



Global Forgiveness Movement

Using evidence-based interventions to make the world a more loving and forgiving place.

What is forgiveness?

Forgiveness is replacing ill will with goodwill to those who have wronged us.

- This means desiring the flourishing of the offender, but without necessarily forgetting or forgoing justice.
- Forgiveness is compatible with accountability and truth.
- Forgiveness requires a two-fold movement
 - 1) a decision to forgive, and
 - 2) replacing negative emotions towards the offender with more positive ones.

Why should we forgive?

Our research shows that forgiveness is good for individual and communal health:

- Forgiving those who have harmed us leads to flourishing because it allows us to let go of negative feelings that can undermine our health and wellbeing
- Forgiveness lowers depression and anxiety
- Forgiveness can, over time, help free one from rumination and hurt

(See Long, K. N. G., Worthington, E. L., VanderWeele, T. J., O'Connor, L. E., Chen, Y., & Hook, J. N. (2020). Forgiveness of others and subsequent health and well-being in mid-life: A longitudinal study on female nurses. *BMC Psychology*, 8, 104. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-020-00470-w>)

What is the REACH Model of Forgiveness?

Psychologist Everett Worthington's REACH Forgiveness model is one of the most widely tested models of forgiveness.

- (R)** Recall the interpersonal hurt one experienced and the emotions associated with it
- (E)** Try to *empathize* with the offender
- (A)** Explore the idea that forgiveness can be seen as an *altruistic gift* to the offender
- (C)** Make a voluntary *commitment* to forgive
- (H)** Seek to *hold onto* or maintain forgiveness through difficult times

Working with Prof. VanderWeele and synthesizing the best of research and practice using this model, Worthington created a Do-It-Yourself REACH Forgiveness Workbook that can be completed in a few hours and that has been tested by the Human Flourishing Program.

Does the REACH Workbook actually promote forgiveness?

Yes! The REACH Workbook is evidence-based!

The Human Flourishing Program was involved in comprehensively testing the workbook:

- A randomized controlled trial with 4500 participants across 5 relatively high conflict countries: Colombia, South Africa, Ukraine, Indonesia, and Hong Kong.
- The results indicate that the workbook is effective in:
 - increasing forgiveness
 - reducing anxiety and reducing depression
 - increasing hope, and
 - increasing flourishing



(See Ho, M. Y., Worthington, E. L., Jr., Cowden, R. G., Bechara, A. O., Chen, Z. J., Gunatirin, E. Y., Joynt, S., Khalanskyi, V. V., Korzhov, H., Kurniati, N. M. T., Rodriguez, N., Salnykova, A., Shtanko, L., Tymchenko, S., Voytenko, V. L., Zulkaida, A., Mathur, M. B., & VanderWeele, T. J. (2024). International REACH forgiveness intervention: A multisite randomised controlled trial. *BMJ Public Health*, 2, e000072. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjph-2023-000072>)

Where can I find the REACH Forgiveness Workbook?

The Human Flourishing Program has enhanced the workbook design and we are currently in the process of incorporating adaptations for various communities. At this time, you can click the Resource links below to download free, fillable PDFs of the *REACH Forgiveness Workbook* and *REACH Forgiveness Workbook Adapted for Use in Churches*.

For the original version and for additional resources, see Everett Worthington's website: <http://www.evworthington-forgiveness.com>



**The Human Flourishing Program is promoting forgiveness through
Forgiveness Groups and Forgiveness Campaigns that use the evidence-based workbook.**

What are Forgiveness Groups?

Forgiveness Groups support individuals to work through the REACH Workbook:

- Comprised of 6-10 participants
- Participants work on the workbook individually and then meet to discuss their experiences
- Meet at least 3 times (online or in person) for approx. 1.5 hours

Meetings:

- Meeting 1: Introduction to REACH Model and Forgiveness Group
- Meeting 2: Facilitated discussion about the experience of completing first half of workbook
- Meeting 3: Facilitated discussion about the experience of completing second half of workbook
- Meeting 4: Optional follow-up at the discretion of the facilitator



What are Forgiveness Campaigns?

Forgiveness Campaigns are community-level initiatives to encourage a deep dive into forgiveness over a specified period of time.

- The goal of the Campaigns is to increase awareness about forgiveness and promote engagement with forgiveness by using a collection of tools and methods that are suitable to the communities where the campaigns are taking place.
- Our evidence shows that Forgiveness Campaigns can improve forgiveness, mental health, and flourishing.
- Campaigns can include forgiveness Groups, hosting talks or speakers, book discussions, social media challenges, and more!

We are creating materials to support communities to launch Forgiveness Campaigns.

(See Ortega Bechara, A., Chen, Z. J., Cowden, R. G., Worthington Jr., E. L., Toussaint, L., Rodriguez, N., Guzman Murillo, H., Ho, M. Y., Mathur, M. B., & VanderWeele, T. J. (2024). Do forgiveness campaign activities improve forgiveness, mental health, and flourishing? *International Journal of Public Health*, 69. <https://doi.org/10.3389/ijph.2024.1605341>)

***We are grateful to be able to do this work through the generosity of
Bancel Philanthropies and the Kern Family Foundation.***

