

They place central emphasis on the interdependence of our research and practice in these efforts.

The final section of this text is geared primarily for practicing counsellors and places meaning reconstruction in a clinical context. In particular, this part branches out to explore loss experiences other than bereavement, and addresses narrative and constructivist counselling for post-traumatic stress, survivors of sexual assault, and the dying. The authors include session transcripts to substantiate these efforts.

I found this text to be thoroughly engaging and filled with a wealth of useful ideas. Neimeyer and his colleagues from Canada and the United States have produced a very comprehensive and worthwhile text not only to guide our practice but to help us envision future directions. Coming from backgrounds in psychology, counselling, nursing, medicine, philosophy and religious studies, their interdisciplinary perspectives strengthen the quality of this text and encourage further work of this nature. They bring together a vast amount of material and make the necessary links to connect these areas to constructivist counselling approaches. Helping professionals and researchers who are working to build bridges between theory and practice in loss issues will benefit from this evocative text.

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McCullough, M. E., Pargament, K. I., & Thoresen, C. E. (Eds.). (2000). *Forgiveness: Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

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The edited volume, *Forgiveness: Theory, Research, and Practice*, is a clear signal to social scientists and counselling practitioners that forgiveness research, despite its limited empirical data, is coming of age. The editors of the volume, Michael McCullough, Kenneth Pargament, and Carl Thoresen, are well-published researchers in the field of psychology, religion, and health. They have succeeded in compiling a thought-provoking resource, not only for fellow researchers, but also for teachers, students, and clinicians who have a serious interest in the topic.

Part One sets forth the conceptual and measurement issues involved in forgiveness research. The editors make it clear that defining what forgiveness is *not* is a much easier task than providing a definition of the psychosocial construct. They propose a minimalist definition of forgiveness as prosocial change within an individual toward a perceived offender. Readers are challenged to test this definition against their own perceptions and those of other theorists throughout the book.

In addition to a helpful review of five diverse religious perspectives on the subject, Part One concludes with an assessment of existing forgiveness measures. The reader is left astonished by the plethora of forgiveness constructs and the psychometric challenges they face. Such information, however, is primarily useful to researchers rather than clinicians.

Part Two, on the other hand, offers ideas that are relevant to both researchers and clinicians. This fascinating section of the book presents new psychological theories

on forgiveness that emanate from neuroevolutionary, cognitive, social, and personality frameworks. In Chapter Five, the act of forgiveness is presented as profitable social behaviour that curbs both excessive evaluation of the self and escalating revenge behaviour. Chapter Seven explores the aspects of intrapsychic and interpersonal expressions of forgiveness, and carefully weighs the benefits and risks of these behaviours. Chapter Eight suggests that forgiveness may be a personality trait by which certain individuals consistently seek harmony, empathy, and detachment from the experience of harm. Throughout this second section the reader is encouraged to view forgiveness from a variety of angles.

Part Three is the section most relevant to practitioners. It offers a critical appraisal of how forgiveness may be applied in a counselling context. In Chapter Nine, forgiveness is presented as a process of psychotherapeutic change brought about by a distinct series of stages. Chapter Ten discusses the use of forgiveness in marital therapy, both from a cognitive-behavioural and an insight-oriented approach. The subsequent chapters explore the contexts of group therapy and pastoral counselling for the promotion of forgiveness, and include a discussion on the relationship between physical health and forgiveness. Many helpful metaphors emerge, such as forgiveness as a gradual discovery — rather than an action or choice — along the pathway towards inner healing.

Finally, the concluding chapter succinctly summarizes important themes from the volume, and calls upon readers to reflect on the frontiers for future research and their implications for therapeutic change. This carefully designed volume is a kaleidoscope of varying perspectives and approaches emerging in the study of forgiveness. Each is uniquely and independently crafted, offering the reader a multiplicity of writing styles, theories, models, and practices from which to choose. The book is an invaluable resource to anyone compelled to consider this critical topic.