2000). Their compassion, wisdom, humor and love continue to guide me in everything I do.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT . . . . .	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .	v
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Adult Attachment . . . . .	5
Dimensions of Attachment Within The Four Category Model . . . . .	14
Forgiveness . . . . .	18
Prior Forgiveness Research . . . . .	23
Integration of Adult Attachment and Forgiveness . . . . .	26
Hypotheses . . . . .	29
CHAPTER THREE: METHOD	
Participants . . . . .	32
Materials . . . . .	32
Procedure . . . . .	37
Design and Analyses . . . . .	38
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS . . . . .	40
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION	
Implications . . . . .	45
Limitations . . . . .	51
Future Research . . . . .	54



APPENDIX A:	INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN STUDY . . . . .	56
APPENDIX B:	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION . . . . .	58
APPENDIX C:	EXPERIENCES IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS INVENTORY . . . . .	60
APPENDIX D:	CONFLICT IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS . . .	64
APPENDIX E:	DEBRIEFING STATEMENT . . . . .	67
REFERENCES	. . . . .	69

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	The relationships between forgiveness (self and others) and the two dimensions of attachment (anxiety and avoidance). . . .	40
Table 2.	Attachment style and forgiveness . . . . .	41
Table 3.	Mean responses across the two types of forgiveness (self and others) for the four attachment groups in homogeneous subsets . . . . .	42

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Close interpersonal relationships are the foundation of human society. Their richness and complexity have shaped history. Religion, literature, politics, the arts, the fates of countries, and the fates of individuals all come back to the base of human relationships. For as long as humans have had relationships, we have been trying to understand, nurture, improve, and preserve them.

Attachment theory provides one framework within which to examine our closest of human bonds, that of parent and child. With the extension of attachment concepts to adults, we are beginning to understand the pair bonds that often form the families in which children are raised. Attachment is an intergenerational cycle which John Bowlby (1977) asserted "to characterize human beings from the cradle to the grave" (p 203). Diehl, Elnick, Bourbeau, and Labouvie-Vief (1998) stated that "[a]ttachment styles describe prototypical patterns of emotional response and interpersonal behavior and should be seen as a larger system of human motivation."

Attachment theory is still a work in progress, especially as it applies to adults (Waters, Crowell, Elliott, Corcoran, & Treboux, 2002). Many social psychological variables have been associated with adult attachment styles, such as relationship functioning, personality, depression, social support, religiosity, substance use, and domestic violence (Mickelson, Kessler, & Shaver, 1997). There is no universal set of attributes that empirically define adult attachment; however, the sheer volume of adult attachment related research in the past 15 years certainly indicates researchers' interest to better understand the construct. Because of its consistency with developmental theories regarding attachment as a life span concept, attachment theory is becoming more widely accepted as an organizing framework for close adult relationships (Diehl, et al, 1998).

Forgiveness is essential to the formation, development, and maintenance of stable close interpersonal relationships and aids in bridging the gaps created by imperfect relational processes (Hargrave & Sells, 1997). While forgiveness has been studied extensively by philosophers and theologians (McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997), relatively little empirical

research on forgiveness exists in psychology (Hill, 2001). As with adult attachment, there is little agreement as to the elements of forgiveness as they affect close relationships (Johnson, Makinen, & Millikin 2001). Research has increased since the late 1980s (McCullough, et al, 1997), but empirical investigations measuring forgiveness remain limited (Maltby, Macaskill, & Day, 2001).

This study examined the relationship between adult attachment styles and attitudes toward forgiving oneself and forgiving others. It was anticipated that the attachment dimensions of anxiety and avoidance (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998) would be correlated with forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others respectively (Mauger, Perry, Freeman, Grove, McBride, & McKinney, 1992). This would serve to determine whether these infrequently tested constructs of forgiveness mesh conceptually with the more thoroughly tested constructs of adult attachment and whether attitudes about forgiveness are part of the complex construct of adult attachment. It was also anticipated that individuals in each attachment category would have significantly

different levels of forgiveness of self and forgiveness  
of others.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Adult Attachment

Adult attachment theory has its basis in John Bowlby's research (1969, 1973, 1980) on how and why infants develop emotional attachments to their primary caregivers and why infants often express emotional distress upon being separated from those caregivers. Bowlby's research revealed that the attachment style developed in one's early years "tend[s] to persist relatively unchanged throughout the rest of life" (1973, p. 235). Bowlby preserved Freud's insights about the importance of early experiences and the similarities between infant-mother and adult-adult relationships (Waters, et al, 2002). Bowlby (1977) theorized that early experiences with significant others mold working models which influence personality and guide social behavior (Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996).

Working models are key elements in attachment theory. They are formed in infancy through interactions with caregivers and consist of a network of thoughts, feelings, memories, and beliefs about other people and relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987); Main, et al, 1985).

If a caregiver is consistently responsive and available to meet the child's needs, the child should form positive expectations of interactions with others. Positive relationships with caregivers foster empathy for others and desire to reciprocate. Through responsive care and the encouragement of autonomy, the child develops feelings of self-worth (Collins & Sroufe 1999). This cycle of positive experiences causes the child to develop positive working models with which to base his or her expectations of future relationships. According to Hazan and Shaver (1987), these expectations provide much of the continuity between early and later feelings and behaviors.

Despite the acknowledgments of infant attachment researchers that attachment continued through the life span and some research exploring adult attachment as a construct, it was not until Hazan and Shaver's 1987 research conceptualizing romantic love as an attachment process that adult attachment research gained vigor.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) hypothesized that romantic love is an attachment process parallel to the bonds formed between infants and primary caregivers. They conceptualized descriptions for adult attachment styles



corresponding to the patterns found by Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) in their study of infant-mother attachment. These infant attachment styles represented the child's expectations regarding his/her caregiver's accessibility and responsiveness, which are crucial aspects of continuity between early and later feelings and behaviors in relationships. Numerous longitudinal studies from infancy to elementary school age have provided support that these early expectations regarding caregivers apply across ages and situations. Given this background, Hazan and Shaver found it plausible that attachment history could extend to romantic relationships. They hypothesized that secure adults have love relationships characterized by happiness, trust, positive emotions, and enduring love; anxious/ambivalent adults have difficult love relationships characterized by emotional highs and lows, jealousy, obsession, and desire for union with their partners; and avoidant adults have love relationships characterized by fear of intimacy, emotional highs and lows, lack of trust, denial of needing love, and jealousy (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Collins & Read, 1990). Avoidant individuals are also more likely

to report never having been in love (Feeney & Noller 1990).

Based upon the results of Campos, Barrett, Lamb, Goldsmith, and Stenberg's 1983 summary of American infant attachment research, Hazan and Shaver expected roughly 60% of adults to self-classify as secure, slightly more than 20% to self-classify as avoidant, and the remainder to self-classify as anxious-ambivalent.

A "love quiz" was printed in a local newspaper in which Ainsworth, et al's (1978) descriptions of infant attachment statuses were parsed into terms more appropriate for adult love relationships and included among 95 questions from prior relationship questionnaires and questions suggested by infant attachment literature. Over 1,200 replies were received in the first week after publication. The first 620 replies were analyzed.

The results showed that of these 620 respondents, 56% self-classified as secure, 25% self-classified as avoidant, and 19% self-classified as anxious/ambivalent. This distribution was reasonably close to that of Campos, et al's (1983) meta-analysis of infant attachment (62% secure, 23% avoidant, and 15% anxious/ambivalent).

Hazan and Shaver (1987) were concerned about the limitations of results from a self-selected sample of newspaper quiz respondents; therefore, a second non-self-selected sample was tested. Undergraduate students were given the "love quiz" as a required class exercise. The results were 56% secure, 23% avoidant, and 20% anxious/ambivalent.

From these two studies, Hazan and Shaver (1987) concluded that the three attachment styles originally categorized by Ainsworth, et al. (1978) were as common in adults as they were in infants. They further concluded that individuals with differing attachment styles had differing experiences in romantic relationships. Finally, the similarity in the results of the adult samples with Campos, et al's (1983) meta-analysis of infant attachment research provided empirical evidence for attachment continuity across ages and situations.

Hazan and Shaver's (1987) initial explorations stimulated a flood of adult attachment research. In a 1993 follow-up article compiling others' replications and extensions of their 1987 findings, the authors commented that approximately 30 published journal articles and book chapters, numerous conference papers and dissertations,

and two books on adult attachment had been produced or were in progress since 1990 (Shaver & Hazan, 1993).

Collins and Read's research (1990) took the discrete categorical measure used by Hazan and Shaver (1987) and developed multi-item continuous scales based upon the three attachment categories. They reasoned that a multi-item measure was more appropriate to measure adult attachment for three primary reasons. First, each description from the discrete categorical measure contained information regarding more than one aspect of relationships. If a participant is only allowed to accept an entire description which has aspects that do not apply to him/her, the results will be inaccurate. Secondly, if a participant's choices are limited to endorsing or not endorsing a description, there is no way to assess the participant's degree of agreement with the description. Lastly, the discrete measure assumes that the three attachment styles are mutually exclusive.

Collins and Read (1990) constructed the Adult Attachment Scale by breaking down the aspects of the adult attachment descriptions used by Hazan and Shaver (1987) into separate items with lower scores indicating less agreement.

The initial version of the Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) was administered to 406 undergraduate students. Factor analysis of the results yielded three groups which Collins and Read classified as Depend (comfort with trusting others and depending on them to be available when needed), Anxiety (fear of being abandoned and not being loved), and Close (comfort with closeness and intimacy). Cronbach's alpha for each factor was adequate (Depend=.75, Anxiety=.72, Close=.69). However, each factor was composed of items from more than one subscale; therefore, they did not correspond directly with the three attachment styles.

A subset of the sample completed the Hazan and Shaver (1987) discrete categorical measure approximately two weeks after completing the AAS. Of this subset, 63% self-classified as secure, 27% as avoidant, and 10% as anxious. Using these self-classifications as grouping variables, a discriminant function analysis was performed on the scale scores from the AAS. Two discriminant functions were calculated and accounted for 70.57% and 29.43% of the between-groups variability respectively. The first function discriminated the avoidant type from the secure and anxious types; the second function

discriminated the anxious type from the secure and avoidant types. Although the standardized discriminant function coefficients allowed correct classification of 73% of the total sample, their utility in correctly classifying the three styles varied. While 92% of the secure group was correctly classified, only 45% of the avoidant group and 27% of the anxious group were correctly classified.

The same subset's results were examined using a cluster analysis. The data suggested a four-cluster solution but since there was no other evidence suggesting a four-cluster solution, they chose a three-cluster solution to represent the data. The individuals with high Close scores, high Depend scores and low Anxiety scores were designated the secure cluster; those with high Anxiety scores and moderate scores on Close and Depend were designated the anxious cluster; and those with low scores on Close, Depend and Anxiety were designated the avoidant cluster. It was noted that the four-cluster solution divided the anxiety group into those who had high scores on Close, Depend and Anxiety (anxious-secure) and those who had very low scores on Close and Depend with high scores on Anxiety (anxious-

avoidant). This finding was an important step in the refinement of adult attachment measures and was vital in the development of contemporary adult attachment measures.

Drawing from the four-factor solution mentioned by Collins and Read, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) proposed four categories of adult attachment style: secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful. Secure individuals are comfortable with intimacy and autonomy and have positive relational attitudes toward themselves and other people. They seek connection with others and are not overly anxious about doing so. Preoccupied individuals feel they are unworthy or unlovable, so while they crave connection with others, they are anxious about seeking it. Fearful individuals have a low opinion of themselves and of other people but desire intimacy; however, they are socially avoidant and find intimacy very risky and anxiety-provoking due to the possibility of rejection. Dismissing individuals perceive themselves as worthy of love but believe others cannot be trusted or depended upon. Their relationship anxiety is low, but they see connection with others as unessential and do not value intimacy highly (Bartholomew, 1990).

### Dimensions of attachment within the four category model.

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) postulated that two types of underlying continuous dimensions defined their four category model: an internal model of self and an internal model of others, each dichotomized into positive and negative. Their results confirmed that these dimensions are separate and can vary independently. The dimensions have been found to be conceptually parallel to the discriminant functions found in Ainsworth, et al.'s 1978 research on infant-parent attachment (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994). Ainsworth, et al (1978) used the underlying dimensions of avoidance and anxiety to explain infant attachment patterns. The orthogonal nature of these attachment dimensions has been validated by repeated subsequent research (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994; Diehl, et al. 1998; Frei & Shaver 2002).

Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998) developed the Experiences in Close Relationships inventory by performing a comprehensive assessment of literature and conference papers for self-report attachment measures. They compiled a pool of 482 items designed to assess 60 attachment-related constructs and then reduced the item



pool to 323 items from which all 60 subscale items could be computed. Factor analysis of the 60 subscale scores revealed two independent factors corresponding to avoidance and anxiety. Clustering scores on these two factors into four groups corresponded to the four attachment styles proposed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991). The 323 items were constructed into briefer scales to represent avoidance and anxiety.

Diehl, Elnick, Bourbeau, and Labouvie-Vief (1998) offered further support for the two dimensional model of adult attachment. They posited that Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) four category model of attachment is Bowlby's (1973) internal working model concept unfolded into model of self (internalized self-worth) and model of others (availability and reliability). This is also consistent with general theoretical views on personality development which suggest adult personality development consists of a self-dimension and an other-dimension, which are separate yet interrelated. The self-dimension concerns the establishment of a stable, realistic and positive identity; the other-dimension concerns the establishment of stable, enduring and mutually satisfying interpersonal relationships.

In Diehl, et al. (1998), 304 participants were drawn from a subset of 1990 census data in a study of cognitive-emotional development across the lifespan which utilized several instruments. The participants' attachment style was assessed by use of the relationship questionnaire which was created by Hazan and Shaver (1987) and modified by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991). The participants first read the four categorical paragraphs describing secure, dismissing, preoccupied, and fearful attachment and selected the one that best described their behavior. The participants again read the four paragraphs and rated each on a five-point Likert scale as to how well each described their behavior in close relationships. The results from the categorical measure were used to assess participant-defined attachment style; the results of both the categorical and continuous measures were used in tandem to assess experimenter-defined attachment style.

In comparing the results of the categorical and continuous measures, 32.6% of the participants had equally high ratings on two or more attachment styles; therefore, they were not assigned experimenter-defined attachment styles. The remaining 205 participants gave

concordant answers on both measures and were assigned experimenter-defined attachment styles. The distribution of participant-defined attachment showed 50.7% secure, 25.3% dismissing, 15.8% fearful, and 8.2% preoccupied attachment styles. The distribution of experimenter-defined attachment showed 55.6% secure, 23.9% dismissing, 14.1% fearful, and 6.3% preoccupied attachment styles. When the results were considered by age group, young and middle aged adults were more likely to describe themselves as preoccupied or fearful than older adults. Diehl, et al (1998) posited that young and middle aged adults are more likely have identities still being formed apart from the family of origin and thus identify with the more strongly other-oriented attachment styles.

The participants' defense styles were assessed by the Defense Styles Questionnaire (DSQ) (Andrews, Pollock, & Stewart, 1989; Bond, Gardner, Christian, & Sigal, 1983). The DSQ measures individuals' defense mechanism usage and thereby classifies each individual's defense style as immature, neurotic, or mature. The immature defense style is characterized by projection, passive aggression, acting out, denial, isolation, displacement, and regression. The neurotic defense style is

characterized by reaction formation, inhibition, withdrawal, and isolation. A mature defense style is characterized by sublimation, suppression, task orientation, anticipation, and humor. Securely attached individuals scored significantly lower on immature defensiveness than did dismissing, preoccupied, and fearfully attached individuals. Individuals with dismissing attachment scored slightly but not significantly positively on all three defense styles. Preoccupied individuals scored significantly higher on immature defensiveness than did secure, dismissing, and fearful individuals. Finally, fearfully attached individuals scored significantly higher on both immature and neurotic defense styles than did secure, dismissive, and preoccupied individuals. This study reinforced the concept that self and other dimensions are valid underlying coordinates of the attachment system.

#### Forgiveness

Whereas forgiveness has often been studied from philosophical, religious, and clinical psychological perspectives (McCullough, et al., 1997), it is only in the relatively recent past that forgiveness has become a research area in social psychology (McCullough, et al.,

1998; McCullough, et al., 2001). When addressed in psychological literature from the late 1950's to the early 1990's, researchers approached forgiveness indirectly through attributional constructs, the quest for revenge, and game theory (McCullough, et al., 1998). Most recent empirical research on forgiveness has been of an applied nature or studied the development of reasoning concerning forgiveness (McCullough, et al., 2001). Finkel, et al. (2002) noted that most of the empirical work to date has been concerned with the process of forgiveness, victims' perceptions and explanations for acts of betrayal, emotional reactions to betrayal, the role of interaction processes in resolving betrayal incidents, and the efficacy of clinical interventions to encourage forgiveness [citations omitted]. Relatively little work on forgiveness has explored individual differences and their influence on forgiveness (McCullough, et al. 2001).

If randomly selected laypeople were asked whether forgiveness is important in relationships, common sense dictates that the majority would reply in the affirmative. Research has, in fact, demonstrated that forgiveness is endorsed as a generally valued construct.

In the assessment of middle class urban/suburban couples in their first marriage of over 20 years' duration, the willingness to forgive and be forgiven was rated as one of the top ten characteristics of long-term satisfactory marriages (Fenell, 1993). Kanz (2000) found in his sample of introductory psychology students at a small private Christian liberal arts college that forgiveness was viewed positively. Kelly (1998) [cited in Fincham & Beach, (2002)] found in a narrative study of close relationships that most motivations for forgiveness include love, restoration of the relationship, or partner well-being.

The definition of forgiveness, however, is contested even among those who study it. Heider (1958) defined forgiving as the forgoing of vengeful behavior [cited in McCullough, Rachal, Sandage, Worthington, Brown, & Hight (1998)]. McCullough, et al., (1997) defined forgiveness as " . . . a motivational transformation that inclines people to inhibit relationship-destructive responses and to behave constructively toward someone who has behaved destructively toward them." Gahagan and Tedeschi (1968) and Horai, Lindskold, Gahagan, and Tedeschi (1969) defined forgiveness as a cooperative response following a

competitive response [cited in McCullough, et al., (1998)]. Pargament (1997) [cited in Maltby, et al., (2001)] saw forgiveness as a conscious attempt to overcome unhappy feelings and thoughts in order to facilitate individual happiness that requires the individual's perception of the offending party to become more sympathetic. Hill (2001) defined forgiveness as an act of discovery that encompasses complex psychological and relational processes. In updated research, McCullough, Bellah, Kilpatrick, and Johnson (2001) adopted the following definition:

Forgiving is a complex of motivational changes that occurs in the aftermath of a significant interpersonal offense. When an offended person forgives, his or her basic motivations to (a) seek revenge and (b) avoid contact with the offender are lessened, and other relationship-constructive motivations (such as the motivation to resume a positive relationship) are restored. These motivational changes occur even though in most cases the victim continues to appraise the harmful actions of the offender

as having been unjust (McCullough, et al. 1998; McCullough, et al. 1997).

Fincham, et al (2002), while acknowledging that forgiveness is a complex construct without a consensual definition, stated that the various approaches to forgiveness center upon the lessening of the motivation to seek revenge and to avoid contact with the transgressor along with the willingness to terminate a potential cycle of abuse and recrimination.

Popular media often portray forgiveness as a simple process in which the transgressor presents a heartfelt apology and the injured party nobly and selflessly absolves the transgressor from blame. Psychological research, however, has revealed that forgiveness is a process that takes time (Kanz, 2000). Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, and Hannon (2002) posit that forgiveness unfolds over the course of extended interaction.

Forgiveness should be characterized as a continuum rather than an all-or-nothing proposition (Finkel, et al, 2002). Philosophical explorations of forgiveness characterize it as dichotomous and all-or-nothing. The prototype of forgiveness in Christian theological



literature focuses on saintly forgiveness in which the victim selflessly and completely forgives the transgressor in a single event. While the events leading to forgiveness are important, the interpersonal factors that stimulate relational forgiveness should not be ignored (Finkel, et al, 2002).

#### Prior Forgiveness Research

Mauger and colleagues conducted preliminary research on the empirical measurement of forgiveness from a trait perspective in 1992 (Mauger, et al., 1992). Mauger's review of secular psychological literature from 1984 to the time of his study failed to reveal any research papers on forgiveness. While both secular and Christian psychologists had provided numerous theoretical papers and case studies on forgiveness, none were based on data to support their theories.

Mauger had been involved in the development of an objective personality inventory, the Behavioral Assessment System (BAS), designed to assess multiple dimensions of behavior associated with personality disorders. The BAS contained true-false scales to assess forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others. The forgiveness of others items related to extrapunitive

concepts (punishing others) such as revenge, retaliation, holding grudges, and the justification of such negative thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors. The forgiveness of self items related to intro-punitive concepts (punishing the self) such as feeling guilt, seeing oneself as sinful, and having negative attitudes towards oneself. The forgiveness of others scale was related to the BAS scale Alienation from Others, which in turn has significant factor loadings on scales measuring cynicism, negativity toward others, and passive aggressive behavior. The forgiveness of self scale was related to the BAS scale Neurotic Immaturity, which in turn had significant factor loadings from scales measuring negative self-image, deficits in self-control, and deficits in motivation. Higher scores on these scales indicated greater difficulties in forgiving.

Individuals' difficulties with forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others were correlated with psychopathology as measured by the MMPI. Depression, anxiety, anger/distrust, and negative self-esteem had stronger correlations with forgiveness of self scores than with forgiveness of others scores. Correlation patterns with high scores on either scale (indicating low

levels of self-forgiveness for the forgiveness of self scale and low levels of other-forgiveness for the forgiveness of others scale) indicated self-alienation, other-alienation, denial of the need for affection, feeling persecuted by others, being hypersensitive to criticism, having cynical attitudes, and having defective impulse control.

Mauger, et al's research (1992) was unique because it sought to measure forgiveness on the trait level rather than on a specific offense level. In seeking objective means to measure self- and other-forgiveness, this research took these important constructs from the conceptual to the empirical realm. While this research is often cited and the forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others scales are used frequently in dissertation research, only one published study replicating Mauger, et al's results exists to date.

Maltby, et al (2001) conducted research to examine the relationship between forgiveness, personality, social desirability and general health which utilized Mauger, et al's (1992) forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others scales. Maltby, et al's research successfully replicated Mauger, et al's results in a non-clinical sample,

detected differences between the sexes as to the possible influences on forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others, and was also consistent with Mauger, et al's assertions that failure to forgive oneself is intropunitive and failure to forgive others is extrapunitive.

#### Integration of Adult Attachment and Forgiveness

There is already some suggestion that interpersonal forgiveness and adult attachment may co-vary. Hill (2001) stated the following regarding the relationship between attachment experiences and forgiveness:

Bowlby (1988) further suggested that there is a strong relationship between an individual's early attachment experiences and his or her ability to be in relationship as an adult. This perspective would imply that one's early attachment experiences could certainly influence his or her ability to discover forgiveness as granted or received. . . . A child's experience with these various [secure] attachment processes would inevitability influence his or her ability to relate to

others and influence various dynamics ingrained in the process of forgiveness.

By their nature, interpersonal relationships are characterized by shared history. In family relationships, romantic relationships, and friendships, the shared history is strengthened by positive attachment experienced by both partners (McCullough, et al, 1997). Partners in high satisfaction, close, and committed relationships are generally more willing to forgive each other for interpersonal offenses. These high-quality relationships promote forgiveness because partners wish to preserve their invested resources, have long-term orientations, have consolidated their best interests, and experience empathy and altruism for each other (McCullough, et al (1998). McCullough, et al. (1997) stated "When people forgive, they become motivated to pursue relationship-constructive, rather than relationship-destructive actions toward an offending relationship partner." Relationship-constructive behaviors are a hallmark of secure attachment.

Commitment is a significant influence on both forgiveness and attachment. Empirical literature suggests that commitment promotes pro-relationship motives (such as those found in secure attachment) and forgiveness. A notable example is Finkel's (2000) three-component model of commitment based on interdependence. First, committed individuals are more likely to forgive their partners because they intend to continue the relationship. Secondly, committed partners with long-term relationship orientation are more likely to forgive each other to maximize their shared self-interests. Lastly, attachment influences perceptions that the well being of each of the partners is linked. Higher levels of interdependence would likely exist in securely attached relationships; somewhat lower levels of interdependence would likely exist for individuals with preoccupied attachment; and even lower levels of interdependence are likely for those with dismissing or avoidant attachment.

In summary, characteristics of securely attached individuals, such as having positive attitudes towards self and others, valuing both intimacy and autonomy, and seeking connection with others, seem consistent with a

greater propensity to forgive oneself and to forgive others. The characteristics of individuals with preoccupied attachment, such as feeling unworthy and unlovable, desiring connection with others, and depending on others as the primary source of self-esteem, seem consistent with a lesser propensity to forgive oneself coupled with a greater propensity to forgive others. The characteristics of fearfully attached individuals, such as being anxious about rejection, avoiding connections with others, and being both self-punishing and other-punishing, seem consistent with a lesser propensity to forgive oneself and to forgive others. Finally, the characteristics of individuals with dismissing attachment, such as feeling worthy of love, believing others are not trustworthy and dependable, and not valuing intimacy, seem consistent with a greater propensity to forgive oneself and a lesser propensity to forgive others.

### Hypotheses

The major goal of the current study was to investigate the relationships between forgiveness (self and others) and the two dimensions of attachment (anxiety and avoidance) proposed by Brennan, Clark, and Shaver

(1998). It was hypothesized that an individual's lack of forgiveness of self would be positively correlated with anxiety. In other words it was predicted that the higher the levels of anxiety, the greater the lack of forgiveness of self. It was also hypothesized that an individual's lack of forgiveness of others would be positively correlated with avoidance. In other words, it was predicted that the higher the levels of avoidance, the greater the lack of forgiveness of others. In addition, the potential relationship between an individual's lack of forgiveness of self and avoidance, and the relationship between his or her lack of forgiveness of others and anxiety were also examined.

Another goal of the current study was to examine the potential influence of attachment styles proposed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) on forgiveness. It was hypothesized that different experiences of attachment would have a differential influence on one's propensity to forgive. Specifically, in regard to forgiveness of self, it is hypothesized that a greater lack of forgiveness would be observed for individuals who experienced preoccupied attachment than those who experienced fearful attachment; a greater lack of



forgiveness would be observed for individuals who experienced fearful attachment than those who experienced dismissing attachment; and a greater lack of forgiveness would be observed for individuals who experienced dismissing attachment than those who experienced secure attachment. In regard to forgiveness of others, it is hypothesized that a greater lack of forgiveness would be observed for individuals who experienced dismissing attachment than those who experienced fearful attachment; a greater lack of forgiveness would be observed for individuals who experienced fearful attachment than those who experienced preoccupied attachment; and a greater lack of forgiveness would be observed for individuals who experienced preoccupied attachment than those who experienced secure attachment.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHOD

#### Participants

Two hundred sixty-five undergraduate students drawn in six classes representing four different courses (Freshman Seminar, Race and Racism, Communication Processes, and Personal and Social Adjustment) at California State University, San Bernardino volunteered for this study. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 58 ( $M=24.41$ ,  $SD\ 7.87$ ) and were 69.1% women ( $n=183$ ) and 30.9% men ( $n=82$ ). Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the participants self-identified as Hispanic/Latino ( $n=98$ ), 33.6% self-identified as Caucasian/white ( $n=89$ ), 8.7% self-identified as African-American/black ( $n=23$ ), 7.2% self-identified as Asian ( $n=19$ ), 5.3 self-identified as other ( $n=14$ ), 3.8% self-identified as multiracial ( $n=10$ ), 2.3% declined to state ethnicity ( $n=6$ ), 1.5% self-identified as Pacific Islander ( $n=4$ ), and 0.8% self-identified as Native American ( $n=2$ ).

#### Materials

The following materials were used in this study: an informed consent (Appendix A), a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B), the Experiences in Close

Relationships inventory (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998) (Appendix C), the Conflicts in Close Relationships inventory adapted from the forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others scales as used in Mauger, et al (1992) (Appendix D), and a debriefing statement (Appendix E).

The informed consent identified the researcher, the purpose of the study, the approval of the study by the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino, a brief description of the instruments, description of how anonymity will be maintained, participants' rights to group results, potential risks, the voluntary nature of participation, the right to withdraw, the right to leave questions unanswered, and the consent of the participant (Appendix A).

The demographic information questionnaire was designed by the researcher to gather basic information such as sex, age, ethnicity, marital status, family of origin status, age at time of parental divorce (if applicable), and romantic relationship status (Appendix B).

The Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory (Brennan, et al, 1998) measures feelings and attitudes towards romantic relationships (Appendix C). It is a measure consisting of 36 statements, 18 of which assess levels of anxiety and 18 of which assess levels of avoidance. Participants are asked to rate the statements with a seven-point scale, with a score of 1 indicating strong disagreement, a score of 4 indicating neutrality/mixed responses, and a score of 7 indicating strong agreement. An example of an anxiety-related statement is item 2, namely, "I worry about being abandoned." An example an avoidance-related statement is item 17, namely, "I try to avoid getting too close to my partner." One of the items on the anxiety scale and nine of the items on the avoidance scale were reverse coded. The reverse coded items were recoded (1=7, 2=6, 3=5, 4=4, 5=3, 6=2, and 7=1). After recoding, participants' responses to the 18 items in each scale were summed yielding a total score that could range from 18 (low anxiety in close relationships) to 126 (high anxiety in close relationships) on the anxiety scale, and from 18 (low avoidance in close relationships) to 126 (high avoidance in close relationships) on the avoidance scale.

Cronbach's alpha for participants' responses to the anxiety scale was .91 and for the avoidance scale was .94 (Brennan, et al, 1998).

Attachment style categories were computed by applying the four classification coefficients (Fischer's linear discriminant functions) obtained by Brennan, Clark and Shaver (1998) to the mean of each individual's anxiety and avoidance scores. Each classification coefficient formula represented an attachment style category: secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing. The results for each of the four classification coefficient formulae were compared, and the highest score of each individual's set of scores determined the individual's assignment to the corresponding attachment style category.

The Conflicts in Close Relationships Inventory (Appendix D) measures feelings and attitudes towards forgiveness of others and forgiveness of self. It is a measure adapted from the Forgiveness of Self and Forgiveness of Others scales as utilized by Mauger, et al (1992). Rather than the true-false answers assigned for the original scales, the scales in the present study utilized a seven-point scale, with a score of 1

indicating strong disagreement, a score of 4 indicating neutrality/mixed responses, and a score of 7 indicating strong agreement. It is a measure consisting of 30 statements, 15 of which measure forgiveness of self and 15 of which measure forgiveness of others. Lower scores on the forgiveness scales indicate a greater propensity to forgive, whereas higher scores on the forgiveness scales indicate a lesser propensity to forgive. An example of a forgiveness of self statement is item 6, namely, "I feel guilty because I don't do what I should for my loved ones." An example of a forgiveness of others statement is item 13, namely, "I have grudges that I have held on to for months or years." Four of the items on the forgiveness of self scale and three of the items on the forgiveness of others scale are reverse coded. The reverse coded items will be recoded (1=7, 2=6, 3=5, 4=4, 5=3, 6=2, and 7=1). After recoding, participants' responses to the 15 items in each scale will be summed yielding a total score that could range from 15 (high forgiveness of self) to 105 (low forgiveness of self) on the forgiveness of self scale, and from 15 (high forgiveness of others) to 105 (low forgiveness of others) on the forgiveness of others

scale. Cronbach's alpha for participants' responses to both scales was acceptable (Mauger, et al, 1992).

The debriefing statement (Appendix E) informed participants of the research questions addressed by the study, who to contact if they experienced negative emotions due to the study, who to contact for further questions about the study, and who to contact if they want to obtain a copy of the group results of the study. Participants were also requested not to discuss the details of the study to ensure validity.

#### Procedure

Permission was obtained from several professors to offer the surveys to their students either at the beginning of or near the end of a class period. Extra credit for participation was offered by the professors. The researcher read the text of the Informed Consent to Participation in Study (Appendix A) to the students. Students who agreed to participate received the survey packet. The completed survey packets were returned to the researcher either directly or via the professors whose students participated.

## Design and Analyses

To test the hypotheses regarding the relationships between forgiveness (self and others) and the two dimensions of attachment (anxiety and avoidance), a correlational-regressional approach was used. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated for lack of forgiveness of self and anxiety and avoidance, and for lack of forgiveness of others and anxiety and avoidance.

To test the hypotheses regarding the potential influence of attachment style on forgiveness, a single-factor quasi-experimental between-subjects design was used. According to their reported experiences of attachment as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory, participants were classified into one of four groups: those who experienced (1) secure attachment, (2) dismissing attachment, (3) fearful attachment, and (4) preoccupied attachment. The dependent variables were forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others as measured by the Conflicts in Close Relationships Inventory. Two separate one-ways analyses of variance (ANOVA) for between-subjects designs and Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) tests



were performed to see if there were significant differences in responses across the two types of forgiveness among the four groups of participants who reported having different attachment experiences.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

Table 1 summarizes the results concerning the relationships between forgiveness (self and others) and the two dimensions of attachment (anxiety and avoidance).

Table 1

The relationships between forgiveness (self and others) and the two dimensions of attachment (anxiety and avoidance)

<u>Attachment</u>	<u>Forgiveness</u>	
	<u>Self</u>	<u>Others</u>
Anxiety	.52**	.35**
Avoidance	.35**	.34**

\*\*p<.001

As can be seen from Table 1, as predicted, an individual's lack of forgiveness of self was positively correlated with anxiety (i.e., the higher the levels of anxiety, the greater the lack of forgiveness of self). In addition, an individual's lack of forgiveness of others was positively correlated with avoidance (i.e., the higher the levels of avoidance, the greater the lack of forgiveness of others). Moreover, a positive correlation was also found between an individual's lack

of forgiveness of self and avoidance, and between an individual's lack of forgiveness of others and anxiety.

Table 2 summarizes the results concerning the relationship of attachment style and forgiveness.

Table 2

Attachment style and forgiveness

<u>Attachment Style</u>	<u>Forgiveness</u>			
	<u>Self</u>		<u>Others</u>	
	M	SD	M	SD
Secure (n=56, 21.1%)	42.99	14.04	43.41	11.13
Fearful (n=98, 37%)	60.48	13.46	55.86	11.66
Preoccupied (n=90, 34%)	56.60	14.06	51.12	12.73
Dismissing (n=21, 7.9%)	47.48	14.05	50.42	12.72

Significant differences in the propensity to forgive oneself were observed among the four groups of participants who reported having different attachment experiences (secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing),  $F(3,261)=21.53$ ,  $p<.001$ . Significant differences in the propensity to forgive others were also observed among the four groups of participants who reported having different attachment experiences,  $F(3,261)=12.97$ ,  $p<.001$ .

Table 3 illustrates the results of the Tukey's HSD tests. The mean responses across the two types of forgiveness (self and others) for the four attachment groups are displayed.

Table 3

Mean responses across the two types of forgiveness (self and others)  
for the four attachment groups in homogeneous subsets

Attachment Style	<u>Forgiveness of Self</u> <u>Homogeneous Subsets</u>		<u>Forgiveness of Others</u> <u>Homogeneous Subsets</u>		
	Set 1	Set 2	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3
Fearful	60.48		55.86		
Preoccupied	56.60			51.12	
Dismissing		47.48		50.24	50.24
Secure		42.99			43.41

Note: Lower scores indicate higher forgiveness.

As can be seen from Table 3, the Tukey's HSD tests for the propensity to forgive oneself revealed two homogeneous subsets. Set 1 included the participants who experienced fearful attachment and those who experienced preoccupied attachment. Set 2 included the participants who experienced dismissing attachment and those who experienced secure attachment. This indicated that there were no significant differences in the propensity to

forgive oneself between the participants who experienced fearful attachment and those who experienced preoccupied attachment (Set 1), and between the participants who experienced dismissing attachment and those who experienced secure attachment (Set 2). On the other hand, the participants who experienced fearful attachment and those who experienced preoccupied attachment indicated a significantly greater lack of forgiveness of self than the participants who experienced dismissing attachment and those who experienced secure attachment ( $p < .05$ ).

The Tukey's HSD tests for the propensity to forgive others revealed three homogeneous subsets, but there was some overlap among these subsets. Set 1 included the participants who experienced fearful attachment, Set 2 included those who experienced preoccupied attachment and those who experienced dismissing attachment, and Set 3 included those who experienced dismissing attachment and those who experienced secure attachment. This indicated that the participants who experienced fearful attachment showed a greater lack of forgiveness of others than those who experienced preoccupied attachment and those who experienced secure attachment ( $p < .05$ ). The participants

who experienced fearful attachment also showed a greater lack of forgiveness of others than those who experienced secure attachment ( $p < .05$ ). Moreover, the participants who experienced preoccupied attachment showed a greater lack of forgiveness of others than those who experienced secure attachment. However, concerning forgiveness of others, no significant differences were found between participants who experienced preoccupied attachment and those who experienced dismissing attachment, or between those who experienced dismissing attachment and those who experienced secure attachment.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### Implications

As expected, the lack of forgiveness of self and anxiety were significantly related. The items comprising Mauger, et al's (1992) scale measuring lack of forgiveness of self address negative self-image, deficits in self-control, deficits in motivation, self-punishment, guilt and feelings of sinfulness. This array of general self-negativity would understandably influence individuals to be anxious when engaging in relationships.

As was also expected, the lack of forgiveness of others and avoidance were also significantly related. The items comprising Mauger, et al's (1992) lack of forgiveness of others scale address punishing others, revenge, retaliation, holding grudges, passive-aggressive behavior, and cynicism. This negative pattern of relational behavior and expectations would indeed make relationships seem to be things that are best avoided.

Additionally, significant relationships were found between the lack of forgiveness of self and avoidance, and between the lack of forgiveness of others and anxiety. This finding may have to do with the fear of

sustaining relational injuries. If one has a self-perception of unworthiness, certainly one might opt for avoiding relationships, because the presentation of such a flawed self is perceived as highly likely to receive rejection. If one has a perception of others as untrustworthy, one might experience high anxiety upon contemplating a new relationship or continuing an old one, because if a past or current partner has been unreliable, a current or future partner is perceived as highly likely to be unreliable as well.

Significant differences in forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others were found for homogenous subsets of attachment categories with some overlap between conceptually similar categories.

Fearful participants, who have high scores on the anxiety and avoidance scales of the ECR, showed the least propensity to forgive self and others. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) described people with fearful attachment as possessing a sense of unworthiness or unlovability combined with an expectation that others will be rejecting and untrustworthy. Fearful individuals are in a double bind: while they depend heavily on others to maintain their self-regard, they see intimacy as very



risky and therefore avoid relationships for fear of rejection. These combined beliefs are not conducive to forgiveness in any form.

While participants classified as preoccupied (high anxiety and low avoidance on the ECR scales) showed no significant difference in forgiveness of self from fearful participants, their forgiveness of others scores were significantly different than fearful participants. Given that what is now considered preoccupied attachment and fearful attachment were both part of Hazan and Shaver's (1987) anxious-ambivalent attachment category, the lack of significant differences in their forgiveness of self scores is not surprising. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) described people with preoccupied attachment as possessing a sense of unworthiness or unlovability combined with a strong positive evaluation of others, sometimes to the point of idealization. Preoccupied individuals also depend heavily on others to maintain their self-regard, but in contrast to fearful individuals, they pursue relationships, sometimes in a jealous or obsessive manner, to attempt to satisfy their dependency needs. The pairing of the unworthy self with

the idealized other corresponds with the forgiveness patterns found in this study's results.

Participants classified as dismissing (low anxiety and high avoidance on the ECR scales) showed significantly different forgiveness of self compared to participants classified as fearful and preoccupied, but no significant differences in forgiveness of self with secure participants. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) describe both dismissing and secure attachment as characterized by high self-regard. This, coupled with low anxiety about relationships, would ease the path to self-forgiveness for these individuals.

Participants classified as dismissing also showed significant differences in forgiveness of others compared to fearfully classified participants, but no significant differences in forgiveness of others compared with those classified as preoccupied and secure. At first glance, these findings are counter-intuitive. It makes little sense that dismissing individuals' propensity to forgive others is not significantly different from preoccupied individuals' over-involvement with and intense idealization of their relationship partners, nor does it seem likely that dismissing individuals' propensity to

forgive others is not significantly different from secure individuals' comfort with intimacy and willingness to seek connections with others. The clarification may lie in dismissing individuals' low value of close relationships, generally low opinion of other people and fear of intimacy. Connections with other people are not seen as necessary to dismissing individuals; therefore, forgiving other people may simply be a prelude to disengaging from the relationship with little fuss or emotionality. Since dismissing individuals do not think highly of other people in comparison to themselves, forgiving others who are inferior to oneself could be fuel for one's own self-regard. Underneath the dismissing individual's sense of superiority over others and denial of needing love may be a suppressed fear of intimacy. Whereas fearful individuals exhibit their fear of intimacy more freely, dismissing individuals may hide it under a cool, collected, self-reliant shell and rationalize their desires for connection away. These reasons may be part of why dismissing individuals are more likely than individuals classified into the other three attachment categories to report never having been in love (Feeney and Noller, 1990).

As expected, participants classified as securely attached (low anxiety and low avoidance on the ECR scales) showed the greatest propensity to forgive self and others. In secure attachment, the extremes of preoccupied, fearful and dismissing attachment are brought into reasonable balance. A securely attached individual is likely to exhibit a healthy autonomy rather than the self-superiority of dismissing individuals or the self-berating of preoccupied and fearful individuals. Securely attached individuals are likely to trust their relationship partners instead of becoming jealous and obsessed as preoccupied individuals may or evidencing the mistrust and suspicion common to fearful and dismissing individuals. Enduring love comes more readily to securely attached individuals, while preoccupied and fearful individuals are likely to experience brief and tumultuous relationships and dismissing individuals are likely to either avoid relationships altogether or disappear as soon as a partner seeks intimacy. In sum, the perceptions of securely attached individuals in relationships appear to be far more realistic and compassionate than are the distorted perceptions of those in the remaining attachment categories. They seem

cognizant of the myriad failings of humankind and may be more willing to forgive themselves and others as they proceed through life, sometimes dancing and sometimes stumbling, but always seeking to maintain connectedness with those they love.

#### Limitations

The use of self-report measures for psychological research has numerous limitations. The quality of the data obtained through self-report measures depends on how well the participant understands himself or herself and how much he or she is willing to disclose. In other words, how a participant behaves may materially differ from how the participant indicates he or she behaves. The surveys were administered both in classes and as a take-home item to be turned in at the next class period. Although anonymity was assured, survey responses in a group setting can be biased towards what is considered socially normative more than survey responses in a private setting. Use of a control measure such as the Social Desirability Scale would be helpful in this regard. Completion of the questionnaires for extra credit was offered in a range of undergraduate classes; however, since participation was not required, a degree

of self-selection did occur. Even though no outliers or other data anomalies were noted, it is possible that some participants answered the questionnaire in a random manner only to obtain the extra credit points.

It should be noted that this sample exhibited an atypical distribution of adult attachment classifications. The study by Diehl, et al (1998) yielded 55.6% secure, 23.9% dismissing, 14.1% fearful, and 6.3% preoccupied. The study by Stein, et al (2002) utilizing five different attachment questionnaires yielded results of between 48% to 63% secure, between 11% to 22% dismissing, between 13% to 28% fearful, and between 8% to 15% preoccupied. This study, however, yielded results of 21.1% secure, 37% fearful, 34% preoccupied, and 7.9% dismissing. These results may be reasonably accounted for in several ways. First, younger participants are more likely to endorse preoccupied or fearful attachment. As they explore new definitions of self-identity apart from their families of origin, the opinions and input of other people is extremely important to them (Diehl, et al, 1988). Second, it is likely that the participants, due to their age, have had relatively few relationships and possibly fewer forgiveness situations in close

relationships. Lastly, participants' responses to the ECR may have been influenced by the knowledge that the study was about forgiveness in close relationships. This knowledge may have primed participants to think about negative relationship events precipitating forgiveness and thereby caused them to respond in less secure ways.

While many attachment researchers agree that using a two-dimensional continuous scale format to measure attachment is desirable, the problem of how to most accurately interpret those scores in relation to the four attachment categories remains unresolved. Until this issue is overcome, the classification of participants into attachment categories on the basis of their continuous scale scores will be subject to misclassification errors.

Other limitations of this study involved the use of the forgiveness of self and forgiveness of other scales. First, Mauger's original forgiveness instrument required only true and false answers. Since this study expanded the answer choices to a seven-point Likert scale, there are no pre-existing results for comparison.

The forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others scales, while frequently cited in doctoral dissertations,

are rarely used in published research. There are few instruments that measure forgiveness as a dispositional factor rather than a situational factor.

The forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others scales were designed to address broader concepts of forgiveness rather than forgiveness specific to close relationships. Testing of the FOS and FOO scales in conjunction with relationship scenarios associated with attachment categories may be useful in refining the FOS and FOO to this more specific use.

#### Future Research

This study showed that forgiveness is an intrapersonal as well as an interpersonal factor important to human functioning in close relationships. While the bulk of the forgiveness research concerns forgiveness of others, this study's results imply that self-forgiveness has a strong influence on relational behavior as well. Further research into self-forgiveness, both as a single construct and paired with forgiveness of others, could provide interesting information of clinical and social psychological interest.



Since the forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others scales utilized in this research addressed general forgiveness, it may be useful to relationship researchers to devise forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others scales more specific to close relationships. This could possibly be achieved by administering the forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others scales in conjunction with existing measures that utilize forgiveness scenarios to determine usefulness of the scales in their present form and to refine their construct validity.

The study of forgiveness of self and others in specific populations, such as domestic violence families, juvenile offenders, gangs, substance abusers, and incarcerated individuals, could contribute to a greater understanding of the self and other attributions that influence relational behavior in these situations.

APPENDIX A:  
INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN STUDY

.

### **Informed Consent to Participation in Study**

The study in which you are about to participate is designed to investigate the relationship between forgiveness and attachment in close relationships. My name is Linda Krajewski, and I am conducting this study under the supervision of Dr. Geraldine Stahly, professor of psychology. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino.

For this study, you will fill out a packet of three written instruments. Do not write your name on any of these instruments. The first instrument asks for basic demographic data. Please fill in or circle your response to each question. The second instrument is about your experiences in close relationships, and the third instrument is about dealing with conflicts in close relationships. On these instruments, please circle the number that best indicates how much you agree or disagree with each statement. This study requires approximately 15 minutes to complete all three instruments.

Please be assured that any information you provide will be anonymous. Your name will be not recorded on your survey packet. All data will be reported in group form only. At the conclusion of this study, you may request a report of the results.

The survey packet includes questions about past and present romantic relationships that may bring up negative feelings or memories. Please understand that your participation in this research is totally voluntary and you are free to leave any question unanswered or withdraw from the study completely. You do not have to complete the survey packet to receive credit for participating.

If you understand the nature and purpose of this study, are at least eighteen years of age, and wish to participate, please consent by signing this form and then raising your hand to receive a packet of the written instruments. When you have completed your packet, please bring it and this informed consent form to me so I can give you an explanation sheet about this study. Thank you.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2003 \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B:  
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

### **DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

This study concerns close relationships of a romantic nature. All of your answers and information are anonymous.

Please circle your sex.                      Male                      Female

What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle the ethnicity with which you most closely identify.

Native American	African-American/Black	Asian
Pacific Islander	Hispanic/Latino	Caucasian/White
Multiracial	Decline to state	Other

Please circle the words that best describe the adults in the family in which you spent most of your time when you were growing up.

Married parents	Single father	Single mother
Mother and stepfather	Father and stepmother	Other relatives
Other non-relatives		

If your parent(s) or guardian(s) went through a divorce while you were growing up, how old were you when the divorce occurred? \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle your marital status.

Never married	Married	Separated	Divorced	Widowed
---------------	---------	-----------	----------	---------

For the purposes of this study, a significant romantic relationship is one in which you and your partner dated only each other for six months or more. Please circle the answer number for one of the following to tell us your present significant romantic relationship status and on what basis you are answering the rest of the questions.

1. I am presently in a significant romantic relationship and I will answer about this relationship.
2. I am not presently in a significant romantic relationship, so I will answer about my most recent past significant romantic relationship.
3. I have not yet had a significant romantic relationship, so I will answer about how I believe I would feel and act in a significant romantic relationship.

APPENDIX C:  
EXPERIENCES IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS INVENTORY

## EXPERIENCES IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

The following statements concern how you feel in close relationships. Please circle the appropriate number from 1 to 7 to show how much you agree or disagree with the following statements using the rating scale shown below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly	→	→	Neutral/mixed	→	→	Agree strongly

1. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. I worry about being abandoned. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. I worry a lot about my relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. Just when my partner starts to get close to me, I find myself pulling away. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. I worry a fair amount about losing my partner. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him/her. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please circle the appropriate number from 1 to 7 to show much you agree or disagree with the following statements using the rating scale shown below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly	→	→	Neutral/mixed	→	→	Agree strongly

- |     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12. | I often want to merge completely with romantic partners, and this sometimes scares them away. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 13. | I am nervous when partners get too close to me.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 14. | I worry about being alone.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 15. | I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 16. | My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 17. | I try to avoid getting too close to my partner.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 18. | I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner.                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 19. | I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 20. | Sometimes I feel that I force my partners to show more feeling and more commitment.           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 21. | I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 22. | I do not often worry about being abandoned.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 23. | I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 24. | If I can't get my partner to show interest in me, I get upset or angry.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |



Please circle the appropriate number from 1 to 7 to show much you agree or disagree with the following statements using the rating scale shown below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly	→	→	Neutral/mixed	→	→	Agree strongly

- |     |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25. | I tell my partner just about everything.                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 26. | I find that my partner does not want to get as close as I would like.          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 27. | I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 28. | When I'm not involved in a relationship, I feel somewhat anxious and insecure. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 29. | I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 30. | I get frustrated when my partner is not around as often as I would like.       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 31. | I don't mind asking romantic partners for comfort, advice, or help.            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 32. | I get frustrated if romantic partners are not available when I need them.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 33. | It helps to turn to my romantic partner in time of need.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 34. | When my romantic partner disapproves of me, I feel really bad about myself.    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 35. | I turn to my partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance.       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 36. | I resent it when my partner spends time away from me.                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

APPENDIX D:  
CONFLICT IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

## CONFLICTS IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

The following statements concern how you feel about conflicts in close relationships. Please circle the appropriate number from 1 to 7 to show how much you agree or disagree with the following statements using the rating scale shown below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly	→	→	Neutral/mixed	→	→	Agree strongly

1. I often use sarcasm when people deserve it. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. When someone insults or hurts me, I think for hours about things I could have said or done to get even. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. I am able to make up pretty easily with friends who have hurt me in some way. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. If another person hurts you first it is all right to get back at him or her. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. If a person hurts you on purpose you deserve to get whatever revenge you can. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. I feel guilty because I don't do what I should for my loved ones. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. I feel that other people have done more good than bad for me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. It is easy to for me to admit that I am wrong. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. I often feel like I have failed to live the right kind of life. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. I would secretly enjoy hearing that someone I dislike had gotten into trouble. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. I rarely feel as though I have done something wrong or sinful. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. When someone treats me unfairly, I feel like telling others all the bad things I know about him or her. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. I have grudges that I have held on to for months or years. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. I am often angry with myself for the stupid things I do. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Please circle the appropriate number from 1 to 7 to show how much you agree or disagree with the following statements using the rating scale shown below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly	→	→	Neutral/mixed	→	→	Agree strongly

15. I often feel that no matter what I do now I will never make up for the mistakes I have made in the past. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16. I believe that when people say they forgive me for something I did they really mean it. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. When other people insult me, I tell them off. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. I brood or think about all the troubles I have. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. I regret things I do more often than other people seem to regret things they do. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. It is not right to take revenge on a person who tries to take advantage of you. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. It is hard for me to forgive those who hurt me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. I don't think of myself as an evil person. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. A lot of times I have feelings of guilt or regret for the things I have done. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. I frequently apologize for myself. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25. I would get frustrated if I could not think of a way to get even with someone who deserves it. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26. I frequently put myself down for failing to work as hard as I should. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27. I often get in trouble for not being careful to follow the rules. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28. I find it hard to forgive myself for some things that I have done. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
29. If I hear a sermon, I usually think about things that I have done wrong. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
30. People who criticize me better be ready to take some of their own medicine. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

APPENDIX E:  
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

## **STUDY EXPLANATION SHEET**

The study you have just completed was designed to investigate the relationship between forgiveness and adult attachment. Two of the hypotheses for this study concerned whether attitudes about forgiving yourself and forgiving other people relate to how much anxiety you experience in close relationships and how much you avoid engaging in close relationships. Other hypotheses related to whether attitudes about forgiving yourself and forgiving other people could predict your adult attachment status, which is a way of classifying sets of beliefs about relationships into four categories.

Thank you for your participation and for not discussing the contents of the study materials with other students. If you experienced negative feelings or memories in responding to the survey packet and would like to talk to someone about it, please call the CSUSB Counseling Center at 880-5040 or Dr. Stahly at 880-5591. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me (Linda Krajewski) at [laskiblue@yahoo.com](mailto:laskiblue@yahoo.com) or Dr. Geraldine Stahly at 880-5591. If you would like to obtain a copy of the group results of this study, please contact Dr. Stahly at the above number at the end of winter quarter 2004.

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