

Assessing the Role of Remorse in Interpersonal Forgiveness

by

Monica Gracyalny

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved July 2011 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Paul Mongeau, Chair
Laura Guerrero
Michelle Shiota

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

August 2011

ABSTRACT

An offender's expression of remorse plays an important role following relational transgressions, yet it is not well understood how the experience and expression of remorse relate to both victim responses to hurt and forgiveness in close relationships. This study uses a social functionalist framework to investigate the role of remorse in the forgiveness process and tests whether offender remorse experiences mediate the associations between victim responses to hurt and remorse expressions. Undergraduate participants ($N=671$) completed questionnaires about a time when they hurt a close relational partner and reported their partners' responses to hurt, their own experiences and expressions of remorse, and their perceptions of forgiveness. Results indicated that victims' sad communication positively predicted offenders' other-oriented and affiliation remorse experiences; victims' threatening communication positively predicted offenders' self-focused remorse experience; and victims' conciliatory communication and withdrawal positively predicted offenders' affiliation and self-focused remorse experiences. Results of the mediation analyses revealed that self-focused remorse fully mediated the relationship between victim threatening communication and low status behaviors; other-oriented remorse partially mediated the association between victim sad communication and apology/concern behaviors; and affiliation partially mediated the relationship between victim conciliatory communication and connection behaviors. Victims' withdrawal behaviors and offenders' use of compensation were not related. Finally, offenders' apology/concern and connection behaviors associated positively with

perceptions of forgiveness, whereas low status behaviors negatively predicted forgiveness. Use of compensation following a hurtful event was not significantly related to forgiveness. Results are interpreted within the framework of evolutionary psychology and further validate the functional approach to studying emotion.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, who shared with me the sacrifices necessary to complete my degree and who were always there when I needed you. To my son Dominic, who kept me laughing and never let me give up, and my daughter Isabella, who was always patient and understanding when I was not as available as a mom should be. I cannot thank you enough for believing in me and never letting me lose sight of the important things in life. I also thank my mom for providing emotional support, guidance, and for giving me the space to follow my own path in life. I thank my dad, who instilled in me a love of learning and who motivated me by telling me that if things did not work out, I could always move back into the basement. Finally, I want to thank my best friend Mike. Thank you for putting up with me over these past three years and for telling me every day that you are my biggest fan. You don't know how much that means to me. Thank you all for your love and support. This dissertation could not have been completed without each of you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the help and guidance of Paul Mongeau, Laura Guerrero, and Lani Shiota in completing this dissertation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE	1
Overview.....	1
Rationale	2
Relational Transgressions	4
Hurtful Events	5
Victims' Responses to Hurtful Events	6
Remorse in Close Relationships	8
Remorse vs. Regret and Guilt	9
Importance of Communicating Remorse	12
Components of Remorse Experience and Expression	14
Implications of Expressing Remorse	20
Interpersonal Forgiveness	20
Evolutionary Psychology Perspective on Emotions	24
Research Questions and Hypotheses	30
2 METHOD	33
Sample.....	33
Procedure	34

CHAPTER	Page
Measures	34
3 RESULTS	40
Data Analysis	40
Measurement Models	41
Associations between Victim and Offender Responses.....	43
Mediation Analyses	51
Remorse Expression and Forgiveness	57
4 DISCUSSION	59
Summary of Findings.....	60
Theoretical Implications	66
Limitations and Future Research Directions.....	70
Conclusion	73
REFERENCES	
APPENDIX	
A Measures and Scales	82
B IRB Approval Form	86

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables.....	39
2. Predicting Offenders' Remorse Experience by Victims' Communicative Responses to Hurt.....	45
3. Predicting Remorse Expression by Remorse Experience.....	48
4. Predicting Offenders' Remorse Expression by Victims' Responses to Hurt	51
5. Predicting Forgiveness by Offenders' Expressions of Remorse.....	58

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Conceptual Model Linking Victim Hurt Expression, Offender Remorse, and Forgiveness	4
2. Full Conceptual Model Linking Victim Responses to Offender Remorse and Forgiveness	32
3. Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Remorse Experience	42
4. Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Remorse Expression	42
5. Results of Mediation Analysis of Victims' Threatening Communication and Offenders' Low Status Behaviors	54
6. Results of Mediation Analysis of Victims' Conciliatory Communication and Offenders' Connection Behaviors	55
7. Results of Mediation Analysis of Victims' Sad Communication and Offenders' Apology/concern Behaviors	57

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Relational transgressions are an unwelcome, albeit inevitable occurrence in nearly all close relationships. As Vangelisti (2007) stated, “the closer people are emotionally and the more often they interact, the greater the likelihood that one or both will feel hurt” (p. 121). Indeed, one of the most damaging effects of a relational transgression may be that the emotional and/or physical harm was inflicted by a close and trusted human being. Yet, in some instances, partners are able to overcome these negative effects to repair their important relationships through relational behaviors that ultimately facilitate forgiveness (Kelley & Waldron, 2005; McCullough, Luna, Berry, Tabak, & Bono, 2010).

Forgiveness involves an emotional transformation from vengeful feelings elicited by a transgression to more positive feelings of good will toward an offender (Fincham, 2000; McCullough, 2008), and is influenced by both cognitive and affective factors (Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010). From a cognitive perspective, victims consider the offender’s intent, responsibility, and the transgression’s severity in deciding to forgive (Boon & Sulsky, 1997). The victim’s emotional response (e.g., empathy) and communicative response (e.g., constructive communication) toward the offender also play a critical role in the forgiveness process (Bachman & Guerro, 2006a; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997; Sandage & Worthington, 2010).

Whether, how, and to what degree a victim forgives a transgressor, however, also depends at least in part upon how the transgressor communicates

after the violation. As Kelley and Waldron (2005) note, “the relational effects of transgressions that might seem ‘unforgivable’ may still be attenuated by communication after the event” (p. 355). In particular, research suggests that an offender’s expression of remorse following a transgression likely plays an important role in the forgiveness process. Specifically, the expression or enactment of remorse may allow the victim to make attributions about the offender’s intentions, responsibility for, and emotional reaction to the event. Thus, remorseful communication has the potential to shape the victim’s interpretation of the event as well as his/her emotional reaction toward the offender, and in turn, should be an important element in repairing the damage caused by transgressions.

Rationale

To date, a variety of researchers have explored the independent effects of communication from victims and offenders following hurtful events. Kelley (1998), for example, argued that in order to more fully understand the process of forgiveness, it is necessary to examine forgiveness-seeking behaviors that transgressors use to repair their relationships. Indeed, how the transgressor behaves after the offense influences the hurt partner’s motives and decision to forgive. When the offender fails to offer an acceptable account following a hurtful event, hurt partners often react with anger and indignation (Mongeau, Hale, & Alles, 1994). Moreover, the offender’s use of strategies such as apologies or appeasements typically reduces the hurt partner’s negative emotion by communicating respect and concern (Mongeau et al., 1994; Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Forster, & Montada, 2004). These behaviors have also been shown to associate

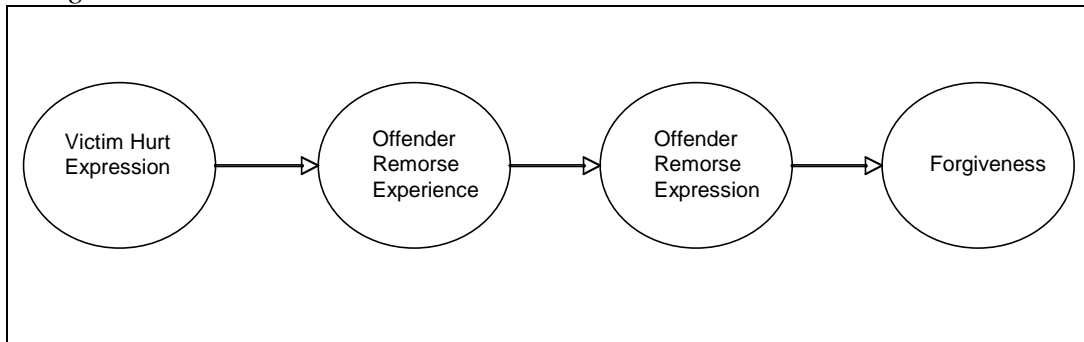
with forgiveness, positive relational outcomes, and reconciliation (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Feeney, 2004; Kelley & Waldron, 2005).

Other studies of forgiveness in romantic relationships suggest that the hurt partner's behavior following a relational transgression also relates to forgiveness and relational outcomes (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Kelley, 1998; Waldron & Kelley, 2005). Bachman and Guerrero (2006), for example, found that the hurt partner's reported use of integrative communication (e.g., talking about feelings in a non-threatening manner) following a hurtful event was an important positive predictor of forgiveness. In contrast, destructive (i.e., angry) communication from the hurt partner associated negatively with forgiveness.

Together, these studies underscore the interpersonal nature of forgiveness and suggest the need to examine both partners' thoughts, feelings, and expressions in order to better understand forgiveness (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Fincham & Beach, 2002; Kelley & Waldron, 2005; Waldron & Kelley, 2008). Furthermore, although remorse has emerged as a significant predictor of forgiveness (Leary, Springer, Negel, Ansell, & Evans, 1998, Zechmeister & Romero, 2002) there has been little systematic study of *how* remorse affects the forgiveness process. In this dissertation, a model is presented to suggest that victim responses to hurt associate with offender experiences of remorse, which in turn, relate to offender remorse expressions, which ultimately facilitate forgiveness (see Figure 1). Thus, the goal of the current research is to (a) examine the role of remorse in the relationships among both partners' cognitive, affective,

Figure 1

Conceptual Model Linking Victim Hurt Expression, Offender Remorse, and Forgiveness



and behavioral responses following relational transgressions, (b) investigate the theoretical underpinnings of remorse experience and expression, (c) test whether remorse experiences mediate the relationships between victim responses to hurt and offender remorse expressions, and (d) examine relationships between remorse expressions and forgiveness.

Relational Transgressions

At some point in nearly all close relationships, people say and do things to hurt each other and have to overcome these painful transgressions to repair their relationships (Driver & Gottman, 2004). According to Metts and Cupach (2007), there are three primary ways of conceptualizing “untoward behavior” in relationships: rule violations, hurtful events, and infidelity. Rule violations refer to “events, actions, and behaviors that violate an implicit or explicit relationship norm or rule” (Metts & Cupach, 2007, p. 244). Implicit norms and rules concern behavior that is culturally accepted as appropriate for the type of relationship (e.g., sexual exclusivity in romantic relationships). Explicit norms tend to involve

rules for the specific relationship, for example, not inviting friends to the house when the other partner is at home studying. Common rule violations include inappropriate behavior, lack of sensitivity, extra-relational involvement, disregard for the relationship, broken promises, deception, and abuse (Metts & Cupach, 2007). The benefit of conceptualizing transgressions in this manner is that it applies to a wide variety of relationship types (e.g., friends, romantic partners, family, coworkers) and includes behaviors perceived as unexpected, inappropriate, and disruptive (Metts & Cupach, 2007). The drawback, however, is that it focuses on the rules themselves rather than on how a person *feels* in response to the rule violation.

A second approach to conceptualizing relational transgressions is to consider them as hurtful events (Vangelisti, 2007) or behaviors that cause a person to feel hurt in his/her relationship. Vangelisti (2007) suggests that people who feel hurt “believe they have been emotionally wounded by something that someone else said or did” (p. 123), which often generates perceptions of relational devaluation, rejection, and/or vulnerability. There are six primary types of hurtful events: criticism, betrayal (e.g., infidelity), active dissociation (e.g., breaking off a relationship), passive disassociation (e.g., ignoring), under-appreciation, and teasing (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Leary et al., 1998). Furthermore, hurt feelings tend to be characterized by undifferentiated negative affect, anxiety, and hostility (Vangelisti, 2007). A benefit to using this approach is that it focuses on the emotions people feel in response to undesirable behavior or events in their relationships.

A final approach to conceptualizing relational transgressions is to consider the prototypical act of betrayal - emotional or sexual infidelity (Metts & Cupach, 2007). Not only does infidelity imply deception, broken promises, and feelings of relational devaluation, it also involves a rival or third party. Hall and Fincham (2006) argue that, compared to emotional infidelity, sexual infidelity likely results in “hostile or vengeful, shocked, nauseated or repulsed, humiliated, sexually aroused, or homicidal or suicidal feelings” (p. 157). Although this approach is useful for considering the role of evolutionary psychology in response to certain types of transgressions (e.g., mating, investments, or paternal certainty), it seems too limited to be of use across relational types (and even in many romantic relationships). Because the “hurtful events” approach applies to a variety of relationship types, considers a variety of transgression types, and focuses on the resulting emotional responses, the present study will rely on this conceptualization of relational transgressions.

Victims’ Responses to Hurtful Events

Vangelisti and Crumley (1998) suggest that victims respond to their feelings about hurtful events in different ways, depending on their level of hurt and their perceptions of how the event impacted their relationships. They propose three main categories of behaviors that victims use following hurtful events: active verbal responses, acquiescent responses, and invulnerable responses. Active verbal responses include behaviors such as attacking the other person, defending the self, and asking for an explanation. Acquiescent responses involve crying and conceding, and are most likely to be used when victims feel extremely

hurt by their partners and perceive the impact on their relationship as high. Invulnerable responses involve behaviors such as ignoring the hurtful event, laughing, and making a joke about it. Such responses are typically used when the event is not very hurtful and the impact on the relationship is relatively low (Vangelisti & Crumley, 1998). Later, Bachman & Guerrero (2006a) extended the typology of communicative responses to hurtful events to include seven distinct responses – three classified as constructive (i.e., relational repair, integrative communication and loyalty) and four destructive responses (de-escalation, revenge, distributive communication, and active distancing).

Investigating victims' responses to hurtful events is important for several reasons. First, the responses reflect the nature and strength of victims' emotions following hurtful events (e.g., high or low levels of hurt), which has important implications for relational well-being. As victims' hurt increases, they tend to report lower relational satisfaction (Feeney, 2004; Leary et al., 1998; Vangelisti & Crumley, 1998). Second, responses to hurt also suggest which discrete emotions the victim experiences. Victims who respond with crying, acquiescent reactions are more likely to experience sadness than those who use attacking, active verbal responses (who may be more likely feeling anger or hostility). Victims who use responses characterized as constructive may experience fewer negative emotions, however, and may be motivated to repair the relationship. Most relevant to the current study, the hurt partner's reactions to the event likely affect the offender's thoughts and feelings. When a victim responds with attacking, defending, crying, or distressed behavior, the offender should become aware that his/her actions

caused the victim pain and suffering. On the other hand, invulnerable responses such as ignoring the event or laughing may be less likely to signal hurt to the offender, particularly if he/she perceives no negative consequences for the victim. This is an important issue because the offender's awareness that he/she has hurt another person, particularly a valued relational partner, should lead to his/her experience of remorse.

Remorse in Close Relationships

Remorse, or the emotional pain that comes from hurting someone, plays an important role in personal and social relationships. Tudor (2001) defines remorse as "the suffering acknowledgement that One is responsible for the Other's suffering" (p. 127). Thus, remorse is an emotion elicited by feelings of responsibility for causing another's distress, coupled with an empathic response toward the aggrieved partner (Gracyalny & Mongeau, 2010). The experience of remorse represents feelings of anguish or discomfort that disturb one's psychological state. Remorse has also been characterized as a moral emotion (Taylor, 1996; Van Stokkom, 2002) as it is informed by notions of right and wrong, or good and bad. Remorse, then, is an emotion that arises from "events that are perceived to have a moral component" (e.g., a transgression) which motivates a person "towards actions that carry a moral component" (e.g., empathizing with or helping someone) (Kroll & Egan, 2004, p. 352).

Given this definition, the transgressor's degree of remorse should vary as a function of both how much the partner suffered and how responsible the transgressor feels for that suffering (Tudor, 2001). For example, if a person insults

a friend about their career choice and the friend subsequently quits his/her job and suffers financial hardship as a result, remorse experience is likely limited if the friend is thought to have overreacted. The transgressor might feel remorse for the insult, but may not feel responsible for the friend's unemployment. Indeed, remorse "concentrates on the deed rather than on the agent" (Taylor, 1996, p. 67). A person's remorse will vary to the extent that they feel that their own actions were responsible for the other's suffering.

An important element of conceptually defining a term is to differentiate it from other, similar, constructs (Miller & Nicholson, 1976). Because remorse is considered both a cognitive and emotional response to one's own wrongdoings, there has been considerable disagreement about defining remorse and differentiating it from related constructs of guilt and regret (Taylor, 1996). Differentiating remorse from guilt and regret are important and difficult tasks for two reasons. First, although these emotions are distinct, they frequently co-occur. Second, they are often defined synonymously. For example, the Encarta online dictionary defines remorse as "a strong feeling of guilt and regret" (MSN Encarta online dictionary, 2010). Despite their similarity, these emotions differ in important and theoretically interesting ways.

Remorse versus Regret

In differentiating remorse from regret, Taylor (1996) argues that "remorse is felt about a sin or moral wrong where regret is felt about that which is in some way undesirable, but not particularly morally so" (p. 66). In addition to containing a moral element, remorse implies that the agent had some degree of

control over (and, thus, responsibility for) the unfortunate situation. For example, when Nathan Hale stated, “I regret that I have but one life to give for my country” he was describing an undesirable circumstance over which he had no control. Furthermore, an individual may feel regret (but not remorse) for an undesirable action that was considered contextually necessary. For instance, if a bully provoked a person to use physical aggression in self-defense, he/she may regret the circumstances that necessitated violence. The aggressor is unlikely to feel remorse, however, if s/he felt that the actions were necessary for self-protection (i.e., the bully, and not the self, is responsible). Thus, according to Taylor (1996), feelings of remorse and regret will stem from different interpretations of an undesirable event. What is more, a person who experiences remorse (but not a person experiencing regret) will want to (if possible) undo the action that harmed the other.

Remorse versus Guilt

Baumeister, Stillwell, and Heatherton (1994) define guilt as an “individual’s unpleasant emotional state associated with possible objections to his or her actions, inactions, circumstances, or intentions” (p. 245). Thus, the experience of guilt differs from the experience of remorse in that remorse is an other-oriented response, whereas guilt is primarily concerned with one’s own or others’ evaluations of the self. Guilt is based on “the possibility that one may be wrong or that others may have such a perception” (Baumeister et al., 1994, p. 245). Unlike remorse and regret, a person feeling guilt is unlikely to think about the behavior in question, but instead focus on his/her self as the agent who

committed the act (Taylor, 1996). The other's suffering is less important in creating guilt than it is in creating remorse. Instead, guilt-related pain results from the uneasiness experienced by the violation of a personal or social rule. Thus, the goal of a guilt-ridden individual is to do whatever is necessary to eliminate that particular emotion, including perhaps, reparation to the other party (usually thought to be the easiest way to dispel guilt because it reflects positively on the self) (Taylor, 1996). Such reparations, however, are usually designed to rid the self of the burden of guilt rather than to right a moral wrong or undo harm.

Therefore, it is important to note that guilt results from an evaluation of the self (and one's own behavior) while remorse is an other-oriented response. For example, in the case of infidelity, the cheating partner feels guilty if he/she experiences distress from thinking that the affair reflects negatively on his/her character, that others might consider him/her a "bad partner" or a "cheater" or that they label him/her that way. The personal distress in this case represents self-focused feelings of anxiety or discomfort (Eisenberg et al., 1989) stemming from the awareness that they have violated a particular social, personal, or relational rule.

In contrast, however, the cheating partner is likely to experience remorse if the transgression causes the partner pain and suffering and he/she is concerned for the partner's well being. In this case, the offender will likely desire to undo his/her action in order to end the *partner's* (rather than his/her own) suffering. Remorse, therefore, is likely facilitated by empathic distress, defined as feeling distress in response to the suffering of another (Hoffman, 2001), and is typically

associated with an “other-oriented, altruistic goal of alleviating the other’s distress or need, even if it is easy to escape contact with the needy other” (Eisenberg et al., 1989, p. 56).

Although guilt, regret, and remorse co-occur frequently, it is possible to experience them separately (Taylor, 1996). For example, guilt is experienced without remorse in a number of contexts. Women, in particular, often report experiencing guilt because of eating or premarital sexual behaviors (D’Augelli & Cross, 1975; Steenhuis, 2009). In such circumstances, anxiety and discomfort likely stem from violations of behavioral standards (either personal or societal) rather than another person’s distress.

The Importance of Communicating Remorse

While several scholars have investigated cognitive and emotional experiences of remorse (e.g., Taylor, 1996; Tudor, 2001), other studies have examined remorse expression or its consequences (Feeney, 2004; Fisher & Exline, 2006; Slovenko, 2006). In the criminal justice system, expression of remorse plays a significant role in determining punishment, where an offender’s perceived lack of remorse typically generates harsher sentences. In capital cases, a defendant’s perceived lack of remorse increases the chances that he/she will receive the death penalty (Slovenko, 2006). For example, in the State of Florida v. Sullivan, the Judge opined:

This court has observed the demeanor and the action of the defendant through this entire trial and has not observed one scintilla of remorse displayed, indicating full well to this court that the death penalty is the

proper selection of the punishment to be imposed in this particular case (in Slovenko, 2006, p. 398).

Along similar lines, in juvenile proceedings, the decision to try an offender as a juvenile or adult depends largely on the extent to which offender has expressed remorse for his/her actions (Slovenko, 2006). Thus, in the criminal context, an offender's expression of remorse (or lack thereof) has serious, even mortal, consequences.

In relational contexts, remorse expression plays an important role in repairing damage due to transgression (Feeney, 2004; Fisher & Exline, 2006; Kelley & Waldron, 2005). Feeney (2004), for instance, reported that the injured partner's perception of the transgressor's remorse is significantly related to long-term relationship effects. Specifically, a perceived lack of remorse resulted in greater relational harm as a "lack of remorse is likely to create distrust and impede relationship repair" (p. 493). Similarly, Gold and Weiner (2000) reported that a lack of perceived remorse following a transgression both increases the victim's estimation that the perpetrator will repeat his/her behavior and decreases the evaluation of the perpetrator's moral character.

Just as a lack of expressed remorse has serious negative personal and relational consequences, expressing remorse typically generates positive outcomes. Expressing remorse for a transgression is part of what is thought to make an offender's apology effective. Specifically, Darby and Schlenker (1982) argued that five components are necessary for an apology to appear sincere, convincing, and effective to the injured party: admitting fault, admitting damage,

expressing remorse, asking for pardon, and offering compensation. Similarly, Kelley and Waldron (2005) found that the expression of remorse after a relational transgression is significantly and positively correlated with the hurt partner's sense of relational improvement and increased relational intimacy.

Components of Remorse Experience and Expression

Consistent with the notion that remorse focuses primarily on taking responsibility for hurting another (along with an empathic response toward the injured partner), research suggests that remorse is comprised of several cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of the emotion (Gracyalny & Mongeau, 2010). These include taking responsibility for one's actions, care and concern for the victim, affiliation (i.e., a desire to continue the relationship), avoiding or reducing punishment, personal distress, and a motivation to repair or undo the damage caused by one's actions (Gracyalny & Mongeau, 2010; Taylor, 1996). Recent investigations into the experience of remorse suggest that these factors reflect the offender's concern for the victim, the relationship, and the self (Gracyalny & Mongeau, 2011). What is more, offenders communicate these various concerns both verbally and nonverbally (Gracyalny & Mongeau, 2010). The components of remorse experience and expression are described in the next section.

Concern for the Victim (Other-oriented Experience)

Other-oriented remorse experience represents the offender's thoughts and feelings concerning the victim, including accepting responsibility for hurting the victim as well as empathic concern for his/her suffering. As Tangney (1991)

states, other-oriented emotion is “generally viewed as the ‘good’ moral affective experience because it is presumed to foster warm, close interpersonal relationships, to facilitate altruistic and prosocial behavior, and to inhibit interpersonal aggression” (p. 599). Offenders communicate their concerns for victims in a variety of ways, including accepting responsibility for and expressing concern for the victim’s pain and suffering

Accepting responsibility. An important part of both remorse experience and expression involves an awareness that another person has been hurt, along with accepting some level of responsibility for his/her suffering. Taking responsibility is often expressed with a concession and/or apology. Concessions involve explicitly admitting responsibility for the negative behavior (Mongeau et al., 1994), whereas apologies are “admissions of blameworthiness and regret for an undesirable event” (Schlenker & Darby, 1982, p. 742). Apologies are important to effective remorse expression because the offender: (a) lets the victim know that s/he recognizes the poor behavior and that they share moral values; (b) informs the victim that the pain experienced was not the victim’s fault; and (c) suffers the humiliation of admitting his/her shortcomings (Lazare, 2004).

Effective apologies should function to inform victims that offenders are no longer a threat to their personal or relational well-being, and may even cause victims to feel sympathy or empathy for the apologetic offender (McCullough et al., 1997).

Empathic concern. In addition to acknowledging responsibility for the partner’s suffering, empathic concern (or a general concern for the partner’s welfare) plays an important role in the experience and expression of other-

oriented remorse. Indeed, Gracyalny and Mongeau (2010) found that remorseful offenders communicate empathic concern both nonverbally (i.e., concerned facial expression) and verbally (i.e., telling the victim how terrible he/she feels because of the victim's suffering).

Offenders may be most likely to experience other-oriented remorse when witnessing the victim's pain and suffering; thus, this response should occur when victims communicate grief and/or sadness by crying or looking sad (i.e., Vangelisti & Crumley's acquiescent responses). When victims use conciliatory communication (i.e., discussing their feelings in a calm and non-threatening manner), offenders may be less likely to perceive them as suffering. Similarly, threatening communication from the victim displays dominance rather than vulnerability. Recent research suggests that people are more likely to feel empathic concern and tenderness for vulnerable versus nonvulnerable others (Lishner, Batson, & Huss, 2011). Thus, offenders' other-oriented remorse experience should be most strongly associated with victims' sad communication.

Concern for the Relationship (Affiliation)

An important function of remorse is to repair or restore valuable relationships following a relational transgression. In fact, Fisher and Exline (2006) found that people experience greater remorse for hurting a valuable relationship partner versus a stranger. The affiliation component of remorse experience consists of thoughts and feelings relating to the relationship, such as feeling committed to the hurt person, wanting to get closer to him/her, and recognizing the value of the relationship. This factor reflects the offender's

awareness of an important relationship and his/her desire to maintain or repair it. As a result, offenders often express remorse through *connection behaviors* that communicate affection, care, and concern for the victim. Connection can be expressed verbally (e.g., “I love you,” “You’re very important to me”) and nonverbally through immediacy and affectionate behaviors (e.g., close proximity, eye contact, touch, forward leans). Thus, offenders attempt to communicate that, despite the rule violation, s/he still cares for the hurt partner and is concerned about the relationship.

An offender’s concern for the relationship may be most likely to occur when victims respond to hurt in a constructive manner versus angry, destructive responses. In particular, victims’ conciliatory communication (e.g., talking about ways to repair the relationship, telling the offender that s/he is still committed to him/her) may most strongly associate with offenders’ relational concerns because it reflects a willingness on the part of the victim to approach the transgression (and continuing relationship) in a positive manner. Offenders’ connection behaviors should be important in helping to repair relational damage, particularly when the relationship is perceived as valuable.

Concern for Self (Self-focused Experience)

The third component of remorse experience involves the egoistic concern for one’s own well-being. As Batson (1990) suggested, when faced with competing concerns, “Concern for others is ‘a fragile flower, easily crushed by self-concern’” (p. 345). Moreover, people are typically motivated by egoistic (versus altruistic) concerns when personal consequences are great (Batson, 1990).

Thus, when confronted by an angry victim (or one threatening to terminate a valuable relationship), the offender's remorse experience likely involves substantial concern for the self. The self-focused factor of remorse includes a desire to avoid punishment from the victim (or one's social group) and/or to prevent losing valuable resources.

Avoiding or reducing punishment/vengeance. One possible function of remorse is to deter or reduce revenge/retaliation after the self has hurt another. Studies suggest that anger and the motivation for revenge are common responses to perceived intentional and significant interpersonal harm by another person (Guerrero & Bachman, 2010; McCullough, 2008). Given that many animal species enact submission during the reconciliation process (de Waal & Pokorny, 2005; de Waal & Ren, 1986), it is no surprise that self-focused remorse experience motivates *low status behavior* in humans. Humans typically enact submissive behavior (e.g., avoiding eye contact, hanging their head, making themselves physically smaller) when attempting relationship repair or trying to avoid potential future punishment following a rule violation (Keltner, Young, & Buswell, 1997). In submissively expressing remorse, offenders accept responsibility for causing the partner's harm, and in doing so, may desire to reduce or avoid future punishment. This strategy tends to work, as submissive behavior elicits greater sympathy (and less punishment) from the hurt individual and promotes relational repair and reconciliation (Keltner et al., 1997). Gracyalny and Mongeau (2010) found that low status is communicated both verbally and nonverbally through avoiding eye contact, slouching, begging, and explaining

how “stupid” or unworthy offenders are of their partner’s love and/or forgiveness. In addition to submissive behaviors, offenders might also experience personal distress from the thought of potentially losing their partner or facing possible negative (personal) consequences. Personal distress is communicated both verbally (i.e., telling the victim how afraid he/she is about the future) and nonverbally (i.e., looking upset or anxious, and speaking in a low or shaking voice).

Appeasement/compensation. Finally, offenders often use appeasement/compensation to express remorse. According to Keltner and Buswell (1997), “appeasement is the process by which one individual pacifies another” (p. 263). A remorseful offender may use appeasement or compensation to communicate to the victim that he/she still has the potential to be a valuable relational partner. Expression of remorse-motivated compensation includes helping behaviors, such as doing extra chores around the house or making dinner, complimenting or doing special things for the partner. These behaviors align with remedial strategies used by transgressors to repair relationships (Aune, Metts, & Hubbard, 1998; Guerrero, Andersen, & Afifi, 2007), suggesting that people often use partner-focused soothing behaviors (e.g., offering compliments or gifts, being increasingly attentive to the partner) to compensate for their own hurtful behavior. However, these behaviors represent self-focused motivation if “benefiting the person in need is an instrumental goal on the way back to helping oneself” (Batson, 1990, p. 340).

Implications of Expressing Remorse

The expression of remorse appears to play an important role in repairing relational damage caused by transgressions. Direct remorse expression is part of what is thought to make an offender's apology effective (Darby & Schlenker, 1982). When offenders express remorse, it improves victims' perceptions of offenders' moral character and decreases their estimations that the offender is likely to repeat his/her behavior (Gold & Weiner, 2000). Further, remorseful offenders are perceived as less blameworthy (Darby & Schlenker, 1989) and typically receive lighter punishments (Gold & Weiner, 2000). Most important for this analysis, however, is the reliable and robust finding that offenders who express remorse are more likely to be forgiven following a relational transgression (Fisher & Exline, 2006; Gold & Weiner, 2000; McCullough et al., 1997; Waldron & Kelley, 2008; Younger, Piferi, Jobe, & Lawler, 2004). The nature of remorse and the relationship between remorse and forgiveness is reviewed next.

Forgiveness in Close Relationships

Within the social sciences, a wealth of literature exists on the interpersonal process of forgiveness. McCullough et al. (1997) define interpersonal forgiving as:

a set of motivational changes whereby one becomes a) decreasingly motivated to retaliate against an offending relationship partner, b) decreasingly motivated to maintain estrangement from the offender, and c)

increasingly motivated by conciliation and goodwill for the offender, despite the offender's hurtful actions (p. 321).

It is important to note that this definition includes the desire for (or at least the willingness to work toward) reconciliation. However, considerable forgiveness literature suggests that emotional forgiveness and reconciliation are separate concepts that often operate independently (for review see Metts & Cupach, 2007). For example, a victim may let go of the negative emotions s/he feels toward an offender but refuse to reconcile the relationship because trust has been permanently damaged. In contrast, an offended person may restore a valuable relationship without emotional forgiveness (i.e., not relinquishing negative emotions) in order to preserve financial resources. More recently, Waldron and Kelley (2008) argued that the forgiveness process involves renegotiating the meaning of the relationship, "with the possibility of reconciliation" (p. 5). Given that the focus of the present study is on the relational implications of expressing remorse, however, this dissertation will rely on McCullough et al.'s (1997) conceptualization of interpersonal forgiveness that includes reconciliation.

Research also suggests that forgiveness is a complex process influenced by a number of situational and dispositional factors, such as religiosity, rumination, time, Big Five personality factors, social desirability, and mood (Fehr et al., 2010). Additionally, a victim's decision to forgive is also influenced by both cognitive and affective factors relating to the transgression (Fehr et al.). Cognitively, victims consider the offender's intent, responsibility, and the transgression's severity in deciding to forgive (Boon & Sulsky, 1997). The

victim's emotional response toward the offender (e.g., empathy, sympathy) also plays a critical role in forgiveness (McCullough et al., 1997; McCullough, Rachal, Sandage, Worthington, Brown, & Hight, 1998; Sandage & Worthington, 2010).

McCullough and colleagues (1997; 1998) proposed a theoretical model of forgiveness that explains people's responses to hurtful events. In two studies, the authors found that: (a) receiving an apology from an errant partner is associated with forgiving, and (b) forgiving is associated with both conciliatory and avoidance behavior toward the errant partner. Conciliatory behavior was reported most often by those who had forgiven their partner and involved attempts at reconciling the relationship (e.g., "I took steps toward reconciliation: wrote them, called them, expressed love, showed concern, etc."). Avoidance behavior, on the other hand, was reported most frequently by those who had not forgiven their partner and included behavior aimed at avoiding contact with the partner ("I keep as much distance between us as possible" or "I avoid them"). Those who had not (yet) forgiven their partner also reported revenge motivation, described as the desire to seek revenge or thoughts of retaliation toward the partner.

Linking Remorse and Forgiveness

Nearly all conceptualizations of forgiveness include the victim transforming his/her motivations from seeking revenge to pursuing conciliatory, prosocial action toward the offender (Metts & Cupach, 2007). The present study aims to determine whether and how the experience and expression of remorse work together to predict forgiveness. The current study proposes that victims' reactions to hurt relate to offenders' experiences and expressions of remorse,

which in turn, associate with forgiveness by shaping victims' motivations toward offenders – either by reducing or eliminating the victim's desire for revenge/estrangement or by increasing the victim's prosocial motivation toward the offender (see Figure 1).

Remorse experience represents several concerns (other-oriented, affiliation, and self-focused) and is expressed through a variety of behaviors (i.e., apology/concern, low status behaviors, connection, and appeasement/compensation). Thus, the emotion of remorse should help offenders respond to varying reactions from victims in ways that complement victims' transgression-related motivations and, ultimately, facilitate forgiveness. Moreover, remorse expression behaviors should influence victims' cognitive and affective responses to offenders in ways that also promote forgiveness. First, remorse expression behaviors provide victims with important information about the offender's intentions and level of responsibility (e.g., through verbal apology behaviors), which have been shown to influence forgiveness (Boon & Sulsky, 1997). Remorse expression should also improve victims' emotional responses to offenders by evoking either empathic responses to offenders' distress or warm responses to offenders' affectionate or caring behaviors. For example, an apology may function to inform the victim that the offender recognizes his/her bad behavior and is no longer a threat to the victim's well-being, which should decrease the victim's desire for estrangement (and positively associate with forgiveness, according to McCullough et al.'s model). Similarly, an offender's distress could evoke an empathic response in the victim, which should also

decrease motivation for estrangement and increase prosocial responses. Further, an offender's offer of compensation may function to inform the victim that he/she is still a valuable relational partner, which could also decrease estrangement and increase the victim's prosocial or conciliatory motivation (both necessary conditions of forgiveness, according to McCullough et al, 1997). Remorse expression behaviors, then, reflect offenders' desires to maintain their important relationships (personal or social) and should evoke the parallel motivations in victims (i.e., decreasing estrangement and/or increasing conciliatory motivations) that associate with forgiveness.

This proposed model linking victim communication to offender remorse and forgiveness emerged from the perspective of evolutionary psychology. The following section provides an overview of evolutionary psychology and describes how it can explain relationships between hurt, remorse, and forgiveness.

The Evolutionary Perspective on Emotions – Social Functionalism

One approach to studying the experience and expression of emotion is the social functionalist perspective (Keltner, Haidt, & Shiota, 2006). Social functionalism is based on a functional approach to emotions, suggesting that “emotions are best understood in the context of the functions they serve” (Keltner et al., p. 115). It is rooted in evolutionary theory, which proposes that humans have evolved unique psychological characteristics as a result of the distinct adaptive pressures faced during the hunting and gathering Pleistocene era (deemed the environment of evolutionary adaptedness) (Buss, 1995; Cosmides, Tooby, & Barkow, 1992). From an evolutionary perspective, emotions are

superordinate programs in the mind that coordinate and override other programs (e.g., heart rate, sleep management, food acquisition) to enhance survival when triggered by a fitness-relevant eliciting situation (Cosmides & Tooby, 2000). For example, when a person is confronted by a hungry lion (predator), the fear emotion should deactivate any sleeping, eating, or mating activities and prepare the heart, lungs, and muscles for possible fleeing or fighting activities. Thus, emotions are adaptations that have evolved over time to activate certain physiological and computational mechanisms that would have contributed to the best fitness outcome, when averaged across individuals and generations.

The social functional approach, however, highlights the ultrasocial nature of humans and argues that humans rely on complex long-term relationships for survival (e.g., pair-bonds, parent-child bonds, cooperative alliances, group memberships, etc.). From this perspective, emotions not only function at an individual level to prepare people for specific fitness-enhancing actions; they also motivate behaviors (e.g., reciprocity, commitment) that strengthen long-term relationships crucial to reproduction and cooperation. Moreover, emotional expressions can indicate long-term commitment to others (e.g., expressions of love and care), also enhancing relational bonds. Thus, emotions are profoundly important in developing and maintaining the long-term relational bonds that, ultimately, enhance human survival.

One advantage of the social functional approach is that it helps to explain a wide range of social emotions. Indeed, the social functional perspective “recognizes that certain emotions such as fear, embarrassment, or guilt, help the

individual respond to threats in the social environment” (Keltner et al., 2006, p. 118). Therefore, in order to understand and explain an emotion from this perspective, scholars must identify the recurring social problem as well as the specific properties of the emotion evolved for dealing with this problem (Cosmides & Tooby, 2000).

First, the recurrent social situation or problem must be identified. With respect to remorse, this task is fairly straightforward: The recurrent situation is the awareness that the self has hurt another person, which has likely occurred many times in humans’ evolutionary history, across individuals and generations. Next, it is necessary to describe the adaptive problem (i.e., identify which behaviors or cognitive/affective states will result in the best fitness outcome). Because emotions function at several different levels (individual, dyadic, group, etc.), this part is more complicated and necessitates a longer discussion, which follows.

Hurtful Events from a Functional Perspective

One problem in hurting another person is that the offender is likely to anger the victim, as anger is the result of a perceived intentional and significant harm (Weiner, Amirkhan, Folkes, & Verette, 1987). Anger, in turn, frequently results in retaliation or retribution of some kind (e.g., provoked aggression; see Daly & Wilson, 1988), or at the very least, an increased *motivation* to retaliate (Guerrero & Bachman, 2010). In fact, McCullough (2008) suggests that taking revenge against perpetrators of significant and intentional harm solves several adaptive problems of its own for victims, and is the default program for dealing with aggressors (in humans, primates, birds, and other animals). Being the object

of revenge, however, would present a significant adaptive problem for aggressors. Additionally, hurting another person could lead to the loss of valuable relationships, which could jeopardize both reproductive success and cooperative alliances. Thus, offenders *should* have a response to deal with revenge and/or estrangement problems, and it is possible that this response is the emotion program of remorse.

The Remorse Response

Remorse likely solves several problems (at the individual, dyadic, and group levels). It appears to prevent or reduce retaliation (Slovenko, 2006) and helps repair valuable relationships (Feeny, 2004; Fisher & Exline, 2006), both of which are important for survival, now and in our ancestral past. For society, offenders' remorse also serves a protective function in that it lets others know that the offender will not likely continue to be a threat or danger (Gold & Weiner, 2000).

In order to be considered an emotion from a functional perspective, however, remorse needs to reliably solve specific adaptive problems, namely reducing/preventing revenge and repairing valuable relationships. How could the experience and expression of remorse result in the best fitness outcome? First, the negative psychological experience of remorse could serve as a recalibrating emotion prompting an offender to change his/her behavior in order to prevent future negative outcomes (the self-focused component of remorse). Remorse expression could also signal to others that the offender is in recalibration-mode and has no intention of repeating the behavior that led to this situation, thus

reconfirming his/her long-term commitment to the relationship or alliance. Those who do not experience (or express) remorse might be perceived as being a continued threat, which could lead to termination of the relationship or being ostracized from the social group. Gold and Weiner (2000), again, observed that a perceived lack of remorse following a transgression increases the victim's estimation that the offender will repeat his/her behavior. As noted above, Slovenko (2006) found that offenders who lack remorse are also significantly more likely to be ostracized from the group (e.g., imprisoned) or even sentenced to death. Thus, the experience of remorse could be adaptive for offenders because it (a) orients offenders to their own mistakes (by letting them know that a particular behavior had a negative outcome), and (b) prevents them from repeating that behavior and harming others in the future (which would risk their position in the dyad/group and threaten their chances of survival).

Second, remorse appears to motivate affiliative, appeasing/compensating, and submissive behaviors in offenders (Gracyalny & Mongeau, 2010). Such behaviors might preserve long-term bonds by soothing angry victims and informing them that the offender still has the potential to be a valuable relational partner (Guerrero, Andersen, & Afifi, 2007; McCullough, 2008). The notion of a "valuable relationship" is salient to both partners following a transgression. Research suggests that offenders are likely to experience greater remorse for hurting a valuable relational partner versus a stranger (Fisher & Exline, 2006), and studies have found that victims are more likely to forgive valuable or rewarding partners for relational transgressions (e.g., Bachman & Guerrero, 2006;

McCullough, Luna, Berry, Tabak, & Bono, 2010). Moreover, the use of submissive behaviors to express remorse (e.g., avoiding eye contact, hanging head, making self physically smaller) has been found to elicit less punishment (*and* greater sympathy) from hurt individuals and promotes relational repair and reconciliation (Keltner, Young, & Buswell, 1997). Initial evidence, then, suggests that remorse may be particularly relevant in keeping valuable relationships intact because it motivates offenders' prosocial actions, which in turn, evoke complementary behaviors from victims. Thus, over time and across individuals, remorse behaviors may have been selected for two main purposes: to solve the revenge problem and to keep our important relationships intact despite relational harm.

Along with affiliation, appeasement, and submission, the expression of remorse also includes displays of emotional distress, such as crying and looking sad. According to Cosmides and Tooby (2000), it is sometimes beneficial for others to know the emotional state of the an individual, and "for those recurrent situations in which, on average, it was beneficial to share one's emotion state (and hence assessment of the situation) with those one was with, species-typical facial and other expressions of emotions were constructed by selection" (p. 105). In situations where one has hurt another person and could possibly be facing retaliation from the victim (or other negative consequences such as loss of a valuable relationship or social group), it seems important to have recognizable signals that communicate remorse. Moreover, Porges (1997) suggests that facial expression and communication behaviors are less "metabolically-costly" than

fighting or fleeing behaviors, therefore, evolutionary fitness could be enhanced by (experiencing and) expressing remorse rather than fighting or fleeing one's victim (or being ostracized from one's group). Research suggests that the combination of several nonverbal behaviors (e.g., distress displays, low status behaviors, appeasement) communicate remorse (Gracyalny & Mongeau, 2010) and thus could discourage victims from seeking retaliation or severing relationships.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Theoretically, then, there appear to be clear associations between the awareness that the self has hurt another person and remorse experience (Kroll & Eagen, 2004; Taylor, 1996), and between the components of remorse experience and expression (Gracyalny & Mongeau, 2011). Based on the preceding reasoning, the following research questions seek to clarify the relationships between victims' responses to hurt, offenders' experiences and expressions of remorse, and forgiveness following relational transgressions.

RQ1: How do perceptions of victims' expressions of hurt associate with offenders' experiences of remorse?

RQ2: How do offenders' experiences of remorse associate with their expression behaviors?

RQ3: How do perceptions of victims' expressions of hurt associate with offenders' expressions of remorse?

RQ4: How do apology/concern, connection, low status behaviors, and compensation relate to perceptions of forgiveness?

Finally, little is known about how the victim's communication relates to the offender's experience of remorse, and whether the components of remorse experience mediate the associations between victim responses and remorse expressions. Therefore, a primary goal of the current study is to investigate whether the components of remorse experience mediate victims' responses to hurt and remorse expressions in close relationships. The conceptual model linking victim communication to remorse experience and expression is shown in Figure 2. On the basis of the theoretical underpinnings outlined above, the following hypotheses are advanced:

H1: Offenders' self-focused remorse experience mediates the relationship between victims' threatening responses and offenders' low status behaviors.

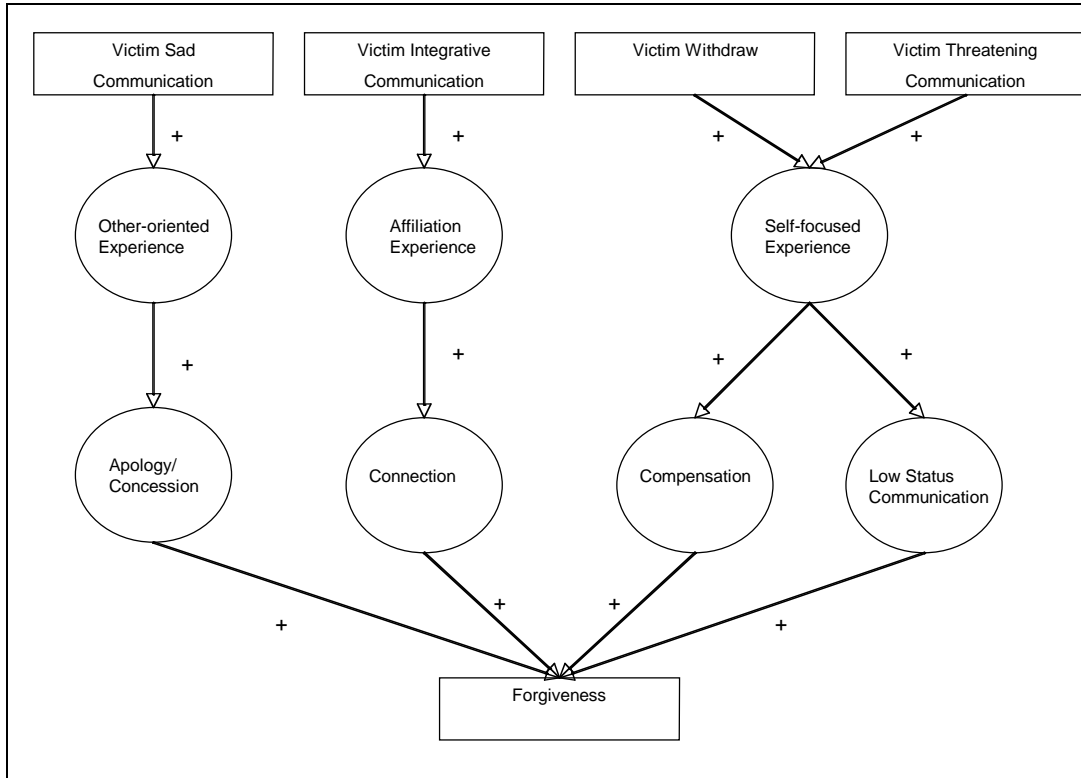
H2: Offenders' self-focused remorse experience mediates the relationship between victims' withdrawal and offenders' compensation behaviors.

H3: Offenders' affiliation remorse experience mediates the relationship between victims' conciliatory responses and offenders' connection behaviors.

H4: Offenders' other-oriented remorse experience mediates the relationship between victims' sad responses and offenders' apology/concern behaviors.

Figure 2.

Conceptual Model Linking Victim Responses to Offender Remorse Experiences and Expressions



Chapter 2

METHOD

The current study investigates relationships between perceptions of victims' communicative responses to hurt, offenders' experience and expressions of remorse, and perceptions of forgiveness. Data was collected through the use of an online questionnaire (i.e., SurveyMonkey.com). Because the goal was to examine relationships among measured variables and latent constructs, quantitative data obtained through survey procedures is appropriate for the study.

Sample

Participants were 705 undergraduates from upper division Family Studies classes at a large Southwestern university. Thirty-four incomplete responses were deleted, thus, the final sample consisted of 671 participants. There were 165 (24.6%) men and 506 (75.4%) women ranging in age from 18 to 57 years ($M = 22.5$, $SD = 5.3$). Ethnicities included Caucasian (67.4%), Latino/a (14.9%), African American (6.7%), Asian (6.1%), and other (4.4%). Approximately 51.4% of respondents described a time when they hurt a romantic dating partner, 21.9% close friend, 11.9% parent, 5.8% spouse, 5.7% sibling, 1.8% other family member, and 1.5% other. Relationship length ranged from 0 to 420 months ($M = 66.7$, $SD = 83.5$, $Median = 26.0$), and the transgressions had occurred, on average, approximately two years prior to data collection ($M = 28.95$ months, $SD = 39.02$, $Median = 17$ months). The majority of respondents (57.4%) were still in a relationship with the person they hurt. Of the 284 relationships that had ended, 47% reported the relationship ending due to the hurtful event.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from undergraduate courses and given extra course credit for their participation. Students were provided with a link to an online survey (via SurveyMonkey.com) and were asked to complete the survey individually outside of regularly scheduled class time. Participants provided demographic information (i.e., age, sex, ethnic background, and relational status) and responded to several sets of questions regarding the severity/degree of hurt created by the transgression as well as their role as perpetrators of hurtful events in close relationships, including their partners' responses to hurt, self-reported experiences and expressions of remorse, and perceptions of forgiveness. The survey also included questions about participants' perceptions of transgression severity.

Measures

The concept of a hurtful event was defined for participants at the beginning of the questionnaire and several examples were provided (e.g., cheating on his/her romantic partner, lying, betraying a confidence, breaking a promise, or making a cruel remark that deeply hurts another person's feelings). Participants were instructed to think about and describe a specific time when they hurt someone close to them and, based upon that event, answer a series of Likert-type questions regarding the hurtful event and his/her partner. Because the present study aims to investigate remorse experiences (i.e., thoughts and feelings) as well as expressions, self-report data was collected from offenders' perspectives. All measures are provided in the Appendix.

Victim's communicative responses to hurt. The victim's communicative responses to the event were measured using a series of 7-point Likert-type items (1 = disagree strongly, 7 = agree strongly) developed by Bachman and Guerrero (2006b). Scale items were modified to reflect offenders' perceptions of victims' responses and included six additional items: three items assessing distress and/or sadness (e.g., "cried or teared up", "seemed sad or depressed") and three items measuring invulnerable responses (e.g., "said 'Whatever' or something similar," "acted as if he/she didn't care"). Negatively worded items were recoded such that high scores reflect strong agreement with use of each strategy.

A principal components analysis with varimax rotation was used to estimate the number of factors that should be retained. Cattell's scree test showed leveling between the fourth and fifth components, so four components were retained. These four components accounted for 59.76% of the common variance. Items were considered loaded if the primary loading was $> .50$, and no secondary loading was within $.20$ of the primary loading value. Of the 43 items, 9 items that failed to meet the loading criteria were removed. The final model consisted of four factors of victims' responses: *conciliatory communication* (11 items, $\alpha = .91$, $M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.41$; e.g., "explained his/her feelings to me," "tried to fix things between us"), *withdrawal* (10 items, $\alpha = .93$, $M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.69$; e.g., "ignored me," "seemed like he/she didn't want to be around me"), *sad communication* (4 items, $\alpha = .77$, $M = 4.94$, $SD = 1.43$; e.g., "cried or teared up," "seemed sad"), and *threatening communication* (8 items, $\alpha = .90$, $M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.62$; e.g., "yelled or cursed at me," "tried to 'get even' with me"). The items in

each factor were averaged for statistical analysis. *Withdrawal* and *threatening communication* were moderately correlated ($r = .51$), as were *withdrawal* and *conciliatory communication* (but negatively, $r = -.45$); all other correlations ranged from .06 to .30. Table 1 provides correlations among the factors.

Offender remorse experience. The offender's cognitive and affective experience of remorse was measured using Gracyalny and Mongeau's (2011) measure of Remorse Experience. The scale consisted of 20 Likert-type items (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) to assess three dimensions of remorse experience: other-oriented experience, self-focused experience, and affiliation. *Other-oriented experience* ($\alpha = .91$, $M = 5.67$, $SD = 1.16$) consisted of nine items relating to empathy and feeling responsible for the other person's pain (e.g., "knew the other person was hurt," "felt concern for the other person," "felt upset because the other person felt upset"). *Self-focused experience* ($\alpha = .82$, $M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.52$) was comprised of six items to assess thoughts and feelings related to negative personal consequences for the event (e.g., "was afraid of being punished by the other person," "worried about my reputation," "felt bad for myself"). *Affiliation* ($\alpha = .89$, $M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.58$) was measured with five items to assess desire for maintaining or repairing a valuable relationship (e.g., "wanted to be emotionally close to the other person," "valued my relationship with him/her," "wanted to touch or hug the other person"). Table 1 displays the correlations between the remorse experience subscales.

Offender remorse expression. The offender's verbal and nonverbal expressions of remorse were assessed with Gracyalny and Mongeau's (2011)

measure of Remorse Expression. The scale consisted of 22 Likert-type items to measure the extent to which offenders exhibited remorseful behavior following the hurtful event (1 = not at all, 7 = to a very great extent). *Apology/concern* ($\alpha = .91$, $M = 5.03$, $SD = 1.62$) was measured with nine items describing verbal behaviors that take responsibility for one's actions or offer an apology (e.g., "admitted I was wrong," "told the other person I knew how hurt/angry he/she was," "said I was sorry for what I had done"). *Connection* ($\alpha = .91$, $M = 3.81$, $SD = 2.02$) was measured with five items assessing verbal and nonverbal behaviors reflecting a desire for closeness (e.g., "said I love you or something similar," "told the other person I didn't want to lose him/her," "tried to touch the other person"). *Compensation/repair* ($\alpha = .91$, $M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.79$) was assessed with five items measuring attempts to provide compensation, appease the victim, or repair the relationship (e.g., "treated him/her more nicely than usual," "complimented the other person more," "helped with chores or tasks"). Finally, *Low status* behaviors ($\alpha = .77$, $M = 2.87$, $SD = 1.79$) were measured with three items (e.g., "said I was not good enough for him/her," "spoke with a shaking voice"). For correlations between the remorse expression factors, see Table 1.

Interpersonal forgiveness. Forgiveness was measured with a three-item scale developed by Bachman and Guerrero (2006b). The items were modified to reflect offenders' perceptions of forgiveness and included: "The other person has forgiven me for hurting him/her," "He/she completely forgave me," and "The other person was able to forgive me for hurting him/her." All items were

measured on a 7-point (1 = strongly agree, 7 = strongly disagree) Likert-type scale and averaged for statistical analysis ($\alpha = .97$, $M = 5.02$, $SD = 2.01$).

Degree of Hurt/Transgression Severity. In addition to measuring offenders' cognitions, emotions, and behaviors relating to the hurtful event, the questionnaire included measures of the degree of hurtfulness and transgression severity. Because past research has found strong associations between transgression severity and forgiveness (Waldron & Kelley, 2008), hurt/severity was included as a covariate in several of the analyses. The items were developed by Bachman & Guerrero (2006b) and modified for this study to reflect the offender's perspective. Offenders' perceptions of the hurtfulness/severity of the event were assessed with eight 7-point Likert-type items (1 = not at all, 7 = to a very great extent). The items assessed the extent to which offenders believed the transgressions caused the victims harm (e.g., "The event was extremely hurtful," "The event caused the other person emotional pain," "This event made the other person feel really bad," "The event was very upsetting") and were considered severe relational transgressions (e.g., "This was one of the worst things I could have done or said to him/her"). The items were averaged to create an index of degree of hurt/severity ($\alpha = .86$, $M = 5.37$, $SD = 1.28$). Overall, participants reported the transgressions to be quite severe and harmful to their victims.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables

Variable	WD	CNC	THR	SAD	OTH	SEL	AFIL	APOL	LST	CON	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
WD	1.00										3.89	1.69
CNC	-.45**	1.00									3.19	1.41
THR	.51**	-.14**	1.00								3.40	1.62
SAD	-.06	.30**	.10*	1.00							4.94	1.43
OTHR	-.05	.12**	-.08*	.43**	1.00						5.67	1.16
SELF	.35**	-.01	.49**	.04	.13**	1.00					3.62	1.52
AFIL	-.12**	.25**	-.20**	.23**	.62**	.16**	1.00				5.05	1.58
APOL	-.02	.18**	.02	.38**	.63**	.18**	.59**	1.00			5.03	1.62
LST	.14**	.15**	.23**	.23**	.20**	.42**	.28**	.43**	1.00		2.87	1.79
CON	-.12	.35**	-.01	.33**	.38**	.15**	.67**	.66**	.50**	1.00	3.81	2.02
CMP	.00	.24**	.13**	.26**	.29**	.31**	.45**	.57**	.58**	.67**	3.20	1.79

Note. WD = Withdrawal; CNC = Conciliatory Communication; THR = Threatening Communication; SAD= Sad Communication; OTHR = Other-oriented Experience; SELF = Self-focused Experience; AFIL = Affiliation; APOL = Apology/concern; LST = Low Status Communication; CON = Connection; CMP = Compensation. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. All values are two-tailed. $N = 671$.

Data Analysis

Three goals are relevant to the present study's results: (a) to investigate the relationships among both partners' cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses following relational transgressions, (b) assess whether offender remorse experiences fully or partially mediate relationships between victim responses to hurt and remorse expressions, and (c) examine relationships between remorse expressions and forgiveness.

To achieve the first goal, a series of multiple hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to examine relationships among both partners' responses following relational transgressions. First, regression analyses were conducted to determine the effects of perceived victims' responses to hurt on offenders' remorse experiences. Second, the effects of various remorse experiences on remorse expressions were analyzed. Finally, regressions were conducted to examine the impact of perceived victims' responses to hurt on offenders' remorse expressions. Because past literature has established the importance of transgression severity in understanding hurtful events (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006b; Waldron & Kelley, 2008; McCullough et al., 1997), degree of hurt/transgression severity was entered as a covariate in Step 1 of these regression models.

For the study's second goal, structural equation modeling (SEM) with maximum likelihood (ML) estimation was used to test the hypothesized relations in Figure 2. Specifically, full structural analyses were performed using Amos 18.0 (Arbuckle, 2006) to determine whether the remorse experience components fully or partially mediated the associations between perceived victim responses to hurt and offender remorse expressions. Prior to conducting the analyses, all variables were tested for multivariate normality. Because none were found to have extreme skewness or kurtosis, maximum likelihood estimation was deemed appropriate for the analyses.

The final aim of the study was to examine the relationships among offenders' expressions of remorse and perceived forgiveness. This was completed using hierarchical regression analysis with perceived forgiveness as the criterion variable and apology/concern, low status behaviors, connection, and compensation as the predictors. Hurtfulness/Transgression severity was entered as a covariate in Step 1 of the analysis.

Measurement Models

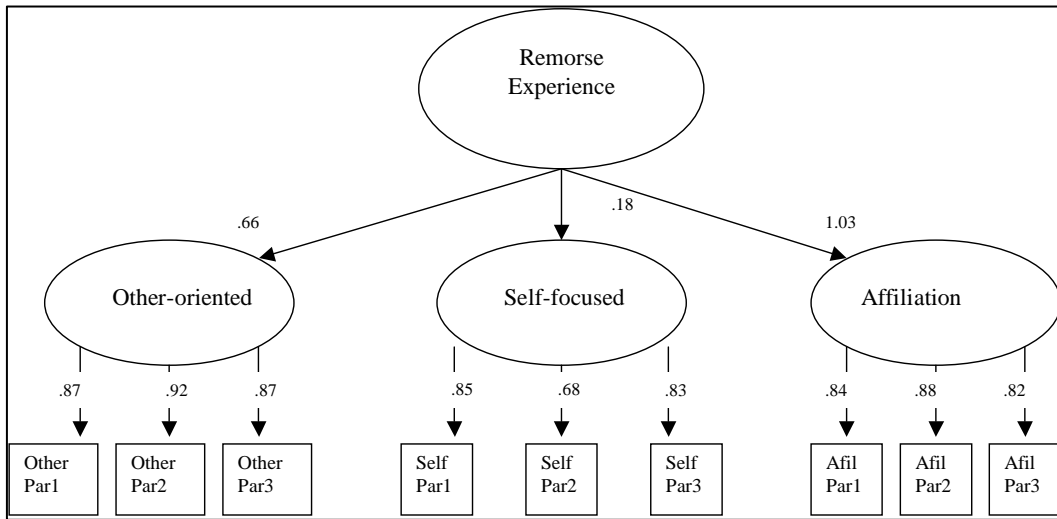
To form the indicators for the remorse experience constructs (i.e., *other-oriented*, *self-focused*, and *affiliation* experience), the three subscales were first determined to be unidimensional via separate principal components analyses, extracting only one factor per subscale. Factor loadings for items on each subscale were examined and three parcels created per construct. The three items with the highest factor loadings served as the anchors for each parcel, and the

remaining items were assigned to the parcels to equally distribute items with high and (relatively) low factor loadings (see Hall, Snell, & Foust, 1999). The

indicators of the remorse expression measure (i.e., *apology*/

Figure 3.

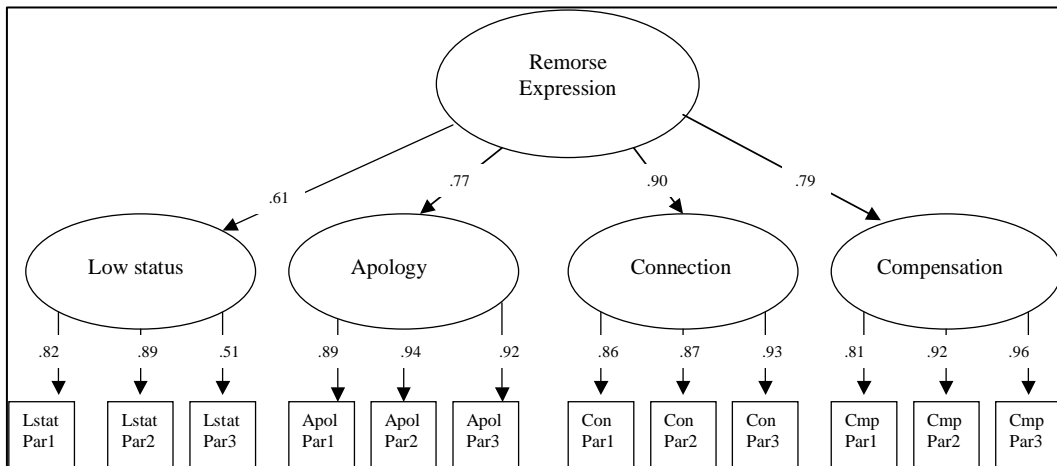
Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Remorse Experience



Note. $\chi^2(24) = 91.06$, $\chi^2/df = 3.79$, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .065, .051 - .079

Figure 4.

Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Remorse Expression



Note. $\chi^2(50) = 224.10$, $\chi^2/df = 4.48$, CFI = .974, RMSEA = .072, .063 - .080

concern, low status behaviors, connection, and compensation) were created following the methods described above. Model fit was considered acceptable upon meeting the following conditions: (a) chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio less than 5, (b) comparative fit index (CFI) greater than .95, and (c) root mean-square-error of approximation (RMSEA) less than .08 (Bentler, 1994).

Confirmatory factor analyses of the remorse experience and expression measures were conducted with SEM using Amos 18.0 (Arbuckle, 2006). The second-order model of remorse experience provided a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(24) = 91.06$, $p < .05$, $\chi^2/df = 3.79$, CFI = .99, and RMSEA = .06_{CI = .05-.08}. The second-order model of remorse expression resulted in adequate fit, $\chi^2(50) = 224.10$, $p < .05$, $\chi^2/df = 4.48$, CFI = .98, and RMSEA = .07_{CI = .06-.08}. As expected, all indicators and parcels were significantly related to their respective factors. Figures 3 and 4 display the results of the confirmatory factor analyses of offender remorse experience and expression.

Associations Between Victim and Offender Responses

Victims' responses to hurt and offenders' remorse experiences. The first set of regression models addressed RQ1 that asked how perceptions of victims' communicative responses to hurt are related to offenders' experiences of

remorse. Degree of hurt/Transgression severity was entered as a covariate in Step 1 of each model, and the four victim responses were entered in Step 2 (see Table 2). For *other-oriented experience*, the model was significant after Step 1, $F(1,580) = 145.52, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .20$, with offenders reporting greater other-oriented remorse as transgression severity increased. The model improved when the victims' responses were added in Step 2, $F(5,576) = 50.92, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .30, R^2_{\text{change}} = .11, F_{\text{change}}(4, 576) = 22.00, p < .001$. Victims' sad communication was positively related, and threatening communication negatively related, to offenders' other-oriented remorse. Victims' conciliatory communication and withdrawal were not significantly related to other-oriented remorse. Approximately 11% of the variance in offenders' other-oriented remorse experience was predicted by the set of perceived victim responses, over and above that which was predicted by transgression severity.

For *self-focused experience*, the model was also significant after Step 1, $F(1,586) = 26.32, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .04$, with offenders reporting greater self-focused remorse as transgression severity increased (see Table 2). When perceptions of victims' responses were added in Step 2, the model improved substantially, $F(5,582) = 47.16, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .28, R^2_{\text{change}} = .25, F_{\text{change}}(4, 582) = 50.17, p < .001$. Victims' conciliatory communication, withdrawal, and threatening communication associated positively with offenders' self-focused remorse; sad communication negatively predicted self-focused remorse.

Controlling for severity, the set of perceived victim responses predicted approximately 25% of the variance in self-focused remorse.

Finally, Step 1 of the model predicting *affiliation experience* was significant, $F(1,583) = 17.07, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .03$, with offenders reporting greater affiliation experience as transgression severity increased (see Table 2). Adding perceptions of victims' responses in Step 2 significantly improved the model, $F(5,579) = 18.66, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .13, R^2_{\text{change}} = .11, F_{\text{change}}(4, 576) = 18.54, p < .001$. Victims' use of conciliatory communication, sad communication, and withdrawal positively predicted offenders' affiliation remorse experience, whereas threatening communication was negatively related. Approximately 11% of the variance in affiliation remorse experience was predicted by the set of perceived victim responses, above and beyond that accounted for by transgression severity. Table 2 displays the standardized coefficients and variances accounted for by the full models.

Table 2

Predicting Offenders' Remorse Experience by Victims' Responses to Hurt, Controlling for Transgression Severity

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Predictors</i>	β	t
Other-oriented experience			
Step 1: $F(1,580) = 145.52^{***}, R = .44$	Transgression severity	.45	12.06***
Step 2: $F(5,576) = 50.92^{***}, R = .55$	Conciliatory com	-.03	-.78
$F_{\text{change}} = 22.00^{***}$	Withdrawal	-.01	-.15
	Threatening com	-.15	-3.53***
	Sad communication	.34	8.40***
Self-focused experience			
Step 1: $F(1,586) = 26.32^{***}, R = .21$	Transgression severity	.21	5.13***
Step 2: $F(5,582) = 47.16^{***}, R = .54$	Conciliatory com	.14	3.34***
$F_{\text{change}} = 50.17^{***}$	Withdrawal	.17	3.80***

	Threatening com	.41	9.90***
	Sad communication	-.11	-2.85**
Affiliation			
Step 1: $F(1,583)= 17.07^{***}$, $R= .17$	Transgression severity	.17	4.13***
Step 2: $F(5, 579)= 18.66^{***}$, $R= .38$	Conciliatory Com	.22	4.81***
$F_{\text{change}}= 18.54^{***}$	Withdrawal	.10	1.98*
	Threatening Com	-.25	-5.33***
	Sad Communication	.12	2.70**

Note. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

Remorse experience and remorse expression. The second set of regression models addressed RQ2 on how offenders' remorse experiences are associated with their expressions of remorse. Degree of hurt/transgression severity was entered as a covariate in Step 1 of each model, and the three remorse experience variables were entered in Step 2 (see Table 3). For *apology/concern*, the model was significant after Step 1, $F(1,606) = 100.51$, $p < .001$, adj. $R^2 = .14$, with offenders reporting greater use of apology/concern as transgressions increased in severity. The model improved substantially when remorse experiences were added in Step 2, $F(4,603)= 140.06$, $p < .001$, adj. $R^2 = .48$, $R^2_{\text{change}} = .34$, $F_{\text{change}}(3, 603) = 131.59$, $p < .001$. Offenders' other-oriented and affiliation remorse experience positively predicted their use of apology/concern behaviors; self-focused remorse was not significantly related. Approximately 34% of the variance in apology/concern was predicted by the set of remorse experiences, over and above that predicted by transgression severity.

For offenders' *low status behaviors*, Step 1 was significant, $F(1,613) = 26.32$, $p < .001$, adj. $R^2 = .04$, with offenders reporting greater use of low status behaviors as transgression severity increased (see Table 3). When the remorse

experiences were added in Step 2, the model improved significantly, $F(4, 610) = 49.21, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .24, R^2_{\text{change}} = .18, F_{\text{change}}(3, 610) = 47.14, p < .001$.

Offenders' self-focused and affiliation remorse experiences were positive predictors of low status behaviors, whereas other-oriented experience was not significantly related. Controlling for transgression severity, remorse experiences predicted approximately 18% of the variance in low status behaviors.

Regarding *connection*, the model was significant in Step 1, $F(1,607) = 24.92, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .04$, with offenders reporting greater use of connection behaviors as transgression severity increased (see Table 3). The model showed substantial improvement in Step 2 when the set of remorse experiences were added, $F(4,604) = 134.06, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .47, R^2_{\text{change}} = .43, F_{\text{change}}(3, 603) = 163.76, p < .001$. However, only affiliation remorse experience positively predicted offenders' use of connection behaviors. Other-oriented experience was negatively related to connection and self-focused remorse experience was unrelated. Approximately 43% of the variance in connection behaviors was predicted by remorse experience, over and above that which was accounted for by transgression severity.

Finally, step 1 of the model predicting *compensation* behaviors was significant, $F(1,611) = 22.73, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .03$, with offenders using greater compensation as transgression severity increased. Adding remorse experiences in Step 2 significantly improved the model, $F(4,608) = 58.14, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .27, R^2_{\text{change}} = .24, F_{\text{change}}(3, 608) = 67.47, p < .001$. Affiliation and self-focused

remorse were positive predictors of compensation, whereas other-oriented remorse was not significantly related to offenders' compensation behaviors. Approximately 24% of the variance in compensation behaviors was predicted by remorse experience, controlling for transgression severity. Table 3 displays the standardized coefficients and variances accounted for by the full models predicting remorse expressions by remorse experiences.

Table 3

Predicting Remorse Expression by Remorse Experience, Controlling for Transgression Severity

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Predictors</i>	β	<i>t</i>
Apology/Concern			
Step 1: $F(1,606)=100.51^{***}$, $R= .38$	Transgression severity	.38	10.03***
Step 2: $F(4,603)= 140.06^{***}$, $R=.69$	Other-oriented experience	.35	8.44***
$F_{\text{change}}= 131.59^{***}$	Self-focused experience	.05	1.76
	Affiliation	.34	8.90***
Low status communication			
Step 1: $F(1,613)= 45.23^{***}$, $R= .26$	Transgression severity	.26	6.73***
Step 2: $F(4,610)= 49.21^{***}$, $R= .49$	Other-oriented experience	-.04	-.87
$F_{\text{change}}= 47.14^{***}$	Self-focused experience	.36	9.84***
	Affiliation	.22	4.81***
Connection			
Step 1: $F(1,607)= 24.92^{***}$, $R= .19$	Transgression severity	.19	4.99***
Step 2: $F(4,604)= 134.06^{***}$, $R=.69$	Other-oriented experience	-.12	-2.91***
$F_{\text{change}}= 163.76^{***}$	Self-focused experience	.02	.72
	Affiliation	.73	19.04***
Compensation			
Step 1: $F(1,611)= 22.76^{***}$, $R= .19$	Transgression severity	.19	4.77***
Step 2: $F(4, 608)= 58.15^{***}$, $R= .53$	Other-oriented experience	-.05	-1.05
$F_{\text{change}}= 67.47^{***}$	Self-focused experience	.23	6.47***
	Affiliation	.45	10.02***

Note. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

Victims' responses to hurt and offenders' remorse. The next set of regression models examined RQ3 on how perceptions of victims' responses to hurt relate to offenders' remorse expressions. Remorse experience was entered as a covariate in Step 1 of each model, and the four victim responses were entered in Step 2. Table 4 lists the standardized coefficients and variances accounted for by the full models predicting remorse expressions by victims' responses. For *apology/concern*, the model was significant after Step 1, $F(1,568) = 335.08, p < .001$, adj. $R^2 = .37$, with offenders reporting greater use of apology/concern as remorse experience increased. The model improved when the set of perceived victim responses were added in Step 2, $F(5,564) = 79.82, p < .001$, adj. $R^2 = .41$, $R^2_{\text{change}} = .04$, $F_{\text{change}}(4, 564) = 10.44, p < .001$. Victims' sad communication positively predicted offenders' use apology/concern behaviors; victims' conciliatory communication, withdrawal, and threatening communication were not significantly related to apology/concern. Approximately 4% of the variance in apology/concern was predicted by perceptions of victim communication, over and above that predicted by remorse experience.

For offenders' *low status behaviors*, Step 1 was significant, $F(1,571) = 126.05, p < .001$, adj. $R^2 = .18$, with offenders reporting greater use of low status behaviors as their remorse experience increased (see Table 4). When the set of perceived victim responses were added in Step 2, the model improved, $F(5,567) = 35.40, p < .001$, adj. $R^2 = .23$, $R^2_{\text{change}} = .06$, $F_{\text{change}}(4,567) = 10.61, p < .001$.

Victims' threatening, conciliatory, and sad communication positively predicted offenders' low status behaviors, whereas withdrawal was not significantly related to low status. Controlling for remorse experience, perceptions of victim responses predicted approximately 6% of the variance in low status behaviors.

Regarding *connection*, the model was significant in Step 1, $F(1,566) = 258.72, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .31$, with offenders reporting greater use of connection behaviors as remorse experience increased (see Table 4). The model showed improvement in Step 2 when the set of perceived victim responses were added, $F(5, 582) = 73.99, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .39, R^2_{\text{change}} = .08, F_{\text{change}}(4,562) = 19.40, p < .001$. Victims' conciliatory and sad communication were positively related to connection behaviors. Withdrawal and threatening behaviors were not significantly related to connection. Approximately 8% of the variance in offenders' connection behavior was predicted by perceptions of victims' responses, over and above that accounted for by remorse experience.

Finally, step 1 of the model predicting *compensation* behaviors was significant, $F(1,570) = 193.33, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .25$, with offenders using greater compensation as their experience of remorse increased. Adding perceived victim responses in Step 2 significantly improved the model, $F(5,566) = 46.73, p < .001, \text{adj. } R^2 = .29, R^2_{\text{change}} = .04, F_{\text{change}}(4, 566) = 7.78, p < .001$. Victims' threatening communication and conciliatory communication were positive predictors of offenders' compensation behaviors; withdrawal and sad communication were not significantly related to compensation. Approximately 4% of the variance in

compensation behaviors was predicted by perceptions of victim communication, controlling for remorse experience. Table 4 displays the standardized coefficients and variances accounted for by the full models predicting remorse expressions by perceived victims' communicative responses to hurt.

Table 4

Predicting Offenders' Remorse Expression by Victims' Responses to Hurt, Controlling for Remorse Experience

<i>Criterion Variables</i>	<i>Predictors</i>	β	<i>t</i>
Apology/concern			
Step 1: $F(1,568)= 335.08^{***}, R= .61$	Remorse experience	.61	18.31***
Step 2: $F(5,564)= 79.82^{***}, R= .64$	Conciliatory communication	.00	.10
$F_{\text{change}}= 10.44^{***}$	Withdrawal	-.04	-.93
	Threatening communication	-.03	-.68
	Sad communication	.21	5.82***
Low status communication			
Step 1: $F(1,571)= 126.05^{***}, R= .43$	Remorse experience	.43	11.23***
Step 2: $F(5,567)= 35.40^{***}, R= .49$	Conciliatory communication	.11	2.52*
$F_{\text{change}}= 10.61^{***}$	Withdrawal	.08	1.70
	Threatening communication	.16	3.57***
	Sad communication	.10	2.51*
Connection			
Step 1: $F(1,566)= 258.72^{***}, R= .56$	Remorse experience	.56	16.09***
Step 2: $F(5, 582)= 73.99^{***}, R= .63$	Conciliatory communication	.20	5.11***
$F_{\text{change}}= 19.40^{***}$	Withdrawal	-.07	-1.70
	Threatening communication	-.02	-.44
	Sad communication	.10	2.75***

Compensation			
Step 1: $F(1,570)= 193.33^{***}, R= .50$	Remorse experience	.50	13.90***
Step 2: $F(5, 566)= 46.73^{***}, R= .54$ $F_{\text{change}}= 7.78^{***}$	Conciliatory communication	.16	3.82***
	Withdrawal	.00	-.16
	Threatening communication	.09	2.24*
	Sad communication	.06	1.52

Note. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

Mediation Analyses

To determine whether remorse experiences (*other-oriented experience*, *self-focused experience*, and *affiliation*) mediated the associations between perceptions of victims' responses to hurt and offenders' remorse expressions (see Figure 1), a series of steps recommended by Holmbeck (1997) for testing for mediation using SEM were followed. To examine the relationships between an independent latent variable (A), the predicted latent mediator (B), and the dependent latent variable (C), first, the fit of the direct effect model of A→C must be assessed. If the A→C model demonstrates acceptable fit, the second step is to assess the fit of the A→B→C model. This model should also have adequate fit and all paths should be significant in the predicted directions. If these requirements are met, a model with paths from the independent variable (A) to the mediator (B), the mediator (B) to the dependent variable (C), and the independent variable (A) to the dependent variable (C) (see Figure 1 for an example) should be constructed. Holmbeck recommends that this model be compared under two conditions: (a) with the path from the independent to the dependent variable constrained to zero (i.e., the "constrained model"), and (b) with all paths unconstrained (the "unconstrained model"). Evidence of significant (or full)

mediation exists when the addition of the path between the independent and dependent variable in the unconstrained model does not significantly improve fit. The difference between the constrained and unconstrained models can be tested using the chi-square difference test (Kline, 2005). Other scholars have noted that evidence for partial mediation occurs when the direct effect adds significantly to the model but shows a reduction after the mediating variable is added (e.g., Ledermann & Macho, 2009).

Thus, for this dissertation, full mediation was defined in terms of Holmbeck's (1997) criterion that the unconstrained and constrained models are not significantly different. Partial mediation, on the other hand, was defined as occurring when both models provided a good fit but the unconstrained model represented an improvement over the constrained model even though there was a reduction in the association between the independent and dependent variable after the mediating variable was added. Of course, all of the preliminary criteria described above must also be met for there to be evidence for any level of mediation. Separate models were analyzed for each remorse expression behavior (i.e., *apology/concern, low status behaviors, connection, and compensation*).

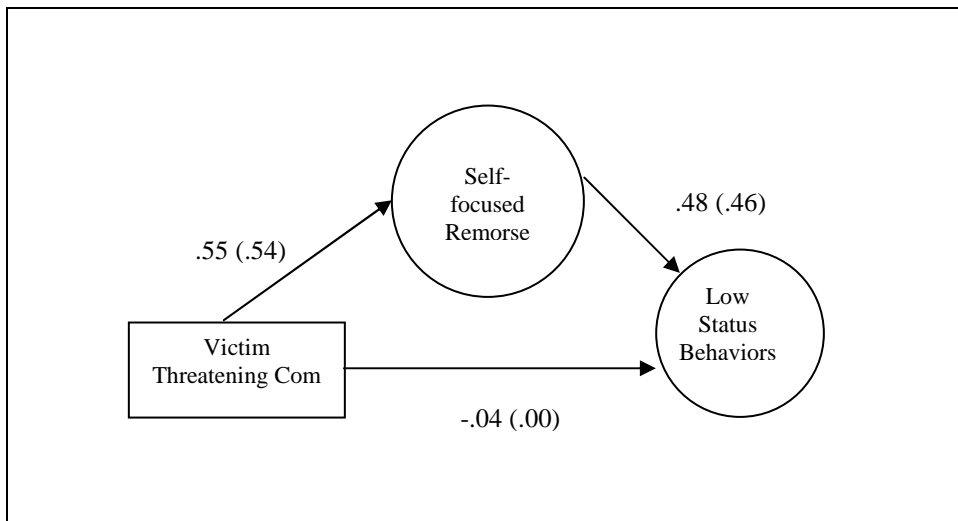
Victim threatening communication and offender low status.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that self-focused remorse experience would mediate the association between perceptions of victims' threatening responses and offenders' low status behaviors. The constrained model (see Figure 5) demonstrated acceptable goodness of fit, $\chi^2(13) = 63.68, p < .05, \chi^2/df = 4.89, CFI = .97,$

RMSEA = .06_{CI = .058-.081}. The unconstrained model provided a similar fit, $\chi^2(12) = 63.06$, $p < .05$, $\chi^2/df = 5.26$, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .08_{CI = .06-.10}, and did not differ significantly from the constrained model, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = .62$, $p > .05$, thereby supporting the hypothesis that self-focused remorse experience mediates the relationship between perceptions of victims' threatening communication and offenders' low status behaviors. Moreover, the zero order correlation between perceived victim threatening communication and offender low status behavior was reduced from .23 to -.04 (ns) when self-focused remorse was added to the model. This implies that the relationship between perceived victim threatening communication and offender low status behavior is completely mediated by self-focused remorse experience. The standardized indirect effect for perceived victim threatening communication on offender low status behavior was estimated at .25.

Figure 5

Results of Mediation Analysis of Victims' Threatening Communication and Offenders' Low Status Behaviors



Note: All parameter estimates are standardized. The values in parentheses represent estimates of the full mediation model (with the direct effects between victim and offender communication constrained to zero).

Victim withdrawal and offender compensation behaviors.

The second hypothesis predicted that self-focused remorse experience mediates the relationship between perceptions of victims' withdrawal and offenders' compensation behaviors. However, preliminary analyses showed that the association between victim withdrawal and compensation behaviors was not significant (see Table 1). Thus, since one of the requirements for mediation was not met, H2 was not supported.

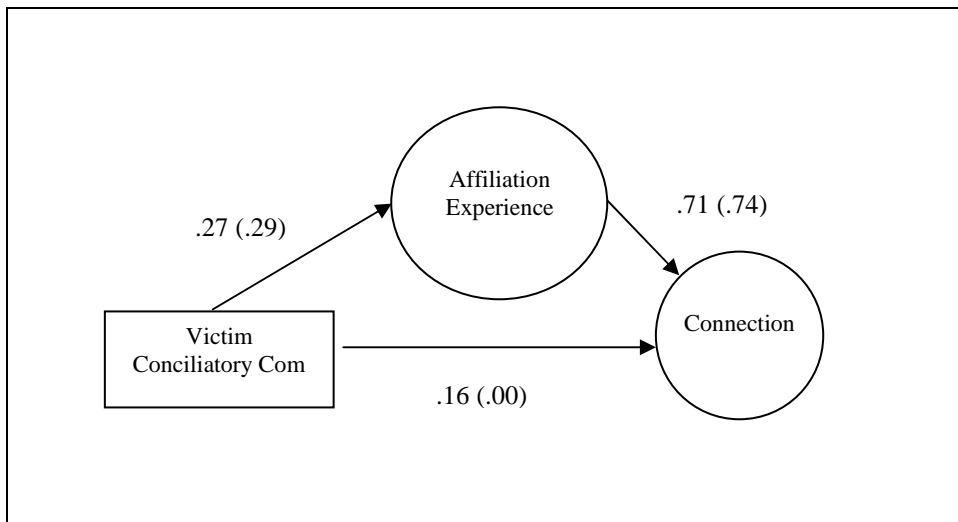
Victim conciliatory communication and offenders' connection

behaviors. The next hypothesis predicted that affiliation remorse experience would mediate the association between perceptions of victims' conciliatory communication and offenders' use of connection behaviors. The constrained model was a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(13) = 64.11, p < .05, \chi^2/df = 4.93, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .07_{CI=.06-.09}$. However, the unconstrained model was an even better fit, $\chi^2(12) = 35.12, p < .05, \chi^2/df = 2.93, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .05_{CI=.03-.07}$, as the chi-square difference test confirmed, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 28.99, p < .05$. In the unconstrained model, the pathway between victim's conciliatory communication and connection dropped to .16 compared to their zero order correlation of .35. Taken together, these results suggest that although controlling for the affiliation experience reduced the association between perceived victim conciliatory communication and connection, it did not fully mediate it. Instead, the evidence suggests partial

mediation. The standardized indirect effect for the partial mediation model of perceived victims' conciliatory communication on offenders' connection behaviors was .19 (see Figure 6 for the standardized parameter estimates).

Figure 6.

Results of Mediation Analysis of Victims' Conciliatory Communication and Offenders' Connection Behaviors



Note: All parameter estimates are standardized. The values in parentheses represent estimates of the full mediation model (with the direct effects between victim and offender communication constrained to zero).

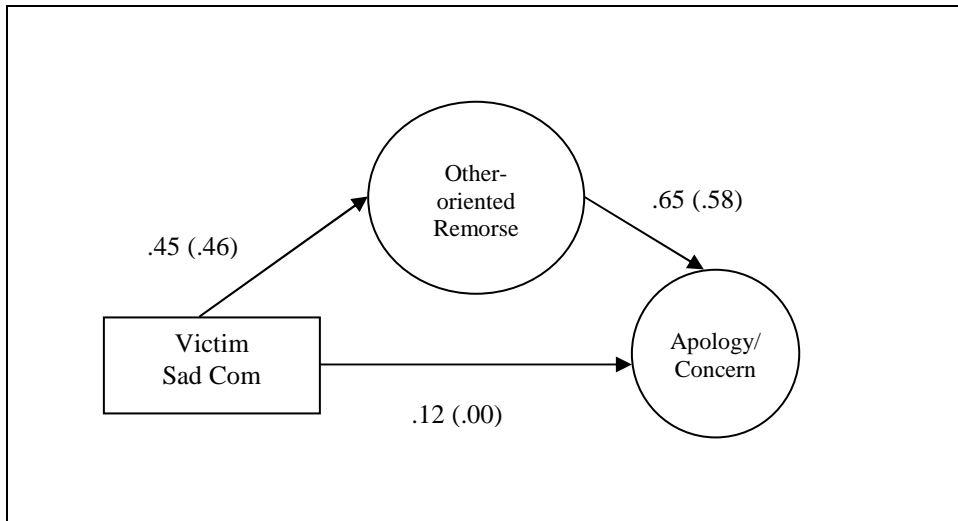
Victim sad communication and offender apology/concern.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that other-oriented remorse experience mediated the association between perceptions of victims' sad communication and offenders' apology/ concern behaviors. The constrained model provided a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(13) = 63.40, p < .05, \chi^2/df = 4.87, CFI = .99,$ and $RMSEA = .07_{CI = .06-.09},$ as did the unconstrained model, $\chi^2(12) = 51.33, p < .05, \chi^2/df = 4.28, CFI = .99,$ and $RMSEA = .07_{CI = .05-.08}.$ In comparing the two models, the results of the chi-square difference test suggested a statistically significant improvement in fit when

the direct path between perceived victim sad communication and offender apology/concern was freed, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 12.09, p < .05$. This path dropped from .38 (the zero order correlation) to .12 (in the unconstrained model), however, since including this path improved the model, other-oriented remorse did not fully mediate the relationship between perceived victim sad communication and apology/concern; instead the evidence is consistent with partial mediation. The standardized estimate for the indirect effect of perceptions of victim sad communication on offender apology/concern was .26. Figure 7 displays the results for the model of other-oriented remorse as a partial mediator of victim sad communication and offender apology/concern.

Figure 7.

Results of Mediation Analysis of Victims' Sad Communication and Offenders' Apology/concern Behaviors



Note: All parameter estimates are standardized. The values in parentheses represent estimates of the full mediation model (with the direct effects between victim and offender communication constrained to zero).

Remorse Expressions and Forgiveness

The final goal of the study was to examine the relationships between expressions of remorse and forgiveness in close relationships. Research question 4 asked how the four remorse expressions (*apology/concern, low status behaviors, connection, and compensation*) associate with perceptions of forgiveness in close relationships. This question was tested using a hierarchical regression analyses. Degree of hurtfulness/transgression severity was entered as a covariate in Step 1, with the four types of remorse expression entered in Step 2. The model was not statistically significant in Step 1, $F(1, 594) = .34, R = .02, p > .05$. However, when the four components of remorse expression were entered, the regression model improved significantly, $F(5, 590) = 17.43, p < .001, R = .36, R^2 = .13, \text{adj. } R^2 = .12; F_{\text{change}} = 21.69, p < .001$. Relationships with forgiveness varied across remorse expression behaviors. Apology/concern and connection

behaviors were positively related to perceptions of forgiveness. Low status behaviors associated negatively with forgiveness, whereas compensation was not significantly related to offenders' perceptions of forgiveness (see Table 5).

Table 5

Predicting Forgiveness by Offenders' Expressions of Remorse, Controlling for Transgression Severity

Predictors	B	SEB	β	<i>t</i>
Step 1				
Transgression severity	.04	.07	.02	.58
Step 2				
Apology/concern	.17	.07	.13	2.38*
Low status communication	-.22	.05	-.20	-4.08***
Connection	.26	.06	.27	4.45***
Compensation	.10	.06	.09	1.62

Note. Step 1: $F(1, 594) = .34, R = .02$. Step 2: $F(5, 590) = 17.43***, R = .36, R^2 = .13$, adj. $R^2 = .12; F_{\text{change}} = 21.69***$. *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. One-tailed.

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION

Both partners' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors have considerable effects on forgiveness following transgressions in close relationships. More specifically, victims' responses to hurt relate to offenders' experiences and expressions of remorse in ways that can either facilitate or impede the forgiveness process. The current study sought to examine the relationships among both partners' responses following transgressions and test whether remorse experiences mediate associations between victim responses to hurt and offender remorse expressions. Additionally, this study investigated the impact of remorse expressions on forgiveness and explored the theoretical framework underlying remorse experience and expression.

In this dissertation, hurtful events in close relationships were examined from the offender's perspective. Participants completed questions about a time when they hurt a close other and provided information about their partner's communication, their own experiences and expressions of remorse, and their perceptions of forgiveness. Results provide evidence of associations among victim and offender responses following hurtful events, and suggest how the victim's communication associates with offender's experience and expression of remorse. Findings also indicate that offender remorse expressions significantly predict interpersonal forgiveness. Finally, the results of this study further demonstrate the utility of a functional approach to studying emotion.

Summary of Findings

A primary goal of the study was to determine how victims' communication relates to offenders' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors following hurtful events. Overall, results indicate that perceptions of victim responses do relate to whether and how offenders experience remorse in close relationships. Past research suggests that remorse experience is comprised of three factors reflecting offenders' other-oriented, self-focused, and relational (affiliation) concerns (Gracyalny & Mongeau, 2010). When victims were perceived as communicating hurt with sadness (e.g., crying or looking sad), offenders were most likely to experience the altruistic, other-oriented component of remorse. Sad communication also associated positively with offenders' affiliation remorse experience (e.g., valuing the relationship, desiring emotional closeness) and negatively with self-focused experience. Thus, when victims were perceived as sad and distressed following a hurtful event, offenders were more likely to be concerned about the victims' well being and the relationship than their own self-interests. In contrast, offenders were most likely to experience the self-focused component of remorse (i.e., personal distress, concern for self harm) and were less concerned about the victim or the relationship when victims were perceived as reacting with threatening communication (e.g., yelling or cursing, making hurtful or mean comments). Victims' perceived use of conciliatory communication (e.g., trying to fix the relationship, talking about feelings in a non-threatening manner)

associated with offenders' relational concerns (and, to a lesser extent, self-interests). Finally, when victims were perceived as withdrawing from the relationship (e.g., not returning calls, ignoring the offender), offenders experienced both self-focused and affiliation components of remorse.

Given the results, it is interesting to note that no victim response positively predicted both self and other-oriented concern in offenders. Perhaps, as Batson (1990) suggested, people are capable of experiencing other-oriented emotion so long as there is no overriding threat to self. Therefore, although angry/threatening victims may indeed be hurting, offenders may be unlikely to feel empathy or be concerned about their welfare because of more pressing self-focused concerns. This has important implications for how remorse is conceptualized and will be discussed further in the next section.

Results also indicate that how an offender experiences remorse is related to his/her remorse expression. When offenders experienced other-oriented remorse, they were most likely to express those feelings with an apology/concession and empathic concern (e.g., looking concerned for the victim, telling the victim how terrible s/he feels for the victim's pain). Other-oriented remorse was negatively related, however, to offenders' use of connection behaviors (e.g., trying to touch or hug the victim, saying "I love you"), and unrelated to low status behaviors or appeasement/compensation. In contrast, self-focused remorse experience positively predicted offenders' use of low status and appeasement/compensation behaviors and was not significantly related to

apology/concern or connection behaviors. Last, when offenders experienced the affiliation component of remorse, they were most likely to express their feelings through connection behaviors. Affiliation experience also positively predicted offenders' apology/concern, appeasement/compensation, and low status behaviors.

There were also significant associations between victims' and offenders' behaviors following hurtful events. Controlling for offenders' remorse experiences, perceptions of victims' sad communication positively predicted offenders' use of apology/concern, connection, and low status behaviors, but was unrelated to appeasement/compensation. On the other hand, when victims were perceived as reacting with threatening communication, offenders were most likely to report low status behaviors and appeasement/compensation. Perceptions of threatening communication were not significantly related to the other expression behaviors. When victims were perceived as using conciliatory behavior in response to hurt, offenders reported greater connection, low status, and appeasement/compensation behaviors. Conciliatory behavior was unrelated, however, to offenders' apology/concern. Finally, perceptions of victims' withdrawal from the relationship were not significantly related to any of the remorse expression behaviors.

Another goal of the current research was to test whether the remorse experience components mediated the relationships between perceptions of victims' responses to hurt and offenders' expression of remorse. The first

hypothesis predicted that offenders' self-focused remorse mediates the relationship between perceived victim threatening communication and offenders' use of low status behaviors. The data support this hypothesis. When victims responded to hurt with destructive, angry communication, offenders perceived a threat to their own well being (e.g., punishment/ revenge, damage to social status). In line with Batson's (1990) argument, offenders were more likely to experience self-focused versus altruistic concern as the threat of negative personal consequences increased. Moreover, offenders' self-focused remorse directly related to their low status behaviors (e.g., self-degradation, trembling hands or body, shaking voice). The relationship between perceived victim threatening communication and offender low status behaviors was fully mediated by self-focused remorse. Consistent with an evolutionary approach (Cosmides & Tooby, 2000), this suggests that self-concern is the underlying mechanism that explains why victims' threatening communication results in offenders' low status remorseful behaviors. It is possible that low status behaviors function to protect offenders when they appraise victims' behavior as threatening.

The second hypothesis predicted that offenders' self-focused remorse also mediates the association between victims' withdrawal from the relationship and offenders' use of appeasement/compensation behavior. This hypothesis was not supported by the data. Results indicate no significant association between victims' withdrawal and offenders' use of appeasement/compensation, therefore, there was no relationship to mediate. A possible explanation for the lack of

association between victims' withdrawal and any of the remorse expression behaviors is that offenders may not be able to express remorse when victims withdraw. Thus, although victims' withdrawal associates positively with offenders' self-focused remorse experience, offenders are unable to interact with victims to compensate for their hurtful behavior.

Hypothesis three predicted that offenders' affiliation remorse mediates the relationship between victims' conciliatory communication and offenders' connection behaviors. Rather than complete mediation, the data are consistent with a partially mediated effect. The results indicate that the affiliation component of remorse experience partially mediated the relationship between victims' conciliatory communication and offenders' connection behaviors, yet at the same time, such behaviors from the victim *directly* increased offenders' use of connection. In other words, when victims used conciliatory behaviors in response to hurt, offenders' concern for the relationship was activated, which led them to express affection and closeness. At the same time, however, perceptions of victims' conciliatory communication also directly enhanced offenders' expressions of connection. This suggests that although concern for the relationship partially explains why offenders express connection in response to victims' conciliatory communication, it does not wholly account for the association. It is possible, for example, that social norms would also influence an offender to reciprocate conciliatory behavior from the victim (e.g., when the

victim expresses his/her love and commitment to the offender, the offender might respond with “I love you too”).

The next hypothesis (H4) proposed that offenders’ other-oriented remorse mediates the relationship between perceptions of victims’ sad communication and offenders’ apology/concern behaviors. Again, the data support a partial mediation effect. Results revealed that victims’ sad communication did indeed elicit offenders’ other-oriented remorse experience, which led offenders to express apology/concern. However, sad communication from the victim also directly increased offenders’ use of apology/concern behaviors, which implies that offenders’ altruistic concerns only partially account for the relationship between victims’ sad communication and offenders’ apology/concern behaviors. There are other possible reasons, though, why an offender might apologize and express concern for a sad victim, even when he/she does not fully accept responsibility for the offense and/or feel empathy. Perhaps self-presentation concerns would cause an offender to apologize, as society would likely view an unapologetic offender in a negative light (see Goffman, 1967). Other research suggests that some offenders feel that an apology and expression of concern is the quickest resolution to a transgression, whether they are truly sorry or not (e.g., Zechmeister, Garcia, Romero, & Vas, 2004). Finally, an offender might apologize and express concern for his/her partner even when he/she does not feel responsible for the offense in an attempt to make the hurt partner feel better and prevent further relational damage.

The final research question asked how offenders' remorse expression behaviors relate to perceptions of forgiveness in close relationships. The results suggest that remorse expression behaviors vary in their associations with forgiveness. The more offenders used apology/concern and connection behaviors to express remorse, the more they perceived forgiveness from their partners. However, low status expression associated with lower levels of perceived forgiveness. Moreover, offenders' perceptions of forgiveness were not significantly related to their use of appeasement/compensation behaviors.

Theoretical Implications

The results of this study have clear theoretical implications, both for the model presented in Figure 1 and social functional theory. As predicted, offenders experience different components of remorse depending on how victims respond to hurt. Perceptions of victims' sadness, for example, elicited offenders' other-oriented concerns, whereas victims' withdrawal and threats produced concerns for the self. Thus, consistent with evolutionary theory (Cosmides & Tooby, 2000), offenders appear to experience the particular component of remorse that will best help them respond to a specific eliciting situation in the social environment. An angry, threatening victim presents a fundamentally different challenge than one who reacts with sadness. Although the angry victim is most likely viewed as an immediate threat (which would privilege self-interest), a sad victim may be perceived as vulnerable and needy (a necessary condition of empathic concern, see Lishner et al., 2011). The results of the current study suggest that whether the

offender focuses on the self, partner, or relationship is influenced, in part, by how the hurt partner communicates after the event and the offender's appraisal of the situation.

These results are meaningful, given that these distinct cognitive/affective experiences have strong motivational and behavioral consequences (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987; Lishner et al., 2011). In situations where one is faced with a suffering victim, self-focused distress generally predicts avoidance behavior (if it is easy to escape contact with the victim), or behaviors aimed at reducing the victims' aversive communication in order to relieve one's own discomfort. On the other hand, other-oriented emotion predicts prosocial behavior designed to alleviate the victim's suffering or need, even if it is relatively easy to avoid contact with the victim (Batson, 1990; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). Although self-focused emotion may be functional at the individual level, other-oriented emotion seems to be more effective at enhancing the long-term relational bonds necessary for survival.

Accordingly, the results indicate that the components of remorse experience associate with specific expression behaviors. In line with previous research on self-focused versus other-oriented emotion (e.g., Batson, 1990; Eisenberg et al., 1989; Tangney, 1991), the analyses show that a concern for the self motivates qualitatively different behaviors than altruistic concerns. For example, offenders' other-oriented remorse experience predicted apologizing to the victim and showing concern for his/her well being, whereas self-concern

motivated low status and appeasement/compensation behaviors. Apologizing to the victim and expressing concern for his/her welfare could be considered prosocial behaviors, of which the ultimate goal is to make the other person feel better. In fact, as Lazare (2004) argues, the act of apologizing typically causes the offender pain (by admitting his/her shortcomings) in order to alleviate the victim's suffering. In contrast, low status and appeasement/compensation could be behaviors for which relieving one's *own* suffering is the ultimate goal, and alleviating the other's suffering is an instrumental goal that helps one achieve the ultimate goal (i.e., an egoistic or self-focused goal). For example, if a cheating partner treats his/her spouse extra nicely after an affair to avoid being thrown out of the house, the ultimate goal is to secure his/her living arrangements. The instrumental goal is to help the hurt partner feel better (which should help the cheating spouse achieve the ultimate goal of staying in the house). However, this behavior represents self-focused concern because helping the hurt partner is just a means to protect valuable resources or avoid revenge, rather than the ultimate goal itself. The results of the present study suggest that offenders use appeasement/compensation in ways that more likely reflect egoistic concerns than altruism. Finally, the present study also found that an offenders' concern about his/her relationship predicted pro-relational behaviors. Specifically, relational concern resulted in the use of connection behaviors, which communicate a high degree of affection and relational involvement (Burgoon, Buller, Hale, & de

Turck, 1984). The ultimate goal of these behaviors may be to repair or maintain close relational ties.

Finally, results of the current study suggest that victims' responses to hurt do relate to offenders' experiences and expressions of remorse in ways that predict perceptions of forgiveness. These patterns relating victim communication to forgiveness are in accordance with previous research (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006b; Fincham & Beach, 2000), which found that victims' negative affect expression (e.g., crying or looking sad) and integrative communication were positively related to forgiveness, whereas destructive communication associated negatively with forgiveness. Results of the present study suggest that this occurs, in part, because different responses from victims elicit distinct remorse experiences in offenders, which result in differing types of remorse expression behaviors. It is also likely that different types of victim responses reflect the many motivations of victims (e.g., revenge, estrangement, reconciliation). From a social functional perspective, these responses should evoke complementary reactions from offenders that help repair/maintain long-term relational bonds (Keltner et al., 2006). For example, when victims react to hurt with sad communication, offenders should respond with the complementary behavior (e.g., apology/empathic concern) that has the best relational outcome in that situation. However, the present results suggest that some of these remorse behaviors (i.e., apology/concern, connection) relate more strongly than others (i.e., low status

behaviors, appeasement/compensation) to positive relational outcomes (i.e., perceptions of forgiveness).

Furthermore, the present results also suggest that even though self-focused experience might be a functional response to threat at the individual level, it is not terribly effective in producing forgiveness in close relationships. It is possible, however, that low status behaviors may prevent retaliation/vengeance (one of the necessary components of forgiveness), but do not evoke the prosocial motivation in victims that is equally important in the forgiveness process (McCullough et al., 1997; 1998). Therefore, while such behaviors may be functional for offenders in terms of preventing retaliation, they might not generate forgiveness as it is defined in the current study. Alternatively, because low status behaviors were significantly related to perceptions of victims' threatening behaviors, victims' revenge/estrangement motivations seem to be reflected in their initial responses to offenders. That is, when victims are initially perceived as having conciliatory motivations, offenders may already be well on their way toward forgiveness. However, when victims respond with threats and destructive communication, offenders may have a greater distance to overcome before forgiveness is possible (Fincham & Beach, 2002).

Regarding appeasement/compensation, because these behaviors were motivated by both self and relational concerns, perhaps some forms of compensation are more effective than others at influencing victims' prosocial motivations. In circumstances where victims are aware that the compensation

behavior is an instrumental task aimed at an ultimately self-serving goal, compensation may be less likely to result in forgiveness. On the other hand, if the compensation convinces the victim that the offender still has the potential to be a valuable relational partner, it may be more effective in facilitating forgiveness and/or repairing the relationship. Further, if the compensation is paired with another remorse expression behavior (i.e., one that reflects other-oriented concern), it might be more likely interpreted as an altruistic act versus one that is primarily self-serving. Darby and Schlenker's (1982) study, for example, found that effective apologies combined elements of other-oriented behaviors (i.e., admitting fault and harm to other) with an offer of compensation.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

There were a number of limitations that may restrict the generalizeability of the findings. First, although this study examines the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of both partners in a relationship, data was collected from the offender's perspective. It is possible (and perhaps likely) that offenders' perceptions of victims' thoughts and feelings are not as accurate as the victims' own reports. Ideally, a study of this nature would use dyadic data to investigate these relationships. However, it might prove difficult to collect dyadic data from partners who have experienced a severe transgression and are no longer in a relationship. Future research should attempt to collect data from both partners' perspectives, if possible.

Next, this study uses a cross-sectional design, though growing evidence and the model presented in Figure 1 suggest that forgiveness is best understood as an ongoing interpersonal process rather than a one-time event (McCullough et al, 1997, 1998; Waldron & Kelley, 2008). Thus, a single data collection likely does not capture the complexity of the forgiveness process. Moreover, it is quite possible that victims and offenders engage in several interactions as forgiveness unfolds. For example, a victim may first respond with sadness, which evokes the offender's other-oriented remorse, leading him/her to apologize and express concern. The offender's apology/concern could then cause the victim to react (immediately or at some later point) with conciliatory communication, which might elicit affiliation remorse experience in the offender. Affiliation remorse associates positively with the offender's use of connection behaviors, which relate positively to forgiveness. Each of these steps might occur over time, such that the forgiveness process may take some time to unfold. Future studies should investigate these relationships using longitudinal data in order to more fully understand the nature of the forgiveness process.

Another limitation of the present study is that it uses retrospective recall data. The questionnaire did not limit when the hurtful event took place, and the transgressions occurred an average of two years prior to data collection. This could have negatively affected the accuracy of participants' memory, and consequently, the validity of the results. On the other hand, the length of time between transgressions and data collection might also have been sufficient to

allow the forgiveness process to completely unfold. Restricting the time between transgression and data collection might improve the accuracy of participants' recall, but it could also limit the extent to which the forgiveness process is captured in the data.

Additionally, the present study investigates the role of remorse in forgiveness in close relationships. It is likely that remorse functions differently in other contexts, such as in organizations or in legal contexts where the relational concerns might be attenuated, but self-concerns enhanced. Further, the present sample consisted of college-aged participants, 75% of whom were women. Using a social functional perspective, one would not expect age to have a significant impact on emotional experience and expression, but perhaps there are sex differences in the experience and expression of remorse that are not currently reflected in the data.

Finally, the present study examines the experience and expression of remorse using a functional approach. This theoretical lens helps to explain the components of remorse experience and predicts when offenders might most likely feel concern for the self, partner, or relationship. Throughout this research, however, the role of empathy in remorse has remained unclear. Does empathy *facilitate* remorse experience or is it an integral part of remorse? Are there differences in trait and state empathy with respect to remorse? Certainly, it seems as if one could experience the self-focused component of remorse without empathy (trait or state), but how does empathy impact the affiliation (relational)

component of remorse? Moreover, do victims and society view self-focused remorse as sincerely “remorseful”? Given its negative relationship with perceptions of forgiveness, it is possible that victims do not view self-focused remorse as true remorse. Because the present data was collected from the offender’s perspective, future research should also investigate how others interpret self-focused remorse. This could help explain why some remorse expression behaviors are perceived as insincere whereas others are interpreted as being “truly sorry” (Zechmeister et al., 2004).

Conclusion

The results of the present study indicate that remorse is indeed a complex emotion that serves a number of functions for offenders. It appears to be affected by how victims respond to hurt, and motivates a variety of behaviors – some self-serving, others which are clearly altruistic. Furthermore, remorse seems to have varying effects on interpersonal forgiveness, depending on whether the experience involves primarily self versus other-oriented or relational concerns. This places offenders in extremely complicated situations. When responding to a threatening victim, how can one best attend to one’s own concerns while simultaneously communicating care for the victim and the relationship? Admittedly, it is a difficult question for which future research will hopefully provide more conclusive answers.

References

- Arbuckle, J. L. (2006). Amos (Version 7.0) [Computer Program]. Chicago: SPSS.
- Aune, R. K., Metts, S., & Hubbard, A. S. (1998). Managing the outcomes of discovered deception. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 138*, 677-689.
- Bachman, G. F., & Guerrero, L. K. (2006a). Forgiveness, apology, and communicative responses to hurtful events. *Communication Reports, 19*, 45-56.
- Bachman, G. F., & Guerrero, L. K. (2006b). Relational quality and communicative responses following hurtful events in dating relationships: An expectancy violations analysis. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 23*, 943-963.
- Barkow, J. H., Cosmides, L., & Tooby, J. (Eds.) (1992). *The adapted mind: Evolutionary psychology and the generation of culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Batson, C. D. (1990). How social an animal? The human capacity for caring. *American Psychologist, 45*, 336-346.
- Baumeister, R. F., Stillwell, A. M., & Heatherton, T. F. (1994). Guilt: An interpersonal approach. *Psychological Bulletin, 115*, 243-267.
- Boon, S. D., & Sulsky, L. M. (1997). Attributions of blame and forgiveness in romantic relationships: A policy-capturing study. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality, 12*, 19-44.
- Burgoon, J. K., Buller, D. B., Hale, J. L., & de Turck, M. A. (1984). Relational messages associated with nonverbal behaviors. *Human Communication Research, 10*, 351-378.
- Buss, D. M. (1995). Evolutionary psychology: A new paradigm for psychological science. *Psychological Inquiry, 6*, 1-49.
- Cosmides, L., & Tooby, J. (2000). Evolutionary psychology and the emotions. In M. Lewis & J. M. Haviland-Jones (Eds.), *Handbook of Emotions* (2nd ed.) (pp. 91-116). New York: Guilford.
- Daly, M. & Wilson, M. (1988). Evolutionary social psychology and family homicide. *Science, 242*, 519-524

- Darby, B. W., & Schlenker, B. R. (1982). Children's reactions to apologies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 4, 742-753.
- D'Augelli, J. F., & Cross, H. J. (1975). Relationship of sex guilt and moral reasoning to premarital sex in college women and in couples. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 43, 40-47.
- de Waal, F. B. M., & Ren, R. (1986). Comparison of the reconciliation behavior of stump-tail and rhesus macaques. *Ethology*, 78, 129-142.
- de Waal, F. B. M., & Pokorny, J. J. (2005). Primate conflict and its relation to human forgiveness. In E.L. Worthington (Ed.), *Handbook of forgiveness* (pp. 17-32). New York: Routledge.
- Driver, J. L., & Gottman, J. M. (2004). Daily marital interactions and positive affect among newlywed couples. *Family processes*, 43, 301-314.
- Eisenberg, N., Fabes, R. A., Miller, P. A., Fultz, J., Shell, R., Mathy, R. M., & Reno, R. R. (1989). Relation of sympathy and personal distress to prosocial behavior: A multimethod study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 55-66.
- Eisenberg, N., & Miller, P. A. (1987). The relation of empathy to prosocial and related behaviors. *Psychological Bulletin*, 101, 91-119.
- Feeney, J. A. (2004). Hurt feelings in couple relationships: Toward conciliatory models of the negative effects of hurtful events. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 21, 487-508.
- Fehr, R., Gelfand, M., & Nag, M. (2010). The road to forgiveness: A meta-analytic synthesis of its situational and dispositional correlates. *Psychological Bulletin*.
- Fincham, F. D. (2000). The kiss of the porcupines: From attributing responsibility to forgiving. *Personal Relationships*, 7, 1-23.
- Fincham, F. D., & Beach, S. R. H. (2002). Forgiveness in marriage: Implications for psychological aggression and constructive communication. *Personal Relationships*, 9, 239-251.
- Fisher, M. L., & Exline, J. J. (2006). Self-forgiveness versus excusing: The roles of remorse, effort, and acceptance of responsibility. *Self and Identity*, 5, 127-146.

- Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual*. Garden City, N.Y.:Anchor.
- Gold, G. J., & Weiner, B. (2000). Remorse, confession, group identity and expectancies about repeating a transgression. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 22, 291-300.
- Gracyalny, M. L., & Mongeau, P. M. (2011, November). *Assessing the voice of conscience: Measuring remorse experience and expression*. Paper to be presented to The National Communication Associate Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana
- Gracyalny, M. L., & Mongeau, P. M. (2010, November). *Expressing remorse in close relationships: Verbal and nonverbal components of remorse*. Paper presented to The National Communication Association Convention, San Francisco, California.
- Guerrero, L. K., Andersen, P. A., & Afifi, W. A. (2007). Hurting the ones we love: Relational transgressions. In L. K. Guerrero, P. A. Andersen, & W. A. Afifi (Eds), *Close encounters: Communication in relationships* (pp. 281-305).Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Guerrero, L. K., & Bachman, G. F. (2010). Forgiveness and forgiving communication in dating relationships: An expectancy-investment explanation. *The Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 27, 1-23.
- Hall, J. H., & Fincham, F. D. (2006). Relationship dissolution following infidelity: The roles of attribution and forgiveness. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 25, 508-522.
- Hall, R. J., Snell, A. F., & Foust, M. S. (1999). Item parceling strategies in SEM: Investigating the subtle effects of unmodeled secondary constructs. *Organizational Research Methods*, 2, 233-256.
- Hoffman, M. L. (2001). *Empathy and moral development: Implications for caring and justice*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Holmbeck, G. N. (1997). Toward terminological, conceptual, and statistical clarity in the study of mediators and moderators: Examples from the child-clinical and pediatric psychology literatures. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 65, 599-610.
- Kelley, D. L. (1998). The communication of forgiveness. *Communication Studies*, 49, 255-271.

- Kelley, D. L., & Waldron, V. R. (2005). An investigation of forgiveness-seeking communication and relational outcomes. *Communication Quarterly, 53*, 339-358.
- Keltner, D. (1995). Signs of appeasement: Evidence for the distinct displays of embarrassment, amusement, and shame. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 68*, 441-454.
- Keltner, D. (1997). Embarrassment: Its distinct form and appeasement functions. *Psychological Bulletin, 122*(3), 250-270.
- Keltner, D., Haidt, J., & Shiota, M. (2006). Social functionalism and the evolution of emotions. In M. Schaller, D. Kenrick, & J. Simpson (Eds.), *Evolution and Social Psychology* (pp. 115-142). New York: Psychology Press.
- Keltner, D., Young, R. C., & Buswell, B. N. (1997). Appeasement in human emotion, social practice, and personality. *Aggressive Behavior, 23*, 359-374.
- Kline, R. B. (2005). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.
- Kroll, J., & Egan, E. (2004). Psychiatry, moral worry, and the moral emotions. *Journal of Psychiatric Practice, 10* (6), 352-360.
- Lazare, A. (2004). *On apology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Leary, M. R., Springer, C., Negel, L., Ansel, E., & Evans, K. (1998). The causes, phenomenology, and consequences of hurt feelings. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*, 1225-1237.
- Ledermann, T., & Macho, S. (2009). Mediation in dyadic data at the level of the dyads: A Structural Equation Modeling approach. *Journal of Family Psychology, 23*, 661-670.
- Lishner, D. A., Batson, C. D., & Huss, E. (2011). Tenderness and sympathy: Distinct empathic emotions elicited by different forms of need. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 37*, 614-625.
- McCullough, M. E. (2008). *Beyond revenge: The evolution of the forgiveness instinct*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- McCullough, M. E., Rachal, K. C., Sandage, S. J., Worthington, E. L., Brown, S. W., & Hight, T. L. (1998). Interpersonal forgiving in close relationships: II. Theoretical elaboration and measurement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75*, 1586-1603.
- McCullough, M. E., Root Luna, L., Berry, J. W., Tabak, B. A., & Bono, G. (2010). On the form and function of forgiving: Modeling the time-forgiveness relationship and testing the valuable relationship hypothesis. *Emotion, 10*, 358-376.
- McCullough, M. E., Worthington, E. L., & Rachal, K. C. (1997). Interpersonal forgiving in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 73*, 321-336.
- Metts, S., & Cupach, W. R. (2007). Responses to relational transgressions: Hurt, anger, and sometimes forgiveness. In B. H. Spitzberg & W. R. Cupach (Eds.), *The dark side of interpersonal communication* (pp. 243-274). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Miller, G. R., & Nicholson, H. E. (1976). *Communication inquiry: A perspective on a process*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Mongeau, P. M., Hale, J. M., & Alles, M. (1984). An experimental investigations of accounts and attributions following sexual infidelity. *Communication Monographs, 61*, 326-344.
- Ohbuchi, K., Kameda, M., & Agarie, N. (1989). Apology as aggression control: Its role in mediating appraisal of and response to harm. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56*, 219-227.
- Porges, S. W. (1997). Emotion: An evolutionary by-product of the neural regulation of the autonomic nervous system. In C. S. Carter, B. Kirkpatrick, & I. I. Lederhendler (Eds.), *The conciliatory neurobiology of affiliation*. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences.
- Sandage, S. J., & Worthington, E. L. (2010). Comparison of two group interventions to promote forgiveness: Empathy as a mediator of change. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling, 32*, 35-57.
- Schlenker, B. R., & Darby, B. W. (1981). The use of apologies in social predicaments. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 44*, 271-278.

- Schmitt, M., Gollwitzer, M., Forster, N., & Montada, L. (2004). Effects of objective and subjective account components on forgiving. *Journal of Social Psychology, 144*, 465-485.
- Slovenko, R. (2006). Remorse. *Journal of Psychiatry and Law, 34*, 397-432.
- Steenhuis, I. (2009). Guilty or not? Feelings of guilt about food among college women. *Appetite, 52*, 531-534.
- Stiff, J., Dillard, J., Somera, L., Hyun, K., & Sleight, C. (1988). Empathy, communication, and prosocial behavior. *Communication Monographs, 55*(2), 198.
- Tangney, J. P. (1991). Moral affect: The good, the bad, and the ugly. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 61*, 598-607.
- Taylor, G. (1996). Guilt and remorse. In R. Harre & W. G. Parrott (Eds.), *The emotions: Social, cultural, and biological dimensions* (pp. 57-73). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Tudor, S. (2001). *Compassion and remorse: Acknowledging the suffering other*. Sterling, VA: Peeters.
- Vangelisti, A. L. (2007). Communicating Hurt. In B. H. Spitzberg & W. R. Cupach (Eds.), *The dark side of interpersonal communication* (pp. 121-142). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Vangelisti, A. L., & Crumley, L. P. (1998). Reactions to messages that hurt: The influence of relational contexts. *Communication Monographs, 65*, 173-196.
- Van Stokken, B. (2002). Moral emotions in restorative justice conferences: Managing shame, designing empathy. *Theoretical Criminology, 6*, 339-360.
- Waldron, V. L., & Kelley, D. L. (2008). *Communicating Forgiveness*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Weiner, B. (2006). *Social motivation, justice, and the moral emotions: An attributional approach*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Weiner, B., Amirkhan, J., Folkes, V. S., & Verette, J. A. (1987). An attributional analysis of excuse giving: Studies of a naïve theory of emotion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52*, 316-324.

- Younger, J. W., Piferi, R. L., Jobe, R. L., & Lawler, K. A. (2004). Dimensions of forgiveness: The views of laypersons. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 21*, 837-855.
- Zechmeister, J. S., Garcia, S., Romero, C., & Vas, S. N. (2004). Don't apologize unless you mean it: A laboratory investigation of forgiveness and retaliation. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 23*, 532-564.
- Zechmeister, J. S., & Romero, C. (2002). Victim and offender accounts of interpersonal conflict: Autobiographical narratives of forgiveness and unforgiveness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82*, 675-686.

APPENDIX A
MEASURES AND SCALES

Victims' Communicative Responses to Hurt

1. Withdrawal, 10 items, Cronbach's alpha = .93

Avoided me
Stopped calling or texting me
Ignored me
Seemed detached or "over" our relationship
Gave me the "silent treatment"
Seemed like he/she didn't want to be around me
Let things fall apart between us
Decreased affection toward me
Physically pulled away from me
Told me we should go our separate ways

2. Conciliatory Communication, 11 items, Cronbach's alpha = .91

Planned special activities for us to do together
Was more affectionate
Was nicer to me
Spent more time with me
Suggested things that might help us
Apologized to me for the way he/she had been treating me
Tried to fix things between us
Calmly questioned me about my actions
Tried to talk to me and reach an understanding
Told me how committed he/she was to me
Gave me gifts

3. Threatening Communication, 8 items, Cronbach's alpha = .90

Tried to "get even" with me
Tried to get revenge
Made hurtful or mean comments to me
Tried to get revenge on me
Yelled or cursed at me
Quarreled or argued with me
Acted rude toward me
Confronted me in an accusatory manner

4. Sad Communication, 4 items, Cronbach's alpha = .77

Seemed sad
Looked like he/she was going to cry
Cried or teared up
Didn't seem to be bothered what happened (reverse)

Remorse Experience

1. Other-oriented experience, 9 items, alpha = .91

Knew the other person was hurt
Felt responsible for hurting him/her
Accepted that the other person was upset
Worried about the other person.
Felt concern for the other person.
Cared about the other person's wellbeing
Felt upset because of how upset he/she felt
Felt bad because the other person felt bad
Felt guilty

2. Self-focused experience, 6 items, alpha = .82

Was afraid of being punished by the other person.
Worried about my reputation.
Was afraid of being reprimanded by the other person.
Worried about him/her wanting to get even.
Felt cautious around the other person.
Felt bad for myself

3. Affiliation, 5 items, alpha = .89

Wanted to be emotionally close to the other person.
Felt committed to the other person.
Valued my relationship with him/her.
Wanted to touch or hug the other person.
Wanted to do something to make the other person less upset.

Remorse Expression

1. Apology/Concern, 9 items, alpha = .95

Said I was sorry for what I had done.
Apologized for my actions.
Said I felt awful for hurting the person
Admitted I was wrong.
Told the person I understood why he/she was upset
Told the person I knew how hurt and/or angry he/she was
Asked the other person to forgive me, or something similar
Explained to the other person what happened
Told the person I respected his/her feelings

2. Low Status Communication, 3 items, alpha = .77

Had trembling or shaking hands or body.

Spoke with a shaking voice.

Said I was not good enough for him/her.

Compensation, 5 items, alpha = .91

Complimented the other person more.

Did special things to make other person happy

Treated the other person more nicely than usual.

Promised to make it up to the other person or something similar

Helped the other person with chores or tasks

Connection, 5 items, alpha = .91

Tried to touch the other person.

Moved closer to him/her.

Tried to hug the other person.

Said "I love you," or something similar.

Told the other person that I need him or her in my life

Additional Measured Variables

Degree of hurt/transgression severity, 7 items

The event was extremely hurtful.

This event made the other person feel really bad.

This event was one of the most negative things that could happen in my relationship with him/her.

The event caused the other person emotional pain.

The event was very upsetting

My behavior was highly inappropriate.

This was one of the worst things I could have done or said to him/her

Forgiveness, 3 items

The other person has forgiven me for hurting him/her

He/she completely forgave me for hurting him/her

The other person was able to forgive me for hurting him/her

APPENDIX B
IRB APPROVAL FORM

To: Paul Mongeau
STAUF

From: Mark Roosa, Chair *SM*
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 04/22/2011

Committee Action: Exemption Granted

IRB Action Date: 04/22/2011

IRB Protocol #: 1104006351

Study Title: The Role of Remorse in Interpersonal Forgiveness: A test of Two Theoretical Models

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.