

# Chapter 9

## Coping and Resilience Through Peace Psychology and Restorative Justice



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### Introduction

The Western social world is characterized by signs of strife at the intrapersonal level. Globally, there are 800,000 suicides every year, twice the number of homicides and making it one of the leading causes of death in young people (Ritchie et al., 2015). At the interpersonal level, there has been an upward trend in divorces globally since 1970 and lower marriage rates, perhaps indicating that people are less willing to commit to a relationship that may be doomed to fail (Ortiz-Ospina & Rogers 2020). The world has also seen increased international conflict and mental health issues, perhaps exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Knipe et al., 2020). It is in this context that it is important to consider ever so urgently how best to develop resilience, coping abilities, and inner peace.

This chapter has as its central theme the pivotal importance of personal growth and development for achieving a state of happiness and inner peace, which in turn help develop resilience and coping abilities. In order to achieve this, the chapter will first outline what makes for a person who is truly happy and at peace and then draw on the concepts of peace psychology and the principles of restorative justice that can guide the attaining and maintaining of a state where one is truly comfortable and happy with who they are and, as a result, will have fulfilling and lasting relationships. This does not mean that there will never be a conflict, whether intrapersonal or interpersonal. Therefore, the chapter then will look at the tools of peace psychology and restorative justice to deal with conflict, restore peace, and promote happiness. The achievement of this state will ensure that personal growth is maximized as

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well as, with it, one's ability to cope and be resilient to adversity, particularly in intrapersonal and interpersonal relational contexts.

## **Happiness and Inner Peace as the Foundation for Personal Growth**

The quest for happiness is a key desire that keeps human beings engaged in work, relationships, and the pursuit of self-actualization. In defining happiness, Argyle (2001) makes a distinction between subjective well-being (SWB) and objective well-being (OWB). SWB is a measure of happiness that considers how people feel about their life. OWB is a measure of observable variables, such as life expectancy, that are considered important for a good life. Happiness, in the context of this chapter, fits with the concept of Argyle's SWB because happiness is inextricably linked to internal peace, which in and of itself has core values for human psychological well-being. Many religious philosophies and leaders have been strong proponents of inner peace, including the Buddhist philosophy, Mahatma Gandhi, and the Dalai Lama. Simply put, inner peace is the absence of fear and chaos, a state of psychological and spiritual calm, which results in being happy and contented even in the face of external stressful events that often cause fear and upheaval. To be truly happy, therefore, it is vitally important to be at peace with oneself. The focus of this chapter is the endeavour of a peaceful existence through forgiveness and reparation.

The work of psychologist Abraham Maslow provides a starting point to help understand what human beings need to truly strive to attain fulfilment and inner peace. Maslow (1943, 1954) suggested that human motivation is based on people seeking fulfilment and change through personal growth. As Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests, human beings will strive to meet their physiological needs (e.g. food and clothing) and their need for safety (e.g. job security), love, sense of belonging (e.g. friendship), esteem, and self-actualization. These needs can be understood as building on each other in that only once a lower-level one is fulfilled that one can move to a higher level (e.g. safety needs must be met before love). Self-actualized people are those who are fulfilled and are doing things they are capable of doing. Maslow (1970) identified 15 characteristics of a self-actualized person.

Some of the key characteristics are very relevant to a consideration of inner peace. For example, Maslow suggests that self-actualized people accept themselves and others for what they are with no conditions and can tolerate uncertainty. Uncertainty for many people causes turmoil and disrupts their internal equilibrium, thus affecting inner peace. Further, self-actualized people have a genuine concern for the welfare of humanity and will play their part in trying to ensure this. Maslow also opines that a deep appreciation of basic life experiences coupled with strong moral and ethical standards are hallmarks of self-actualization. The final characteristic relevant to the context of this chapter is that self-actualized people can establish deeply satisfying interpersonal relationships with a few people, as opposed to a

“Facebook friend” culture, where quantity is of the essence. Quality relationships are tied to both inner well-being and interpersonal harmony, with roots in the evolutionary explanations of the social basis of our species (Cords & Thompson, 2017).

In this context, one might say that a self-actualized person is at peace with themselves through being comfortable with who they are and accepting themselves, others, and the world as they are. Further, a self-actualized person develops and maintains deep interpersonal relationships with others (Roberts, 2007). Still, there is no relationship that is perfect and that is not fraught with some misgivings from time to time. The key to healthy relationships is the ability to heal relationships, but healing relationships with others is nigh impossible without first healing relationships with ourselves (Hammer & Hammer, 2015).

With this in mind, introspection is important to identify what it is that perhaps causes one to feel unpeaceful within. Carl Rogers’ (1959) concept of congruence helps deconstruct some of the dissonances that leads to loss of inner peace and, consequently, stressful relationships with others. Congruence refers to the consonance or dissonance between ideas one holds about oneself and the messages about oneself from outside. A person’s “ideal self” may not be consistent with what actually happens in life and with the experiences of the person. Hence, a difference may exist between the ideal self and the actual experience. This is called incongruence and can undermine feelings of agency and self-worth (Ismail & Tekke, 2015). Where a person’s ideal self and actual experience are consistent or very similar, a state of congruence exists. Rarely, if ever, does a total state of congruence exist; most people experience a certain amount of incongruence because of the need to follow societal norms and act in socially acceptable ways.

At times, differing messages across social groups and systems may also feed into nuanced feelings of congruence and incongruence. For example, where a person is brought up in a religious culture where being homosexuality is considered sinful and against nature but lives within a broader social context where such positions are considered discriminatory at best and illegal at worst. Depending on this person’s sexuality and experience in different contexts, they would have to grapple with accepting homosexuality to fit a social context or rejecting it based on belief systems they were socialized to embrace. Another example is a person who believes that the earth and all its resources belong to all creatures (human and otherwise) but lives in a capitalist society where the right to private property is enshrined in law. These examples speak to the interpretive element of identity congruence and incongruence as individuals build understandings of themselves by engaging in and making meaning of everyday life (Spencer et al., 1997).

For a person to “grow”, they need an environment that provides them with genuineness (e.g. openness and self-disclosure), acceptance (e.g. being seen with unconditional positive regard), and empathy (e.g. being listened to and understood; Rogers 1959). Without these, relationships and healthy personalities will not develop as they should, much like a tree will not grow without sunlight and water. People need to be in an environment where inner peace and peaceful relationships can be fostered through genuine dialogue and acceptance of one another with their faults and failings. This perspective on self-actualization mirrors theoretical work in peace

psychology, highlighting the coupling of environmental and personal influences on peace as intra- and interpersonal states (e.g. Christie, 2006; Nelson, 2014).

In fact, Rogers' ideas can be connected more deeply to these frameworks on peace. He suggests a number of ways in which human beings can work towards personal growth and development, with the extension being that these strategies can also promote peace across levels. The first of these is being open to experiences in life, especially both positive and negative emotions. Accepting negative emotions may be a bit more of a challenge; nonetheless, working through negative feelings and not resorting to ego defence mechanisms will lead to personal growth. Further, Rogers recommends that individuals make the effort to be in touch with experiences in life by undergoing them without prejudging and having preconceptions. This, no doubt, can be difficult because of socialization that may promote a set of values, beliefs, and frameworks on the world that are entrenched in the psyche. In relation to Galtung's conceptualization of violence (1990), people often internalize systems and norms that are antithetical to personal growth and development from the cultural violence that pervades their social environments. Being able to live in the here-and-now experience would help a person be able to live and fully appreciate the present without giving in to the urge to think about the past or forward into the future. Such present-centred mindfulness has proven benefits and promotes more peaceful inner states, as well as offers an important component of peace education amidst violent social contexts (Grossman et al., 2004; Salomon, 2014; Waelde et al., 2019).

Continuing on a theme of mindfulness, Rogers encourages individuals to trust their feelings and instincts and to be confident that their decisions and choices are right. To this end, choices and decisions are an expression of who one really is. In contrast, decisions and choices based on external forces could lead to feeling incongruent and could stifle growth.

The last two characteristics suggested by Rogers as hallmarks of people who are fully human and alive are creativity and a fulfilled life. Personal growth is not achieved by playing it safe all the time but is characterized by creative thinking, taking reasonable risks, and being open to change and seeking new experiences. These would help achieve a happier and more satisfied life, as well as serve as a crucial component in negative peace through supporting pluralistic understandings that can be the basis of an effective conflict resolution (e.g., Arai, 2009).

Fully functioning, congruent people are well adjusted, well balanced, and interesting to know (Rogers, 1951, 1959). This would include acceptance of oneself while having well-developed mindfulness of one's own inadequacies. This would be particularly important for interpersonal relationships where one may consciously or unconsciously have caused hurt to another or be hurt by another. A congruent and fully functioning person would be able to recognize the hurt and seek forgiveness or offer forgiveness, which would both lead to a freeing experience within. The act of forgiveness here is not lip service but includes a desire and call to action to heal the harm done in line with principles of restorative justice. It is only when the harm done is made good to the extent possible that inner peace can be achieved, which can achieve genuine personal growth and, in turn, true happiness and interpersonal harmony.

## Coping, Resilience, and the Psychology of Forgiveness

The previous section reviewed some characteristics of a self-actualized person and the conditions for personal growth, including being creative, open to new experiences, and able to develop and maintain strong interpersonal relationships. This strength of character promotes resiliency in the face of adversity and helps individuals cope more effectively with the unexpected curve balls that life inevitably presents. This section will detail how developing resilience and coping strategies is very much linked both emotionally and practically to restorative justice through forgiveness, which would in turn lead to inner peace and happiness.

Coping is typically defined as “ongoing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the results of the person” (Lazarus, 1993, p. 237 as quoted by Konstam et al., 2003). Coping is the ability to manage difficult situations by thinking through events rationally and coming up with a behavioural response (where necessary and appropriate) to meet the demands of the event and restore a state of equilibrium. That is why it is both a cognitive and a behavioural effort.

Further insight into this by Lazarus (1993) suggests that there are two major types of coping: problem focused and emotion focused. The function of problem-focused coping is to change the relationship of the individual vis-à-vis the environment by acting on the environment or on the individual. The function of emotion-focused coping is to change either (a) the way the stressful relationship with the environment is attended to (as in vigilance or avoidance) or (b) the relational meaning of what is happening, which mitigates the stress even though the actual conditions of the relationship have not changed (Lazarus, 1993). This is perhaps succinctly put, in the words of Reinhold Niebuhr (quoted by Shapiro 2014), as follows: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, to change the things I can and the Wisdom to know the difference.” To cope means knowing when it is possible to change the environment to mitigate against the stress it causes but also recognizing that it is not always within one’s ability to change the external environment. This is where working on oneself can build resilience and coping mechanisms to minimize the emotional impact of the external stressor.

It is therefore important to consider what helps develop resilience and an ability to cope. Many stressors are emotional and need a rational and emotional response, particularly when the stressful event is hurt caused by a relationship. This is where the concept of forgiveness bears thinking about and being discussed in more depth. Forgiveness thus provides an entryway for considering the role of restorative justice, including how it can serve to promote inner peace.

There is some empirical work on the connections between forgiveness, resilience, and inner peace. For example, Konstam, Holmes, and Levine (2003) conducted a study on empathy, selfism, and coping as elements in forgiveness with 92 university students. The uniqueness and innovativeness of this research was its effort to integrate the social and psychological literature related to forgiveness. They found that fostering empathy for the perpetrator’s perspective aided in the process

of forgiveness. The findings also emphasized the potential significance of emotional coping and detachment in influencing the reduction of selfism (or ego), which is usually a key factor in high-conflict interpersonal situations. An undue focus on self-importance often impedes forgiving because forgiveness would be interpreted as a sign of weakness and hurt to one's pride. In contrast, a self-actualized person will not shy away from taking responsibility and looking at their own role in causing the stressful situation. Thus, the ability to forgive and make good harm done serves to enhance and achieve inner peace and, ultimately, happiness. Also, forgiveness shows an ability to be comfortable with who one is, recognizing that forgiving is truly an act of strength coming from a congruent person.

It is important to understand forgiveness, therefore, as an inherently internal and external phenomenon at the same time. Forgiveness is a rational choice; it is not about forgetting or condoning the wrongdoing (Worthington & Wade, 1999). Rather, forgiveness is a hallmark of a self-actualized person who has achieved personal growth and development by transcending the feelings of hate, anger, and bitterness towards the offender and developing feelings of empathy, love, and compassion. Its benefits can thus be both for personal well-being and interpersonal relationships (McCullough et al., 2000).

Scholars like Enright (2001) also assert that forgiveness is a choice. The act of choosing to forgive requires inner strength, but there are immense benefits to the rational choice of forgiveness. Meta-analyses have shown that forgiveness can reduce anxiety and depression and increase self-esteem and hopefulness (Wade et al., 2013). In this sense, genuine and correctly given forgiveness can replace destructive emotions (which can perpetuate inner or interpersonal violence) with unconditional positive regard and compassion. The benefit to the forgiver can be both a repair to relationships—in line with restorative justice—and inner peace. Forgiveness thus does not simply attend to negative peace and does not simply mean accepting continued abuse or even reconciling with the offender. Rather, giving the gift of forgiveness helps build inner positive peace by facilitating confronting and letting go of pain while reprising a victim's life, which may have been crippled by hurt, and setting themselves back on the path to a fulfilled life.

Empirical research demonstrates that forgiveness helps make individuals stronger and rise above the hurt and pain experienced from transgressions committed against them (Konstam et al., 2003; McCullough et al. 2000; Wade et al., 2013). Practising and striving to perfect the “art” of forgiveness can help continue to build inner strength, thus helping promote resilience and cope with other challenges that life will inevitably present. Practising forgiveness is a way of training oneself to achieve higher levels of self-actualization and be genuinely happy with who one is.

Restorative justice is typically understood as something that an offender has to “do” to restore the damage done to the victim by the offending act. Nevertheless, there is a part for the victim to play as well. Being able to have empathy for the perspective of someone—connect with their thoughts and feelings—who offends by transcending the natural feelings of hurt is a key element for developing coping abilities and resilience. Scholars have argued that empathy must play a pivotal role in reparation by centralizing how the act of harm and the harm itself were experienced by various parties, as well as bringing to the forefront the community and

individual factors underlying the offending (Warden, 2018). To this end, it allows for flexibility in understanding each person's and context's unique trajectory, which then allows for their perspectives and needs in relation to healing and resilience.

Another key element to achieving coping strategies and resilience is to deal with selfism through an ability to be detached, not in an unfeeling way but in a rational way that considers one's own mortality and transience in a world where relationships hold a greater value than ego and pride (Konstam et al., 2003). To this end, while restorative justice is inherently relational and about engaging with others, it does so in theory by re-conceptualizing relationships, power, and the individualization of harm and victimization (Johnstone, 2013).

### *Intrapersonal Forgiveness*

While the previous section explores forgiveness as an interpersonal phenomenon that can promote inner peace, intrapersonal forgiveness is another critically important dimension. Perhaps much of the difficulty or even inability to forgive another stems from an inability to forgive oneself for both interpersonal and intrapersonal transgressions (Raj & Wiltermuth, 2016). Self-forgiveness can be understood as “a willingness to abandon self-resentment in the face of one's own acknowledged objective wrong, while fostering compassion, generosity, and love towards oneself” (Enright, 1996, p. 116). Hall and Fincham (2005) proposed another definition of self-forgiveness that is more focused on external manifestations: “a set of motivational changes whereby one becomes decreasingly motivated to avoid stimuli associated with the offense, decreasingly motivated to retaliate against the self (e.g., punish the self, engage in self-destructive behaviours, etc.), and increasingly motivated to act benevolently towards the self” (p. 623). In essence, self-forgiveness is the ability to show compassion and love towards oneself and avoid wanting to punish oneself (often exhibited through self-destructive behaviour). When one can forgive oneself, it makes it easier to be compassionate and forgive others because there is an implied acceptance of human weakness and vulnerability to do wrong (Raj & Wiltermuth, 2016). Self-forgiveness, however, can be difficult to achieve because when a person has a fully developed conscience, they tend to experience feelings of shame and guilt for wrongdoings. There is also a tendency to ruminate on the wrongdoing, thus prolonging the feeling of shame and guilt, making them more entrenched in one's psyche, and making it more difficult to forgive oneself.

Several scholars have established how important self-forgiveness is for one's mental health, with some making direct connections to the potential of restorative justice. As one example, Gavrielides (2022) proposes an extremely insightful theoretical perspective in disagreeing with views of restorative justice as a punishment. He introduces the concept of restorative pain: the pain a transgressor experiences for the harm committed. Experiencing that pain leads to cleansing or catharsis. Allowing oneself to experience self-inflicted restorative pain is at the same time punishment for the transgression caused while also promoting healing and cleansing within. A well-implemented restorative justice process can allow an individual

to tap into this pain and thus engage in self-forgiveness as well as interpersonal healing.

Empirical evidence also demonstrates the connection between forgiveness and psycho-social well-being. Mauger et al. (1992) developed scales to measure forgiveness of others and forgiveness of self as part of an inventory to sample personality disorders. The development of these scales was based on the responses of 237 outpatient counselling clients, and the scales had adequate internal consistency reliabilities and correlated with each other. In applying these scales to their sample, the researchers found a strong positive relationship between a lack of self-forgiveness and depression and anxiety. Feelings of guilt and shame can be psychologically crippling and lead to bitterness towards self, which can then be expressed in bitterness towards others, including loved ones. In turn, this bitterness can cause more feelings of intrapersonal guilt and shame, and the cycle can go on if not checked. Further, the more a person holds on to and ruminates over feelings of guilt and hurt, the heavier the psychological burden becomes and the more difficult and painful it would become to forgive and repair the damaged interpersonal or intrapersonal relationship. Other studies since the work of Mauger and colleagues have corroborated these close relationships between forgiveness and mental well-being (e.g. Berry et al., 2005; Brown, 2003; Macaskill et al., 2002).

There is evidence to show that the ability to forgive also has positive outcomes for physical health as well. An extensive research base supports these connections, suggesting that forgiveness and reparation have benefits for physical health and not only mental health (e.g. Toussaint et al., 2020). An example of this is a study conducted by Friedberg et al. (2007) examining the relationship between trait forgiveness and cardiovascular reactivity and recovery in 99 participants (mean age of 33.8 years) with normal cardiovascular parameters. Cardiovascular parameters were obtained during a normal period and then during an anger recall period. Participants filled out a self-report measure of forgiveness prior to the laboratory procedure. Although forgiveness was not related to cardiovascular reactivity, higher levels of trait forgiveness were predictive of lower diastolic blood pressure. The findings suggested that forgiveness may be related to overall reductions in blood pressure levels and may aid in recovery from stress. While peace psychology has traditionally and predominately focused on the psycho-social processes and mechanisms for positive and negative peace, the mind-body connection cannot be ignored and is salient in relation to forgiveness and intrapersonal and interpersonal peace (e.g. Toussaint & Webb, 2005).

## **Restorative Justice and Peace Psychology in Action**

To develop resilience and coping, reparation using concepts of restorative justice and peace psychology becomes fundamentally important when it comes to both interpersonal and intrapersonal forgiveness. Integrating restorative justice, psychology, and peace can help promote fairness, respect, and dignity for all while making



violence less likely to occur and helping heal the painful and even harmful psychological effects of violence and hurt in relationships.

According to Zehr (1998), three key ideas support restorative justice. First, not only the direct victim but also the surrounding community have been affected by the offender's action. To this end, holistic restoration across multiple individuals and relationships is necessary. Second, the offender's obligation is to make amends with both the victim and the community involved. Third, and perhaps the most important, is the concept of healing, the process of unburdening the pain experienced in the context of the offence. This healing has transformative power. Rather than focusing on revenge, the purpose of restorative justice is transformation for the victim, offender, and relations between them and the community. For forgiveness to be truly meaningful and psychologically impactful, it needs to be accompanied by an act of restoration to make good the damage to the extent possible. As suggested earlier in the text, this healing could also involve catharsis or cleansing brought about by self-inflicted pain that is not masochistic but rather is in touch with and experiencing remorse for the harm done to oneself or others.

### *Illustrative Examples*

Concrete examples can help define and extend the connection between restorative justice, peace psychology, and this framing of resilience and coping. In an intrapersonal context, this application could be an offence that is damaging to oneself. An example would be breaking a promise to oneself to reduce alcohol consumption to 3 days a week from daily consumption of alcohol. This transgression involves harm to oneself and undermines self-congruence as one's actions misalign with one's values and desires for the self. Reparation and restorative justice have a place even in intrapersonal contexts where the victim and the offender are the same person. The act of making amends is still relevant to help reduce feelings of guilt, shame, and doubt that may accompany the harm. Such a healing process would involve repairing by not only reducing alcohol consumption to make good the transgression of the previous week but also in acknowledging the emotional component and forgiving based on the reparative actions taken in the following week. The result would be experiencing healing and transformation; feelings of guilt would dissipate, and rejuvenated feelings of competence and self-worth would support strengthened commitment to reducing alcohol consumption. In this case, the relational reparation is with oneself.

Intrapersonal forgiveness could also be forgiving oneself for the harm caused to another, even if the other is not aware of the harm. An example is being unfaithful to a partner in a relationship. This can be a complex situation for restitution and reparation, but the principles remain the same: focusing on the relational meaning, setting aside selfism, and being accountable for the transgression by engaging in a meaningful act of reparation and restitution that involves confessing and apologizing. Making amends could involve a renewal of the formal commitment made to the

partner but would also depend on the relationship and the other person. If the right conditions for seeking and giving forgiveness are met, this could result in healing and transformation, which has the potential to take the relationship to a higher plane than where it was before the transgression.

A second, common example is a situation where one has spoken harsh words to a loved one. Using the conceptualization of restorative justice mentioned above in dealing with this situation, saying “Sorry” would not be sufficient because there is no empirical evidence of the remorse felt. There would need to be an accompanying action to repair the damage, such as telling the person how much they are loved and putting the harsh words in the context of a moment of anger. This involves putting away selfishness and resorting to emotion-focused coping by centring on the relational meaning of what has happened. In other words, addressing the relational impacts and taking action to heal them demonstrate that the relationship is treasured and valued above the negative emotional outburst. This would result in healing and transformation for the offender and the victim, which could intervene in cycles of direct violence (negative peace) or help build more harmonious interpersonal relations (e.g. a culture of peace).

To this end, restorative justice appropriately applied can help transform a situation of hurt into a state of healing and cleansing. Such processes are critical elements of both intrapersonal and interpersonal peace (Christie et al., 2008; Nelson, 2014) and are fostered by a restorative focus on forgiveness. Still, emotions of guilt and shame must also be considered as they will invariably accompany a transgression by someone with a well-formed conscience.

## Understanding Guilt and Shame

Emotions, like guilt and shame, can leave more lasting imprints on a person than an academic idea or a routine event. Memories of events evoking strong emotions selectively persist because emotion enhances event-memory retention (Wagner et al., 2006). Therefore, to build resilience and coping abilities, it is vitally important to be aware of emotions that can pose challenges to these processes while finding ways to recognize and harness them productively.

Shame is a powerful emotion that can cause people to feel defective, unaccepted, and damaged beyond repair, as well as to respond more aggressively (see Christie, 2011; Elison et al., 2014). Still, it is important to make a distinction between guilt and shame. On the one hand, guilt is a feeling caused when one did something wrong or perceived doing something wrong. On the other hand, shame is a feeling that one’s *whole self* is wrong, and it may not be related to a specific behaviour or event (Salters-Pedneault et al., 2004).

While shaming can be described as a reaction to a deviant behaviour that causes shame to the deviant, a theory in restorative justice offers a different perspective. Braithwaite (1989) expounds on two different forms of shaming. *Disintegrative shaming* has a stigmatizing effect and excludes a person from the community. It

results in labelling that is likely to result in re-offending and the perpetuation of violence because offenders may accept and act out the label. *Reintegrative shaming* involves not only disapproval of deviance but also signs of forgiveness and willingness to reintegrate the offender into the community. This section focuses on the concept of shame in its disintegrative aspect, though reintegrative shaming also offers insights into how restorative justice can contribute to re-establishing peaceful communal relations.

Some empirical studies explore guilt and shame and their impacts on offenders. One such study is by Kashdan and Ciarrochi (2013), who discuss an initiative undertaken with offenders through an Impact of Crime (IOC) workshop, an intervention rooted in restorative justice principles. Offenders are supported to engage with issues of responsibility and the question of blame. Offenders often experience feelings of guilt and shame. Kashdan and Ciarrochi highlight that guilt and shame (with its disintegrative connotation) are quite different as emotions, with divergent implications when it comes to coping and developing resilience. Shame involves a focus on self that is humiliating and in which the person considers themselves as a “bad person”. Consequently, they feel small, worthless, and perhaps powerless. In contrast, guilt focuses on a specific act or behaviour and the understanding that “I have done a bad thing”, rather than believing that “I am a bad person”. Kashdan and Ciarrochi found that feeling guilt can generate regret and motivate one to take reparative action to address the harm caused and engage more meaningfully in restorative justice practice.

Theoretical arguments also articulate the unhelpful impact of the disintegrative understanding of shame and the possibility of channelizing guilt suitably to achieve restorative justice. Salters-Pedneault et al. (2004) argues that when one feels guilty about the wrong thing they did, they can take steps to make up for it and put it behind them. But feeling shame, or being convinced that *one* is the thing that is wrong, offers no clear-cut way to “come back” to feeling more positive about oneself. These self-perceptions are critical not only for self-congruence but also for laying the groundwork for internal peace (Nelson, 2014).

Although guilt can often have a negative connotation to it, it can be a useful emotion to harness, and when managed appropriately, it can result in reparation that strengthens coping and resilience. This strength emanates from having developed a more positive view of oneself after having performed the act of reparation, in keeping with principles of restorative justice of repairing hurt caused and transformation of both victim and offender.

## **Forgiveness in Eastern and Western Traditions**

Until this point, the chapter has aimed to outline a framework for understanding how self-congruence, self-actualization, resilience, coping, and forgiveness are related to the psychosocial quest for inner and interpersonal peace and can be deepened through restorative justice as a key to humanizing relationships with others and

with oneself. This section moves on to the question of *how* one can achieve this by drawing Eastern and Western traditions to help understand how to engage in restorative justice and attain inner peace.

It is commonly believed that forgiveness came to prominence in Judaic and Christian thought and that the modern concept of forgiveness, in its full richness, did not exist in ancient traditions. While the idea of interpersonal forgiveness and the values and attitudes that accompany and define it emerged later (Konstan, 2010), the seeds of forgiveness are embedded in the long histories of many religious traditions that call for purity of heart and love.

In religious traditions (both formal and informal), forgiveness is an important concept. Major world religions have structures to promote forgiveness, and examples are provided below. Religious constructions present forgiveness as a value tied to compassion and empathy. These frameworks are often justified in religious scripture and translated into rituals to actualize forgiveness in concrete ways. In this sense, both Western and Eastern traditions suggest strategies to help human beings engage in giving and receiving forgiveness and thus live a more fulfilled life. These strategies include dealing with guilt and shame, which, as noted above, are important to enable one to be freed from the psychological distress these cause.

Some research has been conducted on religious frameworks and forgiveness. For example, Witvliet, Ludwig, and Bauer (2002) studied the psychological aspects of asking for forgiveness, as well as the role of religion in seeking forgiveness. Specifically, they assessed transgressors' (20 male and 20 female participants) subjective emotions and physiological responses. They found that when people sought forgiveness, they experienced increased hope, along with reduced sadness, anger, guilt, and shame. These emotions can be understood, in turn, as fostering inner peace from having engaged in a restorative justice process.

In another study, Krause and Ellison (2003) examined, in older adults, the relationship between forgiveness by God, forgiveness of others, and psychological well-being. The findings suggested that forgiving others enhanced psychological well-being more than only feeling the experience of being forgiven by God. Where participants expected transgressors to engage in reparation, there was more psychological distress than where forgiveness was offered unconditionally. Finally, participants who felt forgiven by God were less likely to expect transgressors to perform acts of contrition. One interpretation may be that they achieve inner peace and do not always need the transgressor to complete an act of restorative justice to bring about inner peace.

### *Specific Religious Frameworks*

Human beings generally like to have concrete ways of expressing and experiencing abstract concepts like forgiveness and reparation. This is where religious rituals can play a part in helping people through ritualistic actions to seek and give forgiveness.

These acts of forgiveness can significantly help people achieve inner peace and engage in acts of restorative justice.

Judaism contains considerable writings and rituals devoted to emphasizing the need for a person who caused harm to sincerely apologize. The wronged person is then religiously bound to forgive. However, even without an apology, forgiveness is considered a pious act (Deot 6:9). Teshuva (literally “Returning”) is a way of atoning, which requires the cessation of a harmful act, regret over the act, confession, and repentance. Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement when Jews particularly strive to perform Teshuva. These various values, rituals, and institutionalized processes in Judaism point to the need for relational healing and the roles of the transgressor, victim, and community in these processes (Rye et al., 2000).

Turning to another major religion, the word Islam means peace in Arabic and is derived from the Semitic (Hebrew) word Salem, which means “peace” (Khan, 1988). In Islam, forgiveness is a prerequisite for genuine peace. Forgiveness is held as the preferred course of action whenever possible. This assertion is described in the Qu’ran: “Although the just penalty for an injustice is an equivalent to retribution, those who pardon and maintain righteousness are rewarded by God. He does not love the unjust” (Qur’an 42:40). Rasool (2021) suggests that from an Islamic perspective, repentance has to do with the relationship between the individual and Allah, the Almighty. There are inherent moral, psychological, and spiritual factors in the process and experience of repentance. This rooting in peace can be traced to *Tawbah*, an integral part of the practice within the Islamic psychological paradigm. Drawing on Rasool (2021) defines *Tawbah* as the process of turning one’s heart towards the Divine Presence. This can be done by regretting past evil deeds, returning the rights or property of others that were unjustly usurped, and asking for the forgiveness of a person who has been wronged.

Forgiveness also figures prominently in the Christian religion. The basic tenets of this faith place an emphasis on repentance and seeking forgiveness from God (Brown, 1997). Moreover, a central message in the New Testament involves the importance of forgiving other people for things they have done (Rye et al., 2001). The Lord’s Prayer in the New Testament of the Holy Bible (Matthew 6) best exemplifies this attitude with the line “Forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”. Furthermore, the final words believed to be uttered by Jesus Christ on the cross demonstrate the importance of forgiveness within Christianity, which has resonated through time: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). Finally, Jesus is also described in the Bible as having taught his disciples that they should forgive unconditionally and love their enemies, and if someone strikes them on one cheek, they should turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:9 & Luke 6:27–31).

The Catholic tradition of sacramental reconciliation extends from this textual focus on forgiveness and can be understood as having psychological benefits. The individual confesses their sins and transgressions in a safe and confidential space to a priest, facilitating an experience of unconditional forgiveness from God. Importantly, they are also required by the ritual to perform some form of contrition. This act could relieve the penitent from psychological distress of guilt and, perhaps,

shame while motivating them to, in turn, forgive their transgressors unconditionally. This thus has a dual benefit psychologically to the penitent, making them more resilient and promoting both internal and interpersonal peace.

Forgiveness, restorative justice, and peace can also be seen in Hinduism. The concept of forgiveness is found in Vedic literature in the Hindu *Kshama* and is often combined with *kripa* (tenderness), *daya* (kindness), and *karuna* (compassion). In Hindu Dharma, not only should one forgive others, but one must also seek forgiveness if one has wronged someone else. Forgiveness is to be sought from the individual wronged, as well as the society at large, through acts of charity, purification, fasting, and meditation. Forgiveness is essential for one to free oneself from negative thoughts and be able to focus on blissfully living a moral and ethical (a *dharmaic*) life. In the highest self-realized state, forgiveness becomes the essence of one's personality, where the persecuted person remains unaffected, without feeling like a victim, and being free from anger (McCullough et al., 2001). The closest to a ritualistic celebration of forgiveness in Hinduism is perhaps the festival of Holi, which is the Hindu festival of colors. Traditionally, this celebration incorporates a restorative focus as a day to mark forgiveness, meet others, and repair relationships (Agarwal 2013).

In summary, this section has reflected on how various religious traditions have considered forgiveness and reparation as an integral part of being a good human being. They further emphasize that forgiveness needs restorative actions of contrition to truly restore oneself and one's relationships. Healing relationships with self and others brings about inner peace, which is the goal for a congruent and fully self-actualized person, while concurrently helping address dynamics that can perpetuate cycles of violence (Nelson, 2014).

## Conclusion

This chapter has sought to discuss and reflect upon the concepts of restorative justice and peace psychology in the context of human relationships—both intrapersonal and interpersonal. Engaging in building peace across levels and in response to diverse forms of violence requires recognizing that human beings are not perfect and will inevitably engage in actions that hurt themselves and others. These actions can cause anger, bitterness, and fractured relationships, which stifle individual growth and prevent fulfilling one's true potential as a human being.

A vital component of a peaceful and self-actualized existence entails reflecting on the need to acknowledge the harm done and work towards repairing it. As laid out in this chapter, such a reflection sets a path towards inner peace while contributing to interpersonal harmony. Achieving inner peace can make individuals and groups stronger, more resilient, and more able to cope with adversities. To this end, the chapter has discussed psychological and religious tools available to help develop the ability to forgive and live a life characterized by compassion and love.

As has been emphasized throughout the chapter, the key is to first develop a genuine love for oneself and an ability to forgive oneself even if this means going through a process of restorative pain. Restoration may not be easy but can result in cleansing and transformation. Genuine and unconditional positive regard for self is the first step towards being able to have unconditional positive regard for others. In turn, this inward-out movement can then make forgiveness that much easier, building both internal and external processes to foster the development of congruent, self-actualized, peaceful, and truly happy people.

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