

2008

## **An Investigation Of The Reliability And Validity Of The Caperton Forgiveness Styles Inventory**

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*Indiana State University*

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY  
OF THE CAPERTON FORGIVENESS  
STYLES INVENTORY

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A dissertation

Presented to

The School of Graduate Studies

Department of Communication Disorders and  
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Indiana State University

Terre Haute, Indiana

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Duane Caperton

December 2008

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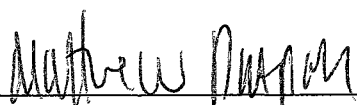
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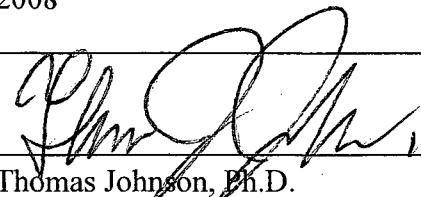
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## ABSTRACT

This research was an investigation into the process of forgiveness. The analysis of qualitative interviews with nearly 100 participants suggested four different approaches, or styles, of forgiving and non-forgiving. The Intrapersonal style describes people who forgive other people by focusing on their own thoughts, feelings, and actions. The Interpersonal style describes people who forgive other people by focusing on the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the offending persons. The Easy Going style describes the people who never forgive anyone because they rarely or never feel offended and consequently rarely or never feel the need to forgive others. The Grudge Holder style describes people who rarely or never forgive anyone because they generally prefer to hold on to the offense for various reasons. The 26 item Pilot CFSI inventory was investigated for reliability and for convergent and divergent validity in a sample composed of 131 undergraduate and graduate students. Cronbachs' alphas of the scales showed the Pilot Caperton Forgiveness Style Inventory (CFSI) inventory to be internally consistent. Multiple regressions of CFSI scale results with IPIP Five Factor Model of Personality inventories, Fear-of-Intimacy relationship anxiety inventories, and demographic information demonstrated appropriate divergent validity for the scales.

These results along with a varimax rotation factor analysis led to an 18 item Revised CFSI and a three item Humility scale which clearly mediated the forgiving process in some as yet to be determined way and was wholly unrelated to the non-

forgiving styles. The Intrapersonal forgivers tended to score high on Openness and somewhat higher on Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. They also scored low on fear of intimate relationships. Individuals who reported being “very active in religion” were the only group which showed a preference for the Intrapersonal style. The Interpersonal forgivers tended to score high on Neuroticism, Extroversion, and Conscientiousness, and they also tended to score low on fear of intimate relationships. The Easy Going non-forgivers scored low on Neuroticism, but scored high on fear of intimate relationships. Males were more likely to score high on Easy Going than any other demographic group. The Grudge Holders tended to score high on Neuroticism and low on Agreeableness, and they were high on fear of intimate relationships.

The Caperton Forgiveness Style Inventory is a valid and reliable assessment tool of styles of forgiveness and is appropriate for both clinical and research uses.



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

What is the process of forgiveness? This is an important question because individuals in counseling have often experienced emotionally charged events in which they feel a need to forgive others, and this need is being recognized by counselors. A survey of 381 members of the American Mental Health Association (Konstam, Marx, Schurer, Lombardo, & Harrington, 2002) investigated forgiveness issues among mental health professionals. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents said that forgiveness issues arose often in their work. Ninety percent said that forgiveness should be addressed in professional training. Seventy six percent said they would be interested in attending a forgiveness workshop. Clearly, forgiveness is an important, relevant topic for counseling psychologists and other mental health professionals.

Literature on forgiveness has grown in recent years and coincides with the establishment of the “positive psychology” endorsed by the clinicians Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi who propose and support the client goals of “The capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness . . .” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). Lamb and Murphy (2002) sees this emphasis on positive psychology and forgiveness as a natural result of the development of cognitive-behavioral methods. For example, the reframing of negative thoughts, which is

a consistent part of forgiveness counseling approaches, can be traced back to the work of Albert Ellis, Martin Seligman, and others.

Malcolm and Greenberg (2000) found only a few unpublished doctoral dissertations looking at forgiveness prior to 1993. Published findings after 1993 are most often in the area of effectiveness of psychoeducational interventions on forgiveness. Konstam et al. (2002) point out that studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of forgiveness counseling in the resolution of anger, guilt, and remorse. They add that forgiveness counseling has been shown to benefit different populations including substance abusers, cancer patients, and incest survivors.

The development of forgiveness research is also described by McCullough, Pargament, and Thoresen (2000) who note that forgiveness became a focus for researchers in the 1980's and 1990's. In the 1990's forgiveness was linked with developmental theories, especially Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Specific strategies for counseling clients about issues related to forgiveness also became a focus in the 1990's. During that time, the Templeton Foundation requested proposals for scientific research on forgiveness and received over 100 submissions (McCullough et al.). Almost a third received funding.

The research question in this proposal is an investigation of the reliability and validity of the Caperton Forgiveness Style Inventory (CFSI). The CFSI has been designed to identify an individual's preference for and use of four distinct styles of forgiveness: the Easy Going non-forgivers who rarely feel offended, the Grudge Holders who consciously choose to hold on to offenses, the Intrapersonal forgivers who focus on themselves, and the Interpersonal forgivers who focus on the offenders. The CFSI

generates a score for each of these four styles of forgiveness, and the individual's score profile will determine their style of forgiveness.

### Discovering Styles of Forgiveness

These four styles of forgiveness have emerged from listening to people's stories about forgiveness in their lives. The research and theoretical literature on forgiveness has helped clarify these stories enabling an assessment tool to be constructed. A series of informal interviews were carried out asking nearly 100 people how they forgave others and asking them to describe what they had done when they had managed to forgive someone. When people were first asked about forgiveness, they often said what "everyone should do" in order to forgive someone. The author quickly emphasized that the request was for what they themselves had actually done and not for what others expected them to do. From the interviews four styles of forgiveness emerged, arranged into the unforgiving and the forgiving. Participants' emphasis on what they should do has been translated into CFSI instructions that direct participants to focus on their behaviors in a specific act of forgiveness in their life.

These interviews were conducted in college psychology classes, in church gatherings, and with friends and relatives. Two styles of forgiveness emerged in these conversations, and further analysis revealed two other patterns related to those who do not participate in forgiveness activities. These four styles were the basis for what became the scales, and statements from these interviews, in an edited form, were used as the basis for the CFSI items.

During these conversations, it appeared that individuals used only one style of forgiveness in talking about a specific time and place in which they have, or in the case of



those who do not forgive, have not forgiven others. Based on these conversations it was decided to develop four independent scales, each designed to measure a specific style of forgiveness.

### The Unforgiving

Some of the people in these interviews responded that they had no memory of having ever forgiven anyone for any reason. The concept of forgiveness was difficult for them to understand, but even after a discussion of the ways people work through forgiveness, they could recall no personal experience of having forgiven someone. Other people claimed to know exactly what was being discussed and without hesitation reported no memory of having forgiven someone. All of these people who are being categorized here as the unforgiving were surprised to hear other people talk about personal, emotionally charged events in which they had forgiven someone. From these interviews this writer has hypothesized the existence of two styles of unforgiving.

#### *Easy Going Style of Non-Forgiving*

This first style of unforgiving includes the people who described themselves as so easy going that they never felt offended by other people. Even after thinking for several minutes, they could not recall any instance when they had forgiven someone. During interviews these people came across as relaxed, light-hearted, and pleasant. They had a healthy sense of humor, were very agreeable, and they expressed surprise when other interviewees could recall forgiving events so easily. They did not see the need for forgiveness in general, and they suggested that other “sensitive” people should just relax. From the perspective of five factor personality these people seemed to have the characteristics of someone who would score very low on Neuroticism.

### *Grudge Holder Style of Non-Forgiving*

The second group of individuals who claimed to have no memory of forgiving other people had clear perceptions and memories of being offended, but they chose not to forgive the offender. Sometimes they wanted to hang on to the memory of offences in order to use them in the future if needed. Sometimes they saw themselves as martyrs and liked to see themselves at a higher moral level than the offenders. Either way these people believe that there is more to be gained by holding on to painful memories than by letting them go through the act of forgiveness. They had a difficult time understanding why other people would choose to forgive someone so readily. As a group, these people come across as aggressive, highly conscientious and ordered, and anxious. From a five factor personality perspective no clear single factor seemed to describe grudge holders and a combination of high neuroticism and low agreeableness and openness may account for these behaviors.

### The Forgiving

Of the people who did recall forgiving others, a consistent pattern was observed: people either focused primarily on their own thoughts, actions, and feelings, or primarily on the thoughts, actions, and feelings of the offender. These two perspectives then appeared in the two distinct ways in which people forgave those who had offended them. One group of people focused on the offending person's experience, for example remorse or apology, while a second group of people focused on their own experience, for example seeing one's self as flawed, or choosing to let go. In the interviews it was discovered that people consistently preferred one style over the other. In group interviews, after several people had spoken about their forgiveness experiences, the people were asked what they

thought of each other's statements. Consistently, people who had offered a self-focused response such as, "I realize that I have done harm to others too," saw no need for the other-focused responses such as, "I can forgive after I receive an apology." The other-focused responders likewise saw little need for the self-focused responses. From this experience the existence of two styles of forgiving others was hypothesized.

#### *Intrapersonal Process of Forgiving*

The first style to be described is the intrapersonal process of forgiving. This is an approach to forgiving others that focuses on the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the forgiving people themselves. They need to work through the process of forgiving in a way that basically leaves out the offender. They may need to see that they themselves are guilty of doing wrong. They may need to see that they contributed to the problem or conflict. Or they may just choose to let go of the issue. Thinking out loud, they might say something like "I've done the same kind of thing myself," or, "I'm just harming myself when I worry about this, so I'm just going to let it go." Whatever step is taken, it is accomplished without the involvement of the offender. From a five factor personality perspective the dominant characteristic of these individuals, other than a minimal level of sensitivity to the feelings of others, was their moderately high introversion.

#### *Interpersonal Process of Forgiving*

The second style to be described is the interpersonal process of forgiving. This is an approach to forgiving others that focuses on the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the offending people. People with this style work through the process of forgiving in a way that avoids focusing on the offended people themselves. They may need to learn why the offender did what he or she did. They may need to express anger at the offender in person

or get an apology. A common response by one of these persons is “I didn’t realize how the offender was hurting that day. It wasn’t personal. I just happened to be there.” One may argue that these events take place in the minds of the offended people and is therefore introspective. This is true, but the focus of their thoughts is clearly on the offender’s experience and not on their own. From a five factor personality perspective, these individuals may be described as agreeable extroverts.

### Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the reliability and validity of the Caperton Forgiveness Style Inventory.

#### *Research Question One*

Is the Caperton Forgiveness Style Inventory a reliable assessment tool?

This was evaluated by examining the internal consistency of the four CFSI scales using Cronbach’s alpha measure of internal consistency for each scale, as well as examining the individual item to scale correlations.

#### *Research Question Two*

Is there evidence that the Caperton Forgiveness Style Inventory has convergent and divergent validity?

This was assessed in four parts: First, measures of association between each of the five personality factors and the four styles of forgiveness were used to answer this question. Previous research has established a relationship between certain personality factors and aspects of forgiveness; consequently, this analysis enabled an examination of both convergent and divergent validity. While the interviews that led to the development

of the CFSI items and scales suggest a relationship between some five factor scales and CFSI scales, this association was examined empirically.

Second, the relationship between scores on the CFSI and the Fear-of-Intimacy Scale (Descutner & Thelen, 1991), which is a measure of interpersonal relationship anxiety, was examined. This was investigated because of the link between forgiveness and relationships that emerged during the interviews. A correlation matrix of all variables was analyzed for relationships between all variables including Fear-of-Intimacy. It was expected that the different forgiveness styles would reveal different levels of relationship anxiety. Results from this examination helped establish an argument for convergent validity.

Third, the relationships between the demographic factors of age, year in school, ethnicity, religion, gender, and scores on the CFSI were examined. There is no reason to suspect that age, religion, or gender should in any way affect how participants respond to the CFSI. This question helped eliminate obvious demographic characteristics as a source for participant scores; however, there were subtle differences that this research detected.

Fourth, a factor analysis was conducted on the CFSI to determine if the factor structure that emerges from the empirical investigation matches that from the theoretical. There is no argument to use any other than a varimax rotation factor analysis because it could not have been posited a priori that the four styles of forgiveness are independent and would argue for an orthogonal examination of the factor structure of the CFSI.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on forgiveness and related issues has increased dramatically in recent years. Areas of focus have included individual differences and aspects of intervention.

The ways individual differences affect forgiveness experiences is becoming clearer. Core beliefs and attitudes are increasingly presenting themselves as important factors in how individuals work through forgiveness. It seems that the belief that a relationship is special or destined to be special can lead to a weaker forgiveness attitude when anxiety arises (Finkel, Scissors, & Burnette, 2008). If a relationship is low in priority, some people find it easy just to let go and forgo any conscious forgiveness work (Siassi, 2007). Religious beliefs such as “If I forgive others God will forgive me” is related to being open to forgiving others (Exline, 2008). Christian religious commitment in general seems to improve interpersonal forgiveness (Wilyliet, Hinze, & Worthington, 2008). While people report different religious beliefs about forgiveness, it turns out that behavior is often inconsistent with conscious attitudes (Toussaint & Williams, 2008). Some people are focused on improving a bad relationship while others are simply trying to add a positive forgiveness element to a normal relationship (Bassett, Edgerton, Johnson, Lill, & Russo, 2008). And there is increasing evidence that there are possible gender differences in how people work through forgiveness. After imagining improper

clergy sexual involvement with a congregant, men were quicker to forgive female clergy, and women were quicker to forgive male clergy (Thomas, White, & Sutton, 2008).

Research on interventions is also reporting interesting results. Forgiveness counseling is noticeably less affective with married couples who engage in frequent negative verbal behavior (McNulty, 2008). Interventions focusing on forgiveness processes seem to be more effective than those focusing on problem solving (Diblasio, & Benda, 2008). Utilizing practices such as prayer can be helpful (McMinn et al., 2008). And learning how one's behavior affects other people has produced positive results in an intervention program with incarcerated clients (Armour, Windsor, Aguilar, & Taub, 2008).

The literature on forgiveness contains models of the interpersonal and intrapersonal processes of forgiveness, and numerous articles about the importance of forgiveness. It is important to note the role of forgiveness historically in traditional 12 step programs that has no doubt influenced the helping professions' literature on the topic.

#### Enright's 17 Steps of Forgiveness

Forgiveness has been a popular topic in religious and philosophical writing for ages. In the last twenty years or so, it has received the attention of writers and researchers in the areas of psychology and counseling. Enright, Easton, Golden, Sarinopoulos, and Freedman (1992) have summarized the steps of forgiveness that have appeared in published literature resulting in the following list of 17 steps:

1. Examination of psychological defenses.
2. Confrontation of anger for release.

3. Admitting shame.
4. Awareness of cathexis.
5. Awareness of cognitive rehearsal of the offense.
6. Realize that the injured may compare self with the injurer.
7. Possibly altered just world view.
8. Realize that old resolution strategies are not working.
9. Commitment to forgive the offender.
10. Reframing who the wrongdoer is by seeing him or her in context.
11. Empathy toward the offender.
12. Compassion toward the offender.
13. Acceptance or absorption of the pain.
14. Realize the self has needed forgiveness in the past.
15. Realize that the self has been permanently changed by the injury.
16. Decreased negative affect and increased positive affect toward the injurer.
17. Awareness of internal, emotional release. (pp. 96-97)

Enright et al. (1992) suggest that some clients may not experience all the steps listed, while others will circle back several times as new issues are discovered suggesting that forgiveness is complex and there are many individual differences. The intrapersonal processes, as identified in the CFSI, are clearly presented, and this is consistent with what this researcher has seen in published literature on forgiveness counseling. On the other hand, there is little on the interpersonal processes, as identified in the CFSI, though it is present. References to individuals who have no need to forgive or who chose not to



forgive for whatever reason are absent altogether. This present research hopes to fill in these gaps by presenting a more complete picture.

### Enright's "Guideposts for Forgiving"

Another popular approach to forgiveness work has been developed by Enright (2001). His Guideposts for Forgiving includes four phases of forgiveness. They include:

#### Phase 1 - Uncovering Your Anger

How have you avoided dealing with your anger?

Have you faced your anger?

Are you afraid to expose your shame or guilt?

Has your anger affected your health?

Have you been obsessed about the injury or the offender?

Do you compare your situation with that of the offender?

Has the injury caused a permanent change in your life?

Has the injury changed your worldview?

#### Phase 2 - Deciding to Forgive

Decide that what you have been doing hasn't worked.

Be willing to begin the forgiveness process.

Decide to forgive.

#### Phase 3 - Working on Forgiveness

Work toward understanding.

Work toward compassion.

Accept the pain.

Give the offender a gift.

#### Phase 4 - Discovery and Release from Emotional Prison

Discover the meaning of suffering.

Discover your need for forgiveness.

Discover that you are not alone.

Discover the purpose of your life.

Discover the freedom of forgiveness. (p. 78)

A notable part of Phase 3 is the giving of a gift to the offender. This unique gift can take many forms, including the gift of time. Separate from the work of reconciliation, this action breaks the power the offender had over the victim.

The last phase focuses on the changes that take place in the forgiving individual. This popular work clearly reflects an intrapersonal viewpoint with a few items leaning toward an interpersonal direction. There is no acknowledgement of individuals who have no need to be consciously forgiving others. This reflects a dominant point of view in the literature that forgiveness is a common and universal behavior.

#### Malcolm and Greenberg's Five Component Process Model

Models of forgiveness work go from simple to complex. A simple five component process has been described by Malcolm and Greenberg (2000). These necessary components include “(1) awareness of strong emotions such as sadness and anger, (2) letting go of previously unmet interpersonal needs, (3) a shift in the view of the offender, (4) empathy for the offender, and (5) the construction of a new self and other narrative” (p. 179). Malcolm and Greenberg point out that these five components occur consistently in the published works on forgiveness. It can be seen to summarize or condense the list of variables identified by Enright et al. (1992). This short list presents both intrapersonal

and interpersonal components and they are all presented as necessary, although there is no mention of individuals who do not participate in the forgiveness process.

### Luskin's Nine Step Process of Forgiveness

A more recent model for doing forgiveness work is offered by Luskin (2002). His nine step process includes the components of the Malcolm and Greenberg model, but he adds a special emphasis on the forgiving person's self talk and techniques for healing.

His model includes these steps:

1. Know exactly how you feel about what happened, and be able to articulate what about the situation is not okay. Then tell a couple of trusted people about your experience.
2. Make a commitment to yourself to do what you have to do to feel better. Forgiveness is for you and not anyone else. No one else even has to know about your decision.
3. Understand your goal. Forgiveness does not necessarily mean reconciling with the person who upset you or condoning their action. What you are after is peace. Forgiveness can be defined as the peace and understanding that come from blaming less that which has hurt you, taking the experience less personally, and changing your grievance story.
4. Get the right perspective on what is happening. Recognize that your primary distress is coming from the hurt feelings, thoughts, and physical upset you are suffering now, not what offended you or hurt you two minutes - or ten years - ago.

5. At the moment you feel upset, practice the Positive Emotion Refocusing Technique (PERT) to soothe your body's flight-or-fight response.
6. Give up expecting things from other people, or life, that they do not choose to give you. Recognize the unenforceable rules you have for your health or how you or other people must behave. Remind yourself that you can hope for health, love, friendship, and prosperity and work hard to get them. However, you will suffer if you demand that these things occur when you do not have the power to make them happen.
7. Put your energy into looking for another way to get your positive goals met than through the experience that has hurt you. In other words, find your positive intention. Instead of mentally replaying your hurt, seek out new ways to get what you want.
8. Remember that a life well lived is your best revenge. Instead of focusing on your wounded feelings, and thereby giving the person who hurt you power over you, learn to look for the love, beauty, and kindness around you.
9. Amend your grievance story to remind yourself of the heroic choice to forgive. (pp. 211-212)

Specific techniques are offered to help forgiving people calm themselves and stay focused during difficult times and to reprogram their minds to operate in a positive fashion. The first technique is called changing the channel. One pretends to have a remote control, similar to that for a TV, and uses it to deliberately change one's focus (channel) away from negative things to positive things (Luskin, 2002).

Other techniques include the breath of thanks which is a relaxing, deep breathing exercise that develops a thankful attitude toward life in general. It is done several times a day. The heart focus is another relaxing, deep breathing exercise that is done three times a week. During this exercise one spends ten to fifteen minutes imagining a previous experience of love, beauty, or tranquility. As these technique skills develop, the forgiving person uses them to resolve ongoing grievances or relationship problems in the positive emotion refocusing technique. Once relaxed and focused on positive feelings, the individual asks the relaxed and peaceful part of the self what can be done to resolve present difficulties (Luskin, 2002).

The model offered by Luskin appears to be a cognitive/behavioral approach that would work well with individuals who are open to meditation techniques. These suggestions would work well with intrapersonal style forgivers, but the interpersonal forgivers would be frustrated as their concerns are not addressed sufficiently. Clearly, the non-forgivers hypothesized in this study would wonder what the fuss is all about.

#### Models of Forgiveness and the CFSI

Writers in the literature have complex and extensive suggestions for counselors who are doing forgiveness work. Recent research by Knutson, Enright, and Garbers (2008) proposes 21 separate steps in a developmental pathway of forgiveness. While participants consistently identified a commitment to forgive, anger leaving, and admitting shame as important steps, 18 more steps were supported to a lesser extent. Information on individual differences is needed to make this process manageable. With the present emphasis on short term therapy, counselors often do not have the time to take clients through all of the therapeutic steps of forgiveness suggested by the authors above. If, as is

suggested here, there are different styles of forgiveness then all of these steps are not all necessary for every client who is working on forgiveness. If irrelevant steps could be avoided and a more client-relevant short list of counseling steps used as a focus, forgiveness counseling would be more effective and less frustrating for all involved.

### The Forgiveness Scale

A recently developed instrument used in the measurement of forgiveness is the Forgiveness Scale. Rye et al. (2001) have presented an instrument that measures forgiveness toward a particular offender. It measures behavioral, cognitive, and affective responses to wrongdoing with 15 items in a Likert format. After thinking about how they have actually responded to someone who has mistreated them, respondents choose a response from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” after reading items such as “I spend time thinking about ways to get back at the person who wronged me.”

While the Forgiveness Scale is similar to the very popular Enright Forgiveness Inventory, it is much shorter and measures two important aspects, or subscales, of forgiveness. The Absence of Negative subscale measures the absence of negative behaviors, feelings, and thoughts involving the offending person, while the Presence of Positive subscale measures the extent to which positive behaviors, feelings, and thoughts are present. Furthermore, the Forgiveness Scale has sufficient test-retest reliability and sufficient internal consistency (Rye et al., 2001).

While it is a popular scale, the drawback of The Forgiveness Scale is that it reflects a single style of forgiveness that should apply to all people. The current study is suggesting that there are four styles of forgiveness and that individuals have a preference for only one of the styles.

### Five Factor Model of Personality

In the last 20 years, the Five Factor Model of personality has become a very effective way to describe the structure of personality traits. The five factors of Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism are dimensions of personality, not types, and scores fall between high and low extremes. For example, an individual may be high on Openness and low on Agreeableness. Research has shown the factors to be stable over time (Soltz & Vaillant, 1999) and to some extent heritable (Jang, McCrae, Angleitner, Reimann, & Livesley, 1998). Piedmont (1998) has noted that heritability coefficients of 61% for Openness and 41% for Neuroticism have been found. Furthermore, he points out that the five-factor model has been generalized to European, Indian, and Asian cultures, and that they operate maturationally. That is, the normal five-factor changes seen in North American individuals as they grow into their 30's take place in other cultures as well.

The five factors are grounded on two lines of research. The first was the analysis of lexical data that goes back to the 1930's (Allport & Odbert, 1936). Identifying personality attributes from the factor analyses of personality assessment tools and adjectives has resulted in these five perceived factors. The second line of research was the analysis of personality traits identified by other researchers such as the 16 PF (Costa & McCrae, 1976). These analyses of English language personality questionnaires have also resulted in these five personality traits. Multiple five factor models have emerged in the literature with differences in nomenclature, but the presence of five factors has remained a constant. The language used here is in more common use and takes advantage of the common acronym OCEAN for the factors.

### *Openness*

The first factor in the “OCEAN” acronym is Openness. This is sometimes called Openness to Experience, Intellect, or Intellectuality. Assessing the pursuit of experience and the unfamiliar for its own sake, this factor includes characteristics such as preference for variety, aesthetic sensitivity, and independence of judgment. High scorers tend to be tolerant, emotionally responsive, and imaginative. They tend to be curious, creative, original, imaginative, and untraditional. They often have broad interests. Low scorers tend to be conventional in behavior, practical, conforming, and they have a narrower scope of interests. They are down-to-earth, inartistic, and unanalytical. Intolerance should not be implied (McCrae & Costa, 1991).

Psychologists sometimes present high openness as more mature and healthier. This may be due to the fact that they themselves are generally high on the openness scale. But, researchers point out that high and low openness are both useful in different environments. A person high on openness might make a successful university professor, but research has shown that low openness or closed thinking is related to higher job performance in sales, police work, and a number of service occupations.

### *Conscientiousness*

The second factor is Conscientiousness, which assesses the extent to which someone is organized and motivated to perform goal-oriented behavior. High scorers are persistent, and they are successful in academic and occupational endeavors. Reliable and hard-working, they may also be associated with compulsive neatness and workaholic behavior. They have a reputation for being dependable, neat, and ambitious. Low scorers



are more relaxed in working toward goals and in applying moral principles and are sometimes seen as aimless, unreliable, and hedonistic (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

This factor describes the way in which we control, and direct our impulses. Being impulsive is not necessarily bad or good. The impulsive person performs better when a snap decision is required. Also, when playing, impulsive people are viewed as more fun, and they experience more short-lived pleasures. The highly conscientious individuals stay out of trouble and accomplish big goals through their planning and consistency, but they also generate a reputation for stuffiness. They would not be at the head of the party invitation list, but they would be the party planner.

#### *Extroversion*

The third factor, Extroversion, is sometimes called Surgency, or Superiority Striving. It describes a person's style of social interaction and need for activity and stimulation. High scorers prefer working and spending time with people. They tend to be talkative, assertive, and optimistic. Other people describe them as affectionate, energetic, fun-loving, and outgoing. Low scorers, or Introverts, prefer to be alone. They are often described as serious, reserved, task-oriented, and cautious. In addition, they may have a reputation for being quiet and reserved (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Highly extraverted people love to be engaged with the external world. They are energetic and often pursue the experience of positive emotions. Being enthusiastic and action-oriented, they enjoy talking and asserting themselves when in groups. Introverted people on the other hand tend to be low-key and disengaged from the world of people. This should not be viewed as depression or shyness, because they simply need less stimulation than do extraverts.

### *Agreeableness*

This factor assesses interpersonal orientation. The continuum has compassion in actions, feelings, and thoughts at one end and antagonism in these realms at the other. People who score high on Agreeableness are described as generous, forgiving, and appreciative. They are sympathetic and altruistic, but they can also be viewed as soft-hearted and gullible. Low scorers tend to be competitive, skeptical of the intentions of others, and egocentric. Other people tend to see them as cynical, rude, and manipulative. Neither high nor low scores should necessarily be viewed as unhealthy. That assessment would need to take the interpersonal environment into account (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

High and low scorers have different views of other people as well. The highly agreeable people have an optimistic view of people in general and so are willing to compromise in order to maintain social harmony. The low scorers, on the other hand, are less likely to compromise because their interests come first. This is partly due to their view of others as suspicious and uncooperative. While the highly agreeable people maintain popularity well, the low scorers will perform better in an environment where tough, clear decisions are required.

### *Neuroticism*

The last factor, Neuroticism, assesses emotional adjustment. The scale goes from well-adjusted at one end, to emotionally unstable at the other. The score describes one's tendency to experience negative emotions such as fear, guilt, or embarrassment. Seen as anxious, insecure, hypochondriacal, and easily frustrated, high scorers may be at risk for psychological disorders. They may be prone to distress, unrealistic ideas, and maladaptive coping responses. Low scorers are seen as emotionally stable, calm, and

resilient. Their tendency to be relaxed, secure, and self-satisfied serves them well in high stress environments (McCrae & Costa, 1992).

The level of neuroticism influences how an individual perceives the world around them. The high scorer reacts very intensely on an emotional level that is often focused on one negative emotion such as anger or sadness, but there can be several other emotions in their reactions as well. For the individual who would score high on neuroticism normal situations are threatening, and hopelessness abounds since the emotional intensity clouds their thinking. In contrast, the low scorers are better able to think clearly without the interruptions of intense emotions. They can make clear decisions, but do not necessarily spend much time in a good mood. Positive feelings are associated more with high extraversion.

### Personality and Forgiveness

The last fifteen years has seen the beginning of research combining forgiveness and personality. In particular, the use of the Five Factor Model of personality has been used several times to identify specific personality traits that enable people to be more or less forgiving within a specific model or style of forgiveness. Several researchers have used the Five Factor Model to describe forgiveness in a general sense.

#### *Agreeableness*

The Agreeableness factor has been shown to correlate positively with forgiveness. Researchers including Ashton, Paunonen, Helmes, and Jackson (1998); John (1990); Berry, Worthington, Parrott, O'Conner, and Wade (2001); Sweet (2001); and Symington, Walker and Gorsuch (2002) have found that people who scored high on Agreeableness were quicker to forgive others than were people who scored low. In a similar fashion,

McCullough et al. (1998) found that people who scored high on Agreeableness scored low on vengefulness, which is the opposite of forgiveness.

### *Neuroticism*

Another factor that is clearly related to forgiveness is Neuroticism. Ashton et al. (1998), Sweet (2001), and Symington et al. (2002) have found that people who scored high on Neuroticism were slower to forgive compared to others. McCullough et al. (1998) likewise found that people who score high on Neuroticism scored high on vengefulness.

### Extroversion, Openness, and Conscientiousness

The three factors of Extroversion, Openness, and Conscientiousness have not been shown in the literature to correlate with forgiveness. Intuitively, it would seem that extroverted people would be quicker to forgive than introverted people. The same would be expected of people who are open to new experiences and conscientious about their relationships. But, Symington (2002), McCullough et al. (1998), John (1990), Berry et al. (2001), Sweet (2001), Ashton et al. (1998), Maltby, Macaskill, and Day (2001), and Ross, Kendall, Matters, Wrobel, and Rye (2004) have all found no significant correlation between the styles of forgiveness used in their studies and these personality factors.

### Forgiveness of Others

In a search looking specifically for research on forgiveness of others, little was found. Ross et al. (2004) and Walker and Gorsuch (2002) have both found that people who score high on Neuroticism are slow to forgive others. The same was true for people high on Agreeableness. These results were similar to the findings on forgiveness in general.

This lack of research is unfortunate for the purposes of this study due to its emphasis on forgiveness of others. On the other hand, the clear connection between Five Factor traits and forgiveness in general suggests that the Five Factor Model would make an effective instrument for the establishment of the validity of the proposed styles of forgiveness.

#### Forgiveness and the Assessment of Relationship Satisfaction

One aspect of forgiveness that is addressed repeatedly in the literature is that forgiveness occurs in relationships, especially close ones. The ways people experience relationships and their styles of relating impact how they experience offenses and how they choose to work through forgiveness. It is for this reason that the Fear-of-Intimacy Scale can reveal important personal differences in how different people experience intimate relationships and the resulting forgiveness issues. The Fear-of-Intimacy Scale is a 35-item assessment asking participants to respond to how well statements describe one's experience in a close, dating relationship. An item example would be "I would feel uncomfortable telling O about things in the past that I have felt ashamed of." where O is the partner in a relationship (Descutner & Thelen, 1991, p. 225).

An assumption of the Fear-of-Intimacy Scale is that three important features define intimate relationships. The first is that personal information is shared, the second is that shared information carries strong emotions, and the third is that there is high vulnerability due to the high value placed on the other person. Some people are better prepared, or willing, to experience these aspects of close relationships than other people, and the expectation of this research is that these differences was revealed to some extent

in the choices people make in forgiveness style. The relationship between Fear-of-Intimacy scale scores and CFSI scores should prove complex.

#### Assessment of CFSI Reliability

The process of evaluating the characteristics and quality of an assessment instrument often begins with an analysis of its reliability. The question is: How much of the variance of scale scores is not due to error variance? Or put in another way: To what extent are individual items of an instrument measuring the same thing? This becomes a measurement of internal consistency (Dawis, 1987).

The most widely used measure for assessing internal consistency of instrument items is the Chronbach's alpha. This statistic measures the average correlation between possible test scores and randomly chosen scores from the same population. The formula uses the number of items in a scale along with the average of paired-item correlations to arrive at a score that typically falls between zero and one. Scores closer to 1.00 indicate higher internal consistency or reliability than scores closer to zero (George & Mallery, 2001).

#### Assessment of CFSI Validity

The construct validity of an instrument, or the extent to which an instrument is measuring what it claims to measure, is normally addressed in two ways. The first is to look at convergent validity, and the second is to look at divergent validity. Convergent validity examines how a measure compares to other measures that are assessing a related construct. If the measure in question and the compared measure correlate moderate to high, there is evidence that the measure in question is valid. In the case of the CFSI, it was compared to the measure of Fear-of-Intimacy, and hopefully they will correlate

moderate to high. The individual CFSI scales will hopefully correlate high with unique scores of Five Factor personality. Caution must be used in the interpretation of the results because a high correlation might be the result of the measures assessing the same or a related construct, it might be the result of shared items, or it might be due to shared method variance (Kazdin, 1995). Furthermore, if the four scales of the CFSI are identifying four different constructs, the correlations was expected to vary. For example, one CFSI scale might be closer to the construct measured by the Five Factor Scales, and a different CFSI scale might be closer to the construct measured by the Fear-of-Intimacy Scale.

Divergent validity examines how a measure compares to other measures that are assessing unrelated constructs. The hope was that correlations would be low, indicating that the construct in question is different and unique. As the CFSI is compared to the demographic factors, the hope was that the individual scales will correlate low with individual differences indicating that the CFSI scales are consistently represented in a random population. In addition, the same care should be taken when interpreting correlation scores as one does when assessing convergent validity (Kazdin, 1995).

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD

#### Participants

The participants for this study were students enrolled in general education classes at Indiana State University (ISU) or graduate students enrolled in counseling related programs. It is important to note that general education classes draw students from multiple majors, and the classes typically reflect ISU student demographics. Their participation was voluntary, and some may have received some class credit for their contribution. The results from all students who choose to participate in the study were used. 131 participants were recruited, resulting in a minimum of 10 participants per variable in this research.

#### Instruments

This researcher distributed informed consent forms to all of the participants and completion of the assessments will suffice as consent. Participants were given a packet containing the demographic questions, the Five Factor Model instrument, CFSI, and the Fear-of-Intimacy Scale, which are appended except for the Fear-of-Intimacy Scale, and asked to put their answers on an optically read separate answer sheet.



### *Five Factor Model of Personality Assessment*

The first instrument administered was a 50 item inventory based on the Five Factor Model of personality. This instrument comes from the International Personality Item Pool (International Personality Item Pool, 2007) and has been widely used in research. Goldberg et al. (2006) have provided an excellent description of the scales' reliability and the extent to which it has been used in research but do not report reliability for each scale. Reliability coefficients reported by Buchanan, Goldberg, and Johnson (1999) were acceptable, and the Chronbach's alpha for Openness was .74. Conscientiousness was .84. Extraversion was .88. Agreeableness was .76. And Neuroticism was .83. A reliability coefficient were calculated from the data generated in this study and reported in the results.

Each of the 50 items asks participants to response to the question "How accurately does this statement describe me?" The items include aspects of the participant's personality and interactions with other people such as "Have frequent mood swings" and "Make friends easily." The participant chooses a response to each item from these possible choices: "very inaccurate," "moderately inaccurate," "neither inaccurate nor accurate," "moderately accurate," or "very accurate." This scale was selected because of its reliability and for its length.

### *Caperton Forgiveness Style Inventory*

Second, the participants were administered a CFSI which consists of 36 responses to the question "Recalling times when I have actually forgiven people, these are things I have actually done:" The participant chose a response to each item from the following

possibilities: “I frequently do this,” “I often do this,” “I sometimes do this,” “I rarely do this,” or “I never do this.” The items are based on four different scales.

#### *Intrapersonal Forgiveness Scale*

This ten item scale contains items which describe behaviors that have been identified by intrapersonal forgivers as important to their forgiving work. Examples include “I realize I have done similar things,” and “I see how I contributed to the problem.”

#### *Interpersonal Forgiveness Scale*

This ten item scale contains items which describe behaviors that have been identified by interpersonal forgivers as important to their forgiving work. Examples include “I learn why the offender did what he or she did,” and “I imagine what the offender was thinking.”

#### *Easy Going Non-Forgiving Scale*

This three item scale contains items which describe the experience of individuals who do not forgive other people because they never feel the need to do so. These items include “I do not forgive other people because I have never needed to,” “I do not forgive other people because I am easy going,” and “I do not forgive other people because I am not bothered by what other people say and do.”

#### *Grudge Holder Non-Forgiving Scale*

This three item scale contains items which describe the experience of individuals who are content not to forgive other people. They choose to hold on to their reactions to offenses for various reasons. These items include “I do not forgive other people because I hold grudges,” “I do not forgive other people because I like to have something to use

against other people in the future if the need arises,” and “I do not forgive other people because I can not let go of the feelings associated with being hurt.”

#### *Fear-of-Intimacy Scale*

Third, the participants were administered a Fear-of-Intimacy Scale which consists of two parts. In part A the participants are instructed to imagine they are in a close, dating relationship, then to respond to 30 statements as they would if they were in that close relationship. Each statement is rated as to how characteristic it is of the participant. In part B the participants are instructed to respond to five statements as they apply to their past relationships. Each is rated the same way as in Part A. The Fear-of-Intimacy Scale has demonstrated high test-retest reliability with a Pearson Correlation of .89,  $p < .001$  (Descutner & Thelen, 1991).

#### *Demographic Questions*

Finally participants were asked to complete the demographic questions. These items cover age, sex, race, current year in school, religious affiliation, and level of involvement in organized religious activity.

#### Analysis

Data was hand entered into a format usable by SPSS software. Each participant who completed the two instruments and the demographic sheet provided the information needed to be rated on four forgiveness scales and five personality trait scales.

#### *Research Question One*

Reliability of the four scales were computed using the most current version of SPSS and calculating a Cronbach's alpha. It is noted here that the Easy Going Non-Forgiving Scale and the Grudge Holder Non-Forgiving Scale each have a small number

of items and that consequently the interpretations of a Cronbach's alpha will not be straightforward.

### *Research Question Two*

Participants were classified as having a style of forgiveness of one of the four styles being studied according to Table 1. A first level of analysis was conducted in which participants were identified as using a particular type of forgiveness based on their highest score on each of the four scales on the CFSI. Specifically, score scales were converted to z scores, using all available data, and the highest of the four z scores were used to classify each participant as one of four types of forgivers. It should be noted that this is the same technique used in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to assign each type. Multiple regression was used to examine the association between each forgiveness style and personality scores. Appropriate follow-up analyses were conducted.

Pending results from this first level of analysis, a stricter rubric was used to identify each participant as using a particular forgiveness style. Using the sample mean for each of the four forgiveness scales, an individual was identified as using a particular style when they are above average on one CFSI scale and below average on all other CFSI scales. This technique has been used in other assessment tools, specifically the Religious Orientation Inventory (Allport & Ross, 1967). This will reduce the number of individuals identified as each specific style because not all people will meet this stricter criteria. Multiple regression was again used to examine the association between each forgiveness style and personality scores. Appropriate follow-up analyses were conducted.

The four style groups were analyzed for any relationship they may have with the Five Factor scales. A multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) were determined if each

style group has a distinct Five Factor pattern (four scales by five factors). The extent to which they are different from each other will determine the extent to which the forgiveness styles might be considered valid, distinct styles.

Table 1

*Identification of the Four Styles of Forgiveness*

	Interpersonal	Intrapersonal	Easy Going	Grudge
	Forgiving	Scale Score	Not-Forgiving	Holder
	Scale Score		Scale Score	Scale Score
Interpersonal	Above Mean	Below Mean	Below Mean	Below Mean
Intrapersonal	Below Mean	Above Mean	Below Mean	Below Mean
Easy Going Non-Forgivers	Below Mean	Below Mean	Above Mean	Below Mean
Grudge Holders	Below Mean	Below Mean	Below Mean	Above Mean

*Research Question Three*

A multiple regression analysis was used to determine if there was any association between any demographic variable and any of the four scales.

*Research Question Four*

A factor analysis was conducted using a varimax rotation. The dimensions of the variables were investigated and the extent to which, and the manner in which, they were related to each other was explored. This also provided insight into scale construction and suggestions for future developments.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### Research Questions

The results of this study begin with a table of the number of participants in each demographic category and tables of the Pilot and Revised Scale correlations. Then the evidence for the reliability of the CFSI, which is research question number one, is addressed. One result of this study is a revised version of the CFSI and for purposes of clarity CFSI (Pilot) will refer to the original instrument used in this study and CFSI (Revised) will refer to the instrument that resulted from analysis of the data in this study. Both versions are appended and the final version is simply referred to as the CFSI. The Cronbach's alpha results for each scale will be presented for internal consistency, and this will be followed with the correlations between individual items and their corresponding scales.

Addressing research question number two evidence for CFSI convergent and divergent validity will be presented. This will include the relationships between the CFSI scales and the five personality factors, and the relationship between the CFSI and the Fear-of-Intimacy Scale, including a report of the reliabilities of these instruments from this research.

Table 2 lists the number of participants in each demographic category.

Table 2

*Demographics*

Demographic Question	Number
Age in years:	
17 year old	0
18 year old	13
19 year old	39
20 year old	24
21 year old and up	45
Gender:	
Female	74
Male	46
Ethnicity:	
Native American/First Peoples	14
Asian-American or Pacific Islander-American	5
African-American	17
Latino/a American	1
European-American	80

Table 2 Continues

Table 2 Continued

Demographic Question	Number
Current year in school:	
First year	57
Sophomore	19
Junior	6
Senior	6
Graduate Student	33
Religious affiliation:	
Protestant	29
Catholic	22
Jewish	0
Muslim	3
Other or None	66
Currently, how active are you in organized religious activities?:	
Not at all active	42
Rarely active	30
Moderately active	34
Very active	14

Addressing research question number three, the results on the relationships between the CFSI and the demographic variables are presented. And finally for research



question number four the results of the factor analysis of the CFSI will be presented which will lead to the development of the second generation of forgiveness scales, the updated CFSI.

Table 3 presents the Pilot CFSI scale correlations.

Table 3

*Pilot Scale Pearson Correlations*

	Intrapersonal	Grudge Holder	Easy Going
Interpersonal	.504**	.075	-.257**
Intrapersonal		-.226*	.000
Grudge Holder			.155

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Table 4 presents the Revised CFSI scale correlations, including the additional scale, Humility, that emerged from the factor analysis.

Table 4

*Revised Scale Pearson Correlations*

	Interpersonal	Grudge Holder	Easy Going	Humility
Intrapersonal	.123	-.176*	-.078	.309**
Interpersonal		.097	-.221*	.304**
Grudge Holder			.155	-.088
Easy Going				.023

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

### Reliability of the CFSI (Pilot)

Overall, the reliability estimates for each of the four pilot scales were excellent and are displayed in Table 5. It should be kept in mind that the Easy Going and Grudge Holder scales each consisted of only three items which can artificially inflate reliability because the Cronbach's alpha is based on all possible split halves for a scale, and scales with small item numbers have fewer possible split halves. It is also important to note that responses from a small number of participants were excluded from the Intrapersonal and Interpersonal calculations due to incomplete response sets for these two scales.

Internal consistency values from .7 to .8 are generally accepted as indicating that a scale is reliable (Field, 2005). Measuring the lower limit of reliability, reliabilities of this magnitude show that each scale has an acceptable level of internal consistency and that all items are probably measuring a similar construct.

Table 5

#### *Reliability Estimates of CFSI (Pilot)*

Scale	Number of items in scale	N	Cronbach's alpha
Intrapersonal	10	126	.771
Interpersonal	10	129	.747
Easy Going	3	131	.784
Grudge Holders	3	131	.806

Table 6

*CFSI (Pilot) Intrapersonal Item to Scale Pearson Correlations*

Intrapersonal Item Number	C1	C3	C5	C9	C11	C13	C14	C16	C18	C20
Pearson Correlation with Intrapersonal Scale	.580	.608	.575	.584	.631	.638	.434	.440	.613	.638

## Correlations between CFSI (Pilot) Items and Scales

The ten items of the Intrapersonal scale,  $N = 126$ , produced item to scale Pearson Correlations, shown in Table 6, that ranged from .434 to .638, and all were significant at the 0.01 level. Based on these correlations items with low item to scale correlations were examined for construct validity.

Nine items of the Interpersonal scale,  $N = 126$ , produced item to scale Pearson Correlations, shown in Table 7, that ranged from .467 to .726. Item C6 showed an item to scale correlation of .082. All items except C6 were significant at the 0.01 level. Due to these correlation results items C1, C4, C6 and C7 were examined conceptually for construct validity.

Table 7

*CFSI (Pilot) Interpersonal Item and Scale Pearson Correlations*

Interpersonal Item Number	C1	C4	C6	C7	C8	C10	C12	C15	C17	C19
Pearson Correlation with Interpersonal Scale	.467	.502	.082	.477	.700	.632	.726	.697	.660	.488

The Pearson Correlations of the three Easy Going items,  $N = 131$ , are shown in Table 8. All were significant at the 0.01 level indicating strong item consistency. However because of the small number of items it should be no surprise to find such high item to scale correlations.

Table 8

*CFSI (Pilot) Easy Going Item and Scale Pearson Correlations*

Easy Going Item Number	C21	C22	C23
Pearson Correlation with Easy Going Scale	.748	.873	.880

The Pearson Correlations of the three Grudge Holder items,  $N = 131$ , are shown in Table 9. All were significant at the 0.01 level. As with the previous three item scale, these high item to scale correlations should be expected from similar items.

Table 9

*CFSI (Pilot) Grudge Holder Item and Scale Pearson Correlations*

Grudge Holder Item Number	C24	C25	C26
Pearson Correlation with Grudge Holder Scale	.843	.818	.891

## Convergent and Divergent Validity of the CFSI

*Relationships Between Forgiveness Styles and Personality Factors*

Because the Five Factor Model is central to this study, the issue of the reliability of the five factor personality assessment used in this research must be addressed.

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were calculated from this study's data and are shown in Table 10. The responses from participants with incomplete response sets were excluded from the calculations. The coefficients were all acceptable indicating the Five Factor inventory used here is appropriate for the purposes of the validity study (Field, 2005).

Table 10

*Reliability Estimates of the IPIP Personality Inventory*

Scale	Number of Items in Scale	<i>N</i>	Cronbach's alpha
Conscientiousness	10	128	.806
Extroversion	10	129	.824
Neuroticism	10	130	.824
Openness	10	129	.780
Agreeableness	10	131	.730

One argument for the validity of the CFSI is based on the expectation of unique relationships between the forgiveness styles and other variables, especially the five factors of personality. A unique pattern of associations between forgiveness scale scores and five factor personality scores was expected. This would indicate that there are underlying personality traits in the four styles of forgiveness. Moderate correlations are expected since forgiveness as conceptualized here is a collection of behaviors, and personality is not conceptualized as behavioral.

Individuals who scored highest on the Intrapersonal scale, called here Intrapersonals, revealed modest positive Pearson Correlations with Agreeableness (.189,  $N = 126, p < .05$ ), Conscientiousness (.182,  $N = 124, p < .05$ ), and Openness (.293,  $N = 124, p < .01$ ). Simultaneous regression surprisingly revealed Openness as the strongest predictor with a Beta Standardized Coefficient of .238. This correlation would indicate that individuals who score high on intrapersonal style of forgiveness are open to new experiences and new ways of doing things. They accept changes and complexity, and they prefer a broader viewpoint over details.

Individuals who scored highest on the Interpersonal scale, called here Interpersonals, revealed modest positive Pearson Correlations with Extroversion (.266,  $N = 128, p < .01$ ), Neuroticism (.212,  $N = 128, p < .05$ ), and Openness (.360,  $N = 127, p < .01$ ). Simultaneous regression revealed the predictors in this order: Neuroticism with a Coefficient of .309, Openness with a Beta Standardized Coefficient of .264, and Extroversion with a Coefficient of .186. This would indicate that individuals who score high on Interpersonal style of forgiveness are open to new experiences, change, and complexity. They are quick to experience feelings associated with anxiety, anger, and

pessimism. They are also quick to experience positive feelings and enjoy working with people.

Individuals who scored highest on the Easy Going scale, called here Easy Goings, revealed a modest negative Pearson Correlation with Neuroticism ( $-.174, N = 130, p < .05$ ). Simultaneous regression revealed Neuroticism as the only significant negative predictor with a Beta Standardized Coefficient of  $-.263$ . This negative correlation would indicate that individuals who score high on Easy Going style of forgiveness tend to have low neuroticism scores, which are associated with a stable affective response to events. High scores on Easy Going indicate that forgiveness is a non-issue in their lives, so while they don't forgive, it appears from the analysis of this data the reason may be that they don't become easily offended, as indicated by their low neuroticism scores.

Individuals who scored highest on the Grudge Holder scale, called here Grudge Holders, revealed positive Pearson Correlations with Neuroticism ( $.483, N = 130, p < .01$ ), and negative correlations with Agreeableness ( $-.471, N = 131, p < .01$ ), Conscientiousness ( $-.353, N = 128, p < .01$ ), and Openness ( $-.189, N = 129, p < .05$ ). Simultaneous regression revealed Neuroticism as one positive predictor with a Beta Standardized Coefficient of  $.315$ , and Agreeableness as one negative predictor with a Coefficient of  $-.276$ . It should be noted that this negative correlation with Openness, for the non-forgiving style, is in opposition to the correlations found between openness and the two styles of forgiving. High scorers on the Grudge Holder style of forgiveness are quick to experience feelings associated with anxiety, anger, and pessimism. They tend to put their own needs first before the needs of other people. They are not well-organized and tend to be spontaneous and they avoid new experiences and new ways of doing

things. They do not care for changes and complexity, and they are quick to accept current levels of achievement.

Table 11

*Pearson Correlations between CFSI (Pilot) Styles and Personality Factors*

	Agr.	Con.	Ext.	Neu.	Open.
Intrapersonal	.189*	.182*	.113	-.006	.293**
Interpersonal	.032	.083	.266**	.212*	.360**
Easy Going	-.082	.055	-.125	-.174*	-.155
Grudge Holders	-.471**	-.353**	-.103	.483**	-.189*

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ , Agr-Agreeableness, Con-Conscientiousness, Ext – Extroversion, Neu-Neuroticism, Open - Openness

Table 11 summarizes the correlations between styles of forgiveness and personality factors. Table 12 summarizes the results of the simultaneous regression equations. Together they illustrate the unique five factor profiles for each of the four styles of forgiveness, lending support to the argument for convergent validity.



Table 12

*Simultaneous Regression Standardized Beta Coefficients between Forgiveness Styles and Personality Factors*

	First Predictor	Second Predictor	Third Predictor
Intrapersonal	Open .238	Con .178	Agr .150
Interpersonal	Neu .309	Open .264	Extro .186
Easy Going	Neu -.263	Agr -.151	Extro -.100
Grudge Holders	Neu .315	Agr -.276	Open -.136

*Agr-Agreeableness, Con-Conscientiousness, Ext – Extroversion, Neu-Neuroticism, Open - Openness*

#### Relationship Between the CFSI and the Fear-of-Intimacy Scale

Because relationships in general, and fear-of-intimacy specifically, are important to this study, the issue of reliability of the Fear-of-Intimacy scale must be addressed. A reliability estimate for the FOI scale was calculated from this study's data. The responses from participants with incomplete responses were excluded from the calculation. The Cronbach's alpha for the Fear-of-Intimacy Scale was .910 (35 items,  $N = 128$ ), which is acceptable. Scores that are as high or higher than .7 to .8 are considered good evidence for scale reliability (Field, 2005).

Table 13 lists the correlations between each of the four CFSI (Pilot) scales and the Fear-of-Intimacy scale.

Table 13

*Pearson Correlations between CFSI (Pilot) Scales and Fear-of-Intimacy*

	<i>N</i>	Correlation with Fear-of-Intimacy
Intrapersonal	123	-.171
Interpersonal	126	-.228*
Easy Going	128	.214*
Grudge Holders	128	.365

\* indicates correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

The Interpersonal and Intrapersonal scales both revealed a negative correlation with Fear-of-Intimacy, indicating that high scorers tend not to experience anxiety when experiencing an intimate relationship. The Easy Going and Grudge Holder non-forgiveness styles both revealed a positive correlation with Fear-of-Intimacy, indicating that high scorers are quick to experience fear and anxiety in intimate relationships. These results lend support to the validity of the CFSI because the forgiving and non-forgiving styles revealed opposite and expected results. They are different. It is intuitive that the Intrapersonals and Interpersonals would have less relationship anxiety than the two non-forgiving styles, who tend to avoid relationship conflict.

*Relationships between the CFSI and Demographic Variables*

As was expected, the CFSI was not affected by age but was minimally influenced by gender. Only Easy Going scores were related to gender with males scoring higher than females. Women ( $n = 74$ ) showed a mean of 4.8 ( $\sigma = 2.3$ ), which was lower than the men ( $n = 46$ ) who showed a mean of 6.3 ( $\sigma = 2.6$ ).

Table 14

*Gender*

Style	Mean		Standard deviation		Standard error		Sample Size	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Easy Going	4.88	6.37	2.31	2.64	.27	.39	74	46
Grudge	6.03	6.13	2.93	2.75	.34	.40	74	46
<i>Holder</i>								
Interpersonal	35.32	33.78	5.45	7.03	.64	1.05	73	45
Intrapersonal	34.16	34.18	5.67	6.38	.67	.95	71	45

Table 15

*Gender ANOVA*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
<b>Easy Going</b>					
Between Groups	65.460	2	32.730	5.497	.005
Within Groups	702.623	118	5.954		
Total	768.083	120			
<b>Grudge Holders</b>					
Between Groups	.308	2	.154	.019	.981
Within Groups	967.163	118	8.196		
Total	967.471	120			
<b>Interpersonal Between</b>					
Groups	76.402	2	38.201	1.029	.361
Within Groups	4307.531	116	37.134		
Total	4383.933	118			
<b>Intrapersonal</b>					
Between Groups	9.938	2	4.969	.140	.869
Within Groups	4037.874	114	35.420		
Total	4047.812	116			

Table 16

*Ethnicity ANOVA*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
<i>Easy Going</i>					
Between Groups	24.667	4	6.167	.961	.432
Within Groups	718.581	112	6.416		
Total	743.248	116			
<i>Grudge Holders</i>					
Between Groups	9.725	4	2.431	.312	.869
Within Groups	871.728	112	7.783		
Total	881.453	116			
<i>Interpersonal Between</i>					
Groups	384.264	4	96.066	2.661	.036
Within Groups	3970.467	110	36.095		
Total	4354.730	114			
<i>Intrapersonal</i>					
Between Groups	535.103	4	133.776	4.322	.003
Within Groups	3342.632	110	30.950		
Total	3877.735	112			

There was little to no influence of ethnicity on the CFSI results. The only ethnic group affecting any CFSI result was Latino Latina American with a higher mean for Interpersonal. But, unfortunately there was only one participant in that group.

Surprisingly, year in school did have one significant impact on the CFSI. The only group to reveal a difference was 3<sup>rd</sup> year juniors. Their mean of 7.6667 ( $\sigma = 4.17931$ ) on Easy Going was noticeably higher than all other groups. This result may well be a random error.

Religion had virtually no affect on the CFSI responses. The only group to reveal a difference was Muslim which had a lower mean of 23.5000 ( $\sigma = 3.53553$ ) on Interpersonal. But, there were only two participants in this group.

The CFSI responses did show one surprising result with how active participants were in religion. The only noticeable difference was the “very active” group which scored high on Intrapersonal with a mean of 39.8462 ( $\sigma = 4.72310, n = 13$ ). Table 17 shows the correlation between level of religious activity and scale scores.

Table 17

*Correlation Between Religious Activity and Scale Scores*

	Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	Grudge Holder	Easy Going	Humility
How Active	.173	-.001	-.210*	-.156	.345**

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

The lack of a clear and consistent relationships between demographic items of gender, ethnicity, and religion lend support to the divergent validity of the CFSI. The

correlation pattern between level of religious activity and the revised scales also lends support to divergent validity. The four forgiveness styles do not reflect demographic or religious activity differences. The forgiveness styles are different from the demographic factors. Details of the Humility scale included in Table 17 are covered below.

### Factor Analysis of the CFSI

#### *Varimax Rotation Factor Analysis*

The principle component analysis of all items on the CFSI (Pilot) using a Varimax rotation method with Kaiser Normalization revealed 6 components with Eigenvalues greater than 1 and that also appeared important using a scree test. The Eigenvalues for factors 1 through 6 were 5.266, 3.749, 2.693, 1.942, 1.461, and 1.151. Table 17 illustrates the item loading on each of the six factors found in this analysis of the CFSI (Pilot).

Table 18

#### *Forgiveness Style Items and Component Factors*

Item (Scale)	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
C1 (I)		.591				
C2 (E)		.726				
C3 (I)				.808		
C4 (E)	.557					
C5 (I)		.717				
C6 (E)		.641				
C7 (E)		.702				

Table 18 Continues

Table 18 Continued

Item (Scale)	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
C8 (E)	.770					
C9 (I)			-.546			
C10 (E)	.583					
C11 (I)				.706		
C12 (E)	.798					
C13 (I)		.694				
C14 (I)						-.684
C15 (E)	.671					
C16 (I)						.566
C17 (E)	.502		.501			
C18 (I)				.624		
C19 (E)	.541					
C20 (I)		.529				
C21 (EG)					.695	
C22 (EG)					.870	
C23 (EG)					.858	
C24 (GH)			.814			
C25 (GH)			.738			
C26 (GH)			.821			



The Interpersonal scale appeared in factor one. The Intrapersonal scale appeared in factor two. The Grudge Holder scale appeared in factor three. And the Easy Going scale appeared in factor five. Factors four and six appear to be identifying two unique groups of items from within the Intrapersonal scale. Based on an examination of item to scale correlations and factor analysis results the CFSI was revised, removing items with low item to scale correlations and which did not load coherently on a single factor. This resulted in the revised CFSI.

#### *Revised CFSI scales*

Using the results of the factor analysis, weak items and unrelated factors were eliminated from the Interpersonal and Intrapersonal scales. This left six items in the Interpersonal and Intrapersonal scales and three items each in the Grudge Holder and Easy Going scales remained the same. Factor four, based on three items, resulted in a scale which has been labeled Humility, which is not a process of forgiveness or a style of non-forgiveness, but is a coherent factor from these results. The result was an updated CFSI scale with 21 items which appears in Appendix C. Using the original data participants' scores were re-calculated using the revised CFSI items and scales. Reliability estimates were calculated on this new scaling, and correlations were again computed with five factor personality scores in order to explore the psychometric properties of this new updated CFSI.

Table 19

*Reliability Estimates of CFSI (Revised)*

Scale	Number of items in scale	<i>N</i>	Pilot CFSI Cronbach's alpha	Number of items in scale	Revised CFSI Cronbach's alpha
Intrapersonal	10	126	.771	6	.794
Interpersonal	10	129	.747	6	.768
Easy Going	3	131	.784	3	.784
Grudge Holder	3	131	.806	3	.806
Humility	0			3	.693

The updated Intrapersonal scale (6 items,  $N = 129$ ) showed a Cronbach's alpha improvement to .794. The updated Interpersonal scale (6 items,  $N = 129$ ) showed a Cronbach's alpha improvement to .768. Cronbach's alphas of .75, as found on the all four scales, are considered acceptable (Field, 2005). Measuring the lower limit of reliability, reliabilities of this magnitude show that each scale has an acceptable level of internal consistency and that all items are measuring a similar construct.

Simultaneous regression analysis of the revised CFSI with the five personality factors produced slightly different results than the data from the pilot CFSI, and lends stronger support to instrument validity. The results for Easy Going and Grudge Holder scales remain the same since no scale changes were made. For the Intrapersonal scale simultaneous regression again revealed Openness as the primary predictor with an improved Beta Standardized Coefficient of .368. The surprise changes came with results

of the simultaneous regression for Interpersonal scale. Openness had been a predictor for the pilot CFSI and was eliminated as a predictor for the revised CFSI. Neuroticism became the highest predictor for the Interpersonal scale, with an improved Beta Standardized Coefficient of .378. Extroversion became the second predictor of the Interpersonal scale score with an improved Coefficient of .230. And Conscientiousness became the third predictor for Interpersonal scale scores with a Coefficient of .182.

Note that the revised Interpersonal third predictor changed from Extroversion to Conscientiousness. This reflects removing the items identified in the factor analysis as not falling under factor one. So, rather than sharing the openness characteristic with the Intrapersonal style as had been seen in the pilot data analysis, based on the revised scale the Interpersonals are primarily identified by their tendency to experience negative emotions, a preference for working and socializing with people, and preferring clear organization and accomplished goals.

Table 20

*Simultaneous Regression Standardized Beta Coefficients between CFSI (Revised) and Personality Factors*

	First Predictor	Second Predictor	Third Predictor
Pilot Intrapersonal	Open, .238	Con, .178	Agr, .150
Revised Intrapersonal	Open, .368		
Pilot Interpersonal	Open, .238	Con, .178	Agr, .150
Revised Interpersonal	Neu, .378	Extro, .230	Con, .182
Easy Going	Neu, -.263	Agr, -.151	Extro, -.100
Grudge Holder	Neu, .315	Agr, -.276	Open, -.136

Agr. – Agreeableness, Neu. – Neuroticism, Con. – Conscientiousness, Extro. - Extroversion

### Summary

The first research question addressed the reliability of the CFSI. Overall, the reliability estimates for each of the four scales was excellent, and the revised CFSI has higher Cronbach's alphas than the pilot version. Internal consistency is acceptable for all four scales. Individual item to corresponding scale correlations were acceptable overall, being neither too high or too low. Items with low correlations were examined for construct validity, and eight were eliminated from the Intrapersonal and Interpersonal scales to create the revised CFSI.

The second research question addressed the convergent and divergent validity of the CFSI. In both respects the pilot and revised CFSI was strong. The four forgiveness styles revealed unique correlations with the five personality factors and intimate

relationship anxiety. Overall, the results were in line with intuitive expectations. In addition, the reliability coefficients of the personality and intimacy inventories were excellent, lending strength to the argument in favor of convergent and divergent validity.

The third research question addressed the relationship of the CFSI with demographic variables. As expected, there was minimal relationship between demographic variables and scores on each of the four CFSI scales. The lack of relationships between demographic items of gender, ethnicity, religion, and religious activity lend support to the divergent validity of the CFSI.

The fourth research question addressed the results of the factor analysis of the CFSI. Six component factors were identified. The Interpersonal, Easy Going, and Grudge Holder scales lined up with factors one, three, and five. The Intrapersonal scale appeared to be divisible into the three remaining factors. Construct analysis of individual items, along with the factor analysis, resulted in a revised CFSI with six items each for the Interpersonal and Intrapersonal scales, and the original three each for the Easy Going and Grudge Holder scales. The reliability coefficients improved slightly for the revised CFSI, and the simultaneous regression predictors stayed the same except for the Interpersonal scale which lost openness and gained conscientiousness.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

This section discusses the implications of the results of each research question and focus specifically on the implications for the professional practice of psychology and counseling when working with client issues of forgiveness. The discussion offers the therapist suggestions for assessment, clinical goal setting, session management, and long term support work.

#### The CFSI (Revised) as an Assessment Tool

The first research question addressed the reliability and validity of the CFSI. The four styles and the specific inventory items were the result of a qualitative methodological assessment of real life responses. People who described things they had actually done in relation to forgiving someone else had demonstrated to this researcher that there were at least these four distinct styles in the forgiveness and non-forgiveness process. The next step of this first research question was to support this idea of four styles of forgiveness quantitatively by developing an assessment tool and examining the reliability and validity of the CFSI instrument.

The strong reliability coefficients found in both the pilot and revised versions are evidence that the CFSI styles reflect the ways in which people participate in forgiveness and non-forgiveness. The high Cronbach's alpha coefficients tell us that the items in each

style are measuring the same construct; that the concepts reflected by the items are internally consistent. The Pearson Correlations of individual items to respective scales support this conclusion. Analysis of the initial data was used to develop a revised version of the CFSI which had stronger reliabilities and stronger evidence of validity as covered in Chapter 4.

The first basic implication of the CFSI is that people work through forgiveness and non-forgiveness issues in different ways, and that an individual's style of forgiveness or non-forgiveness reflects aspects of their personality. The implications for the professional practice of psychology and counseling are clear. The more that psychologists and counselors appreciate that clients can have different styles of forgiveness, the more flexibility therapists can have when working with clients who have different styles of forgiveness. Further, understanding that there are two styles of non-forgiveness will also help in case conceptualization and treatment planning. Treating clients according to their preferred style of forgiveness, or non-forgiveness, is a way to be more effective in the counseling process because of the diverse styles of forgiveness. The differences in clients' styles of forgiveness, as well as styles of non-forgiveness, have been established in this study and should be respected in the therapeutic process. The more clients perceive that counselors understand and respect their style of forgiveness and non-forgiveness; the more clients will trust a counselor to work with them through the difficult and often painful steps of forgiveness, if indeed working through forgiveness is an issue at all for a client.

### *Items Omitted from the Revised CFSI*

The factor analysis of the Pilot CFSI revealed six components, four of which became the four scales of the Revised CFSI. Three of the original Interpersonal items were switched to the Humility scale, and two others were eliminated due to low correlations with any scale. Five of the eliminated items fell into two of the component factors which led to further construct analysis. The sixth component included the two items: C14, "I wait until I am in a better mood to think about it," and C16, "It's a decision of my will." There being only two items and showing no obvious connecting theme led to them being dropped.

### *The Humility Scale*

Three items identified as factor 4 in the analysis were excluded from the four Revised scales. On the other hand these three items, unlike C14 and C16 above, did appear to share a common theme. These three items were: C3, "I realize I am not perfect," C11, "I remind myself that I am still growing as a person," and C18, "I remind myself that I should not be self-righteous." The common theme among these items appeared to be humility. That, along with the positive Pearson Correlation with both Interpersonal and Intrapersonal scale scores, and no correlation with either of the non-forgiving styles provide evidence that these three items somehow mediated the forgiving processes led to them being presented as a fifth scale. One clear implication is that the presence or absence of humility is an important consideration in how or whether an individual works through forgiveness. A second clear implication is that these items, reflecting humility, are not associated with any style or process of non-forgiveness. The



ways in which these three items are related to the forgiveness process should be investigated further.

### The Validity of the CFSI (Revised)

The next research question addressed the validity of the CFSI. First, validity was examined using the relationships between CFSI scale scores and the Five Factor Model of personality. Second, the relationship between CFSI scales and relationship anxiety, as measured by the FOI scale, was examined. The Pearson Correlations between the CFSI styles and the personality factors revealed modest yet significant relationships. The correlations were not as high as the researcher had hoped for, but the main expectation was that there would be a statistically relevant result that provided evidence for a unique pattern of personality traits that were related to scores on the CFSI scales. The idea of the CFSI is not to explain the totality of forgiveness experiences, but to identify styles of forgiveness and non-forgiveness that are important enough to be a focus of clinical attention. The correlations between styles indicated that these are not types like those proposed for the MBTI, but styles. Some clients may well be engaged in forgiveness using two different styles, and some of those individuals may have a preferred style. The correlations between CFSI scores and personality scores revealed a unique pattern of personality scores for each of the four forgiveness styles, providing strong support for the scales and their underlying constructs.

The relationship between the CFSI and the FOI scale suggests that individuals who score high on Intrapersonal and Interpersonal scales experience low levels of anxiety when experiencing intimate relationships in general. This might be one of the main reasons these clients would make excellent prospects for forgiveness work using

traditional models of therapy. The lack of underlying anxiety allows them to explore the sensitive feelings and private thoughts associated with intimate relationships, exactly where much of the most important forgiveness work occurs.

On the other hand, individuals who score high on Easy Going and Grudge Holder scales in this study revealed high anxiety in intimate relationships. This would explain to some extent why Grudge Holders may choose not to forgive in the first place, and why they may not make good prospects for ongoing forgiveness work. Counseling work might be more productive if the focus was placed on managing anxiety in relationships rather than full reconciliation through traditional styles of forgiveness. Counseling goals for these clients might appear to be less demanding than the forgiveness goals for individuals scoring high on the Intrapersonal and Interpersonal scales but from the perspective of the Grudge Holder client a small amount of traditional (Intrapersonal or Interpersonal) forgiveness work is more than enough for clients who score high on the Grudge Holder scale.

The fact that the Easy Going participants also presented with high anxiety in the face of intimate relationships came as a surprise to the researcher. Intuitively one would expect the opposite. On the other hand, one possible reason why these individuals would “never get their feelings hurt” is because they have learned to avoid intimate relationships in the first place as a way to manage this anxiety. Like the people who choose not to pursue sports, games, or academics for fear of losing, the Easy Going person does not risk losing at relationships by simply choosing not to play.

Previous research (Ashton et al., 1998; Cawley, Martin, & Johnson, 2000; Mauger, Saxon, Hamill, & Pannel, 1996; Worthington, 1998) had not shown a

relationship between Extroversion, Openness, and Conscientiousness and forgiveness, to a similar extent than was found in this research. However it is important to note that previous research defined forgiveness as a unitary construct even though different researchers used different definitions of forgiveness. This current research, identifying four styles of forgiveness and non-forgiveness, provided a research avenue previously unknown when examining the relationship between forgiveness and personality.

### The Intrapersonal Style

The simultaneous regression analyses revealed openness as the single best predictor of the Intrapersonal scores on the CFSI, and individuals scoring high on the Intrapersonal scale tended to score low on Fear of Intimacy. Openness was a predictor of scores on the Intrapersonal style of forgiveness in a way that was not shared with any other style. Characteristically people who score high on Openness pursue and enjoy experiences that are unfamiliar. Being untraditional, they are curious and creative and enjoy analyzing new experiences. They tend to be theoretically oriented and analytical. Behaviorally, these people engage in different hobbies and activities that are out of the routine. In regard to values, these people are open-minded and nonconforming and are quick to reconsider their opinions and attitudes (Piedmont, 1998).

In addition, Intrapersonal forgivers have vivid imaginations and regularly daydream, not as an escape, but as a way of creating a complex and entertaining inner world. Fantasies are developed over time and are considered an important part of their life experiences. They have a deep love and appreciation for art and aesthetic experiences. Feelings are deeper and more differentiated than for other people and are more appreciated. This is true for both positive and negative emotions.

An interpretation of the moderate Pearson correlations suggest that Agreeableness and Conscientiousness are relevant descriptors of Intrapersonal forgivers as well. These moderate correlations lead to the inference that Intrapersonals might be easy going, compassionate, and trusting, and that they might also be persistent, dependable, and consistent in goal-directed behavior.

### *Implications for Therapy*

When a client presents as an Intrapersonal forgiver, often using the language found in the scale items, the therapist should recognize the client as a good candidate for exploring forgiveness in the therapy process. The therapeutic focus should be on the Intrapersonal forgiving client's own thinking, feelings, and experiences. The common therapeutic effort to get a client to work face to face with an offender might be unnecessarily frustrating for the Intrapersonal person. While Intrapersonals typically score low on the Fear-of-Intimacy scale, indicating a readiness to work on intimate relationship issues, it might be the case that Intrapersonal clients get frustrated with the slow responses and hesitations of others. Focusing directly on the client's own thoughts, feelings, and actions might be the most effective route for positive change with a client who has the characteristics of an Intrapersonal forgiver.

The therapist should be quick to explore the client's reasoning and perceptions of forgiveness issues, even if they are emotionally charged. Not only will this client tolerate the anxiety and fear, the intensity will be appreciated. An active imagination and creativity, as evidenced by typically high Openness scores, will enable this client to work quickly. The client will be able to understand how things have turned out the way they did, and will be able to imagine how relationships can be in the future. Analysis will be

eagerly anticipated. Compared to other clients, the Intrapersonals will be more able to understand the minds of people who have offended them and then to make sense out of conflict. But care must be taken to consolidate gains as this client will be eager to move on. Repetition of things learned will be helpful.

The Intrapersonal style might be the most complex and varied of the four styles. Their Intrapersonal forgiveness style combined with their openness to new ideas and experiences suggest that therapists can be more flexible with counseling approaches and quicker to change approaches with these clients than with others. If one popular outline of forgiveness steps is not working well, feel free to switch to another one.

#### The Interpersonal Style

The simultaneous regressions revealed that three of the five personality factors were predictors for the Interpersonal style forgivers. Individuals who scored high on the Interpersonal scale tended to score high on Neuroticism, high on Extroversion, and high on Conscientiousness. In addition, individuals who scored high on the Interpersonal style scored low on fear of intimacy. Interpersonal forgiveness style people tend to score highest on Neuroticism which leads to the inference that they are prone to experiencing anxiety, anger, and depression. Being self-conscious, they are easily embarrassed, avoid shame, and have feelings of inferiority. Impulsiveness is a struggle for Interpersonal clients in that desires are difficult to resist. A key feature is that they are vulnerable to stress (Piedmont, 1998).

The Interpersonals also score high on Extroversion leading to the inference that they feel a need to be involved with other people and feel a need for stimulation and positive emotions such as joy. Seen as affectionate and friendly, they prefer to be in the

company of other people. Being assertive, they advance socially. Keeping busy, they live life at a quick and energetic pace. Excitement and risk taking is valued. In contrast to the tendency of Interpersonals to experience negative emotions, Intrapersonals also have a tendency to experience positive emotions. Laughter is common as they are perceived as cheerful and optimistic.

The third high score for Interpersonals is on Conscientiousness which leads to the inference that they have goal-directed behavior and are persistent and consistently motivated. They feel confident and well prepared. Efficient and methodical, things should be in their place. Dependable, these people stick to their moral obligations. They strive for achievement and get jobs done. Cautious and deliberate, they think things through before they act.

#### *Implications for Therapy*

When a client presents a high Interpersonal score, the client should be seen as a good candidate for forgiveness work. To be most effective with the Interpersonal client the therapist should keep several things in mind. First, if there are negative emotions involved they might be surprisingly strong. The client might change from anxiety to anger and to depression in short order. Being impulsive and self-conscious, they might feel strong desires to do forgiveness work but feel stymied by embarrassment or shame. An initial assessment might suggest that Interpersonal clients are not good candidates for therapy, but that would be wrong. The therapist should provide a safe environment for emotional work because of the associated high scores on Neuroticism, develop a strong relationship based on trust, and not let the client move too fast.

Clearly, these clients are good prospects for therapeutic success due to their desire for relationships, warm feelings, and activity. The therapist should take advantage of these desires and point out how being extroverted might open them up to interpersonal conflict and the need for forgiveness, more so than for other people. Adding their desire to work hard and finish tasks, these people can be pushed and challenged to confront offenders in person. Not wanting to leave a job undone, this might be one reason people with high Interpersonal scores reported a willingness to focus on the experience of offenders and have a desire for reconciliation. In fact, some of these people had a difficult time seeing any difference between forgiveness and reconciliation. They saw communication with the offender as a requirement for forgiveness. Alternative definitions of forgiveness might be helpful here.

As noted under the Intrapersonal discussion, Interpersonals also experience low levels of anxiety in the face of intimate relationships. This is surprising given their propensity for negative emotions. But they still should make good prospects for forgiveness counseling, especially if there is an appreciation for the need to focus on the offenders and their experiences.

#### The Easy Going Style

The simultaneous regression revealed the Easy Going style as the people who score low on Neuroticism, and score high on Fear of Intimacy. They are seen as calm, relaxed, and in control. Resisting temptation is easy. Being gentle and even-tempered, they are not intimidated by social situations (Piedmont, 1998). This even temperedness, along with their high relationship anxiety, suggests they are the opposites of the Interpersonals.

### *Implications for Therapy*

If a client says she or he does not get their feelings hurt except on rare occasions, they may be telling the truth. Sometimes therapists and counselors can be quick to assume denial or some other deluding defense mechanism is at work, when in fact the client is not very sensitive to interpersonal conflict. The therapist should at least consider the possibility that some people do not have the same need to forgive that is seen in other clients. When clients scoring high on the Easy Going style say they have no memory of ever needing to forgive someone, the therapist can consider taking them at their word. During the interviewing stage of this study, these people had a difficult time seeing relationships from the perspective of people who get their feelings hurt on a regular basis. One unexpected observation from this study was the tendency of the Easy Going style people to demonstrate high anxiety in the face of intimate relationships. While the tendency of the Grudge Holders to feel anxiety in relationships made intuitive sense, the result for the Easy Going people suggest there is more going on with them than was revealed in the initial interviews.

The results of this research pose some interesting questions about those who have an Easy Going style of forgiveness: Are they normally very relaxed and afraid of relationships? Could it be that they are at more emotional risk than any other group and they cope by avoiding intimate relationships? Could it be that they avoid the need to forgive other people by avoiding situations where conflict might arise?

When these clients say they feel no need to work on interpersonal conflicts, or that they are satisfied with holding a grudge for a while to avoid victimization, it might be wise for a counselor to take this at face value. A more helpful therapeutic goal for the



Easy Going client might be to plan for future maintenance of relationship anxiety, no matter how successful ongoing forgiveness work turns out to be.

### The Grudge Holder Style

The simultaneous regression revealed the Grudge Holder style as people who scored high on Neuroticism, low on Agreeableness, and in addition scored high on Fear of Intimacy. The high Neuroticism score describes them as being prone to experiencing anxiety, anger, and depression. Being self-conscious they are easily embarrassed and have feelings of inferiority. Impulsiveness is a struggle in that desires are hard to resist, and they are vulnerable to stress. But this high Neuroticism is combined with low Agreeableness, which is a tendency to be suspicious and pessimistic. They are willing to manipulate others and are very guarded with their own feelings. They stretch the truth out of a sense of need. Not inclined to get involved with the problems of others, they are sometimes seen as cynical and snobbish. They prefer to compete rather than to cooperate. Feeling a sense of superiority, they are not moved by the emotional complaints of others. Cold, hard logic is always preferred (Piedmont, 1998), This highly anxious and highly guarded description of the Grudge Holders is almost opposite to that of the Intrapersonal.

### *Implications for Therapy*

The first suggestion for therapists to keep in mind when working with these clients is to respect their choice not to forgive. It might be that they are accomplishing something else, such as self-protection, or that they conceptualize relationships in different ways that do not have the need for forgiveness as defined by therapists. In fact, the Grudge Holders might have some things to teach us. While some counselors might tend to attribute most or all relationship anxiety to early life experiences, this research

suggests that relationship anxiety might be a natural result of personality type. In relationships where risk is high, the Grudge Holder tendency to feel anxiety might be an asset, a protection from possible emotional injury. When interpersonal conflict arises, finding an effective way to maintain relationships might be better in the long run over efforts at forgiveness. Even after successful forgiveness work, these people will still experience relationship anxiety quicker than others. As counselors work with these clients, it would be important to keep effective defenses in place. And similar to the Easy Going people, personal control in relationships and emotional maintenance might well be a focus of ongoing counseling work, along with trust in general.

#### CFSI (Revised) and Demographic Variables

##### *Gender*

The result that men more often than women scored as Easy Going has implications for counseling and gender differences. Female clients have had a well deserved reputation for being more open to the work and benefits of counseling than male clients. It might be that women, being less easy going than men in general, actually experience more interpersonal conflict than do men. When there is conflict, men might be better able to let go of negative feelings, or to suppress them in both healthy and unhealthy ways.

##### *Year in School*

Another interesting result involving Easy Going scores was the higher frequency of 3<sup>rd</sup> year juniors who were Easy Going in the sample. While no obvious explanation is apparent to this researcher, one thought is that these students have survived the adjustment and identity struggles of the first two years of college. With that anxiety out

of the way and not yet facing the pressure of the graduation job search, these students are free to be easygoing in this unique time of their college experience.

### *Ethnicity and Religion*

The fact that both ethnicity and religious affiliation showed no affect on CFSI scores suggests that they are not important factors in how individuals prefer to work through forgiveness issues. This is noteworthy given the tendency for many people, including counselors, to work from stereotypes of both ethnic groups and specific religious affiliations. The point is to be fair and open minded and to expect surprises.

### *Religious Activity*

One other demographic result worth mentioning was the tendency of participants who marked “very active in religion” to score more frequently than others as Intrapersonals. It might be that these people have been more consistently encouraged than others to pursue forgiveness as part of their religious education. It might be that they have invested more time in conceptualizing relationship issues and how to work on them and so are more adept at forgiveness work. It might also be that they have developed a preference to work things out in their own heads, as is characteristic of Intrapersonals in general. It has already been noted that the Intrapersonals might be the most complex of the four forgiveness styles. The many different religious experiences might suggest ways people get into and develop this forgiveness style.

### Study Limitations

The limitations of this study begin with the university context. While the qualitative interviews were well represented by participants with varied demographics, all of the participants who filled out the questionnaires were university students. While both

undergraduate and graduate students were represented, it would have been good to have had middle age and older adults as participants.

Another limitation was the classroom settings for administrations. In most cases the undergraduate participants were getting required class credit. Could it be that a nonacademic setting would affect the results? Did the presence of grade assigning teachers make a difference?

It would have been better to have had a more even distribution of demographics, especially with ethnicity and religious orientation. When one considers the developmental aspects of ethnic and religious identity, age difference becomes more of an issue. It would be fascinating to get a wide age range in both ethnicity and religious experiences.

Another limitation was the probability that participants were reporting personal experiences with significant differences in intensity. It might be that more intense conflicts are processed differently than those which are less intense. Could it be that Interpersonals become Easy Going when relationships become highly charged?

Another concern is that all of the information came from self-reports. It comes as little surprise that individuals are often perceived differently by others than how they perceive themselves. Friends and family might suggest that participants work through forgiveness issues differently than the participants report.

Finally, the dependency of this research on multiple correlation analyses can increase the probability of Type I errors. It was hoped that a mixed methodology of individual interviews, group interviews, and quantitative instruments was helpful in this regard.

### Suggestions for Future Research

It would be good for future research to expand on the study limitations just mentioned. Beyond that, it would be good to focus research on each of the four forgiveness styles. What other factors might play a part in how they are unique? This might be especially true for the Intrapersonals, which seems to be a more complex group than the others. Additionally, the relationship between the three item Humility score and the process of forgiveness should be explored further.

Another issue is how developmental factors might change responses between and within the forgiveness styles. It might be that one or more of the styles exhibit a developmental sequence not found in the others. And could one style change into another after certain life experiences, personality development, and social skills acquisition?

As a contribution to the research on personality types and relationships, it would be interesting to see how couples or friends would benefit from the awareness of forgiveness styles. As individuals or groups anticipate that others resolve conflict in different ways, or even hang on to issues for different reasons, they might become more forgiving.

Given the role religious and spiritual experiences play in personal development and relationships, it would be fascinating to explore how different religious traditions impact forgiveness styles. Different religious traditions encourage different approaches to forgiveness work, and it would be good to explore how different traditions might be a better fit for clients with a preferred style.

## Conclusion

The Caperton Forgiveness Style Inventory, based on this research, is a valid and reliable assessment tool that has positive implications for counseling.

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## APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT

*Study of Forgiveness*

You are being invited to participate in a research study about how people forgive. This research project is being conducted by Duane Caperton and supervised by Dr. Will Barratt of Indiana State University. The objective of this research project is to attempt to understand the different ways people may prefer to use when forgiving someone who has harmed or offended them. All of the subjects are Indiana State University students.

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study, nor are there any costs for participating in the study. The information you provide will help me understand how different people work through forgiveness issues. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but what I learn from this study should provide meaningful suggestions for counselors in many different settings.

This Inventory is anonymous. If you choose to participate, do not write your name on the questionnaires. No one will be able to identify you, nor will anyone be able to determine which class you are in. No one will know whether you participated in this study. Nothing you say on the questionnaire will in any way influence your present or future grade in this or any future class.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, please place your completed questionnaires in the box at the front of the classroom.

Questionnaires will be collected by the researcher.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaires or about being in this study, you may contact me at (812) 555-5555 or at [dcaperton@indstate.edu](mailto:dcaperton@indstate.edu).

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at 114 Erickson Hall, Terre Haute, IN 47809, by phone at (812) 237-8217, or by e-mail at [irb@indstate.edu](mailto:irb@indstate.edu).

## APPENDIX B: CAPERTON FORGIVENESS STYLE INVENTORY (PILOT)

The CFSI appears on the following page beginning at the top of the page to preserve formatting.

### Caperton Forgiveness Style Inventory

Forgiveness is being viewed more and more as an ongoing process of thoughts, feelings, and actions. Sometimes forgiveness happens quickly, and sometimes it takes longer as several things are needed for healing to take place.

Please take a few moments and recall an event when a close friend or family member treated you unfairly. Recall what happened along with any interactions you may have had with the offending person. Then try to remember what thoughts, feelings, and actions you experienced during the following days or weeks as you managed to forgive the individual. (Do that now before reading further.)

Different people have offered the following statements on how they have worked through forgiveness. Please mark each statement according to how it describes your experience of forgiving someone. If you do something that is not on the list, please write it in at the end (up to three).

Recalling times when I have actually forgiven people, these are things I have actually done:	I frequently do this	I often do this	I sometimes do this	I rarely do this	I never do this
I realize I have done similar things.	1	2	3	4	5
I learn why the offender did what he or she did.	1	2	3	4	5
I realize I am not perfect.	1	2	3	4	5
I choose to offer forgiveness to the offender in person.	1	2	3	4	5
I see how I contributed to the problem.	1	2	3	4	5
I realize the offense was not personal.	1	2	3	4	5
I imagine what the offender was thinking.	1	2	3	4	5
I need to talk with the offender.	1	2	3	4	5
I make a conscious choice to forgive.	1	2	3	4	5
The offender needs to know how much I was hurt.	1	2	3	4	5
Recalling times when I have actually forgiven people, these are things I have actually done:	I frequently do	I often do	I sometimes do	I rarely do	I never do



	this	this	this	this	this
Recalling times when I have actually forgiven people, these are things I <u>have actually done</u> :	I frequently do this	I often do this	I sometimes do this	I rarely do this	I never do this
I remind myself that I am still growing as a person.	1	2	3	4	5
I talk with the offender face-to-face.	1	2	3	4	5
I remind myself how similar I am to the offender.	1	2	3	4	5
I wait until I am in a better mood to think about it.	1	2	3	4	5
I need to hear the offender's side of the event.	1	2	3	4	5
It's a decision of my will.	1	2	3	4	5
The offender needs to understand what their actions did.	1	2	3	4	5
I remind myself that I should not be self-righteous.	1	2	3	4	5
The offender needs to see my reaction.	1	2	3	4	5
I think about how I have related to the offender in the past.	1	2	3	4	5
I do not forgive other people because I have never needed to.	1	2	3	4	5
I do not forgive other people because I am easy-going.	1	2	3	4	5
I do not forgive other people because I am not bothered by what other people say and do.	1	2	3	4	5
I do not forgive other people because I hold grudges.	1	2	3	4	5
I do not forgive other people because I like to have something to use against other people in the future if the need arises.	1	2	3	4	5
I do not forgive other people because I can not let go of the feelings associated with being hurt.	1	2	3	4	5

Something I do that is not on the list:

**APPENDIX C: CAPERTON FORGIVENESS STYLE INVENTORY (REVISED)**

The CFSI appears on the following page beginning at the top of the page to preserve formatting.

### Caperton Forgiveness Style Inventory (Revised)

Forgiveness is being viewed more and more as an ongoing process of thoughts, feelings, and actions. Sometimes forgiveness happens quickly, and sometimes it takes longer as several things are needed for healing to take place.

Please take a few moments and recall an event when a close friend or family member treated you unfairly. Recall what happened along with any interactions you may have had with the offending person. Then try to remember what thoughts, feelings, and actions you experienced during the following days or weeks as you managed to forgive the individual. (Do that now before reading further.)

Different people have offered the following statements on how they have worked through forgiveness. Please mark each statement according to how it describes your experience of forgiving someone.

Recalling times when I have actually forgiven people, these are things I <u>have actually done</u> :	I frequently do this	I often do this	I sometimes do this	I rarely do this	I never do this
I realize I have done similar things.	4	3	2	1	0
I learn why the offender did what he or she did.	4	3	2	1	0
I see how I contributed to the problem.	4	3	2	1	0
I realize the offense was not personal.	4	3	2	1	0
I imagine what the offender was thinking.	4	3	2	1	0
I remind myself how similar I am to the offender.	4	3	2	1	0
Total Intrapersonal Score:					
I choose to offer forgiveness to the offender in person.	4	3	2	1	0
I need to talk with the offender.	4	3	2	1	0
The offender needs to know how much I was hurt.	4	3	2	1	0
Recalling times when I have actually forgiven people, these are things I <u>have actually done</u> :	I frequently do this	I often do this	I sometimes do this	I rarely do this	I never do this

Recalling times when I have actually forgiven people, these are things I have actually done:	I frequently do this	I often do this	I sometimes do this	I rarely do this	I never do this
I talk with the offender face-to-face.	4	3	2	1	0
I need to hear the offender's side of the event.	4	3	2	1	0
The offender needs to see my reaction.	4	3	2	1	0
Total Interpersonal Score:					
I do not forgive other people because I have never needed to.	8	6	4	2	0
I do not forgive other people because I am easy-going.	8	6	4	2	0
I do not forgive other people because I am not bothered by what other people say and do.	8	6	4	2	0
Total Easy Going Score:					
I do not forgive other people because I hold grudges.	8	6	4	2	0
I do not forgive other people because I like to have something to use against other people in the future if the need arises.	8	6	4	2	0
I do not forgive other people because I cannot let go of the feelings associated with being hurt.	8	6	4	2	0
Total Grudge Holder Score:					
I realize I am not perfect.	1	2	3	4	5
I remind myself that I am still growing as a person.	1	2	3	4	5
I remind myself that I should not be self-righteous.	1	2	3	4	5
Total Humility Score:					

## APPENDIX D: FIVE FACTOR INVENTORY

On the following pages, there are phrases describing people's behaviors. Please use the rating scale below to describe how accurately each statement describes *you*.

Describe yourself as you generally are now, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you honestly see yourself, in relation to other people you know of the same sex as you are, and roughly your same age. So that you can describe yourself in an honest manner, your responses will be kept in absolute confidence. Please read each statement carefully, and then place an X over the number that corresponds to the number on the scale.

How accurately does this statement describe me?	Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate
Tend to vote for conservative political candidates.	1	2	3	4	5
Have frequent mood swings.	1	2	3	4	5
Am not easily bothered by things.	1	2	3	4	5
Suspect hidden motives in others.	1	2	3	4	5
Enjoy hearing new ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
Believe in the importance of art.	1	2	3	4	5
Have a vivid imagination.	1	2	3	4	5
Am the life of the party.	1	2	3	4	5
Am skilled in handling social situations.	1	2	3	4	5
Am always prepared.	1	2	3	4	5
Make plans and stick to them.	1	2	3	4	5
Dislike myself.	1	2	3	4	5
Respect others.	1	2	3	4	5
Insult people.	1	2	3	4	5
Would describe my experiences as somewhat dull.	1	2	3	4	5
Seldom feel blue.	1	2	3	4	5
Don't like to draw attention to myself.	1	2	3	4	5
Carry out my plans.	1	2	3	4	5
Am not interested in abstract ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
Have a sharp tongue.	1	2	3	4	5
Make friends easily.	1	2	3	4	5
Tend to vote for liberal political candidates.	1	2	3	4	5
Know how to captivate people.	1	2	3	4	5
Believe that others have good intentions.	1	2	3	4	5
Am very pleased with myself.	1	2	3	4	5
How accurately does this statement describe me?	Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate

How accurately does this statement describe me?	Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate
Do just enough work to get by.	1	2	3	4	5
Find it difficult to get down to work.	1	2	3	4	5
Carry the conversation to a higher level.	1	2	3	4	5
Panic easily.	1	2	3	4	5
Avoid philosophical discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
Accept people as they are.	1	2	3	4	5
Do not enjoy going to art museums.	1	2	3	4	5
Pay attention to details.	1	2	3	4	5
Keep in the background.	1	2	3	4	5
Feel comfortable with myself.	1	2	3	4	5
Waste my time.	1	2	3	4	5
Get back at others.	1	2	3	4	5
Get chores done right away.	1	2	3	4	5
Don't talk a lot.	1	2	3	4	5
Am often down in the dumps.	1	2	3	4	5
Shirk my duties.	1	2	3	4	5
Do not like art.	1	2	3	4	5
Often feel blue.	1	2	3	4	5
Cut others to pieces.	1	2	3	4	5
Have a good word for everyone.	1	2	3	4	5
Don't see things through.	1	2	3	4	5
Feel comfortable around people.	1	2	3	4	5
Make people feel at ease.	1	2	3	4	5
Rarely get irritated.	1	2	3	4	5
Have little to say.	1	2	3	4	5
How accurately does this statement describe me?	Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate