Chapter 1

Introduction

Objectives

Facilitating forgiveness: an NLP approach to forgiving is an attempt at uncovering features of the blocks that prevent people to forgive. These blocks to forgiveness can be detected in the real life situations of the six individuals who told me their stories. The inner thoughts, feelings and the subsequent behaviour that prevented them from forgiving others is clearly uncovered in their stories. The facilitation process highlights the features that created the blocks in the past thus preventing forgiveness to occur. The blocks with their accompanying features reveal what needs to be clarified or changed in order to eventually enable the hurt individuals to forgive those who have hurt them. The application of discourse analysis to the stories of hurt highlights the links between the real life stories of the individuals within their contexts with regard to unforgiveness to the research findings of the existing body of knowledge, thereby creating a complexly interwoven comprehensive understanding of the individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours in conjunction with their developmental phases within their socio-cultural contexts.

Neuro-linguistic-programming (NLP) is the instrument with which forgiving is facilitated in the six individuals who expressed their conscious desire to forgive, because they were unable to do so on their own. Their emotions had the habit of keeping them in a place in

which they were forced to relive the hurtful event as if it were happening in the present. Arresting the process of reliving negative emotions requires a new way of being in this world. The assumption that this can be learnt is based on the results from a previous study, in which forgiveness was uncovered by means of the grounded theory approach as a cognitive process (Von Krosigk, 2000).

The aim of applying NLP to facilitate forgiveness comprises the following:

- **a demonstration of the principles involved in learning to forgive**

Learning something new necessarily involves the brain, the body, and the mind, and this learning is influenced by the individual's physical, social, cultural, and political environment. It is not possible to make subjective assessments that will accurately measure the degree of hurt and pain that an individual is subjected to. Therefore it becomes necessary to heed an individual's request for help when recurrent pain has become a problematic part of their life.

- **a description of the tools for turning problems into opportunities**

The tools for turning problems into opportunities can be accessed through our consciousness by consciously generating alternative ways of being in this world, and by becoming aware of choices that can lead to the freedom of living joyously. We all have distinctive interactions with our social environments, and hence develop distinctive patterns of knowledge. Individuals in different countries tend to have specialised knowledge about specialised aspects of their environments. This is evident in many countries in which women tend to have more knowledge about the bodies of infants, children, the elderly, and the sick, as well as about agriculture, silviculture, and animal husbandry (Harcourt, 1994; Harding, 1997, 1998). Similarly we tend to develop a specialised knowledge for dealing with the hurts and pains of life. Our idiosyncratic ways of dealing with hurt and pain are acquired in our interactions with our physical, social, cultural, and political environments. It is thus imperative to include some of the individuals' physical, social, cultural, and political environment together with the individual aspects of body, brain and mind for a more comprehensive understanding of the reasons for being unable to forgive.

- **facilitating forgiving**

Assisting those who are unable to forgive will convince them that an increase in their repertoire of choices in life, particularly their emotional choices will lead them to develop a better quality of life. The aim is to break the cycle of rehearsing past pain by learning new behaviours that propel them towards the ability to forgive.

From the systems perspective successful forgiving creates effects in the lives of those who forgive as well as in the lives of those who are forgiven (Von Krosigk, 2000). A model for understanding forgiveness, that has the capacity to map the dynamics of forgiveness as close to reality as possible will therefore be proposed. An incomplete model was uncovered by the grounded theory approach in a previous research study which is presented in the box below (Von Krosigk, 2000).

INCOMPLETE MODEL OF FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness as a conscious decision.

Forgiveness as replacing bad thoughts with good thoughts.

Forgiveness as being able to remember the hurtful incident without feeling the hurt and experiencing the negative feelings.

Forgiveness as a release from focussing on the past by focussing on the future.

Forgiveness as a suspension of judgement.

Forgiveness as a way to pardon unalterable conditions.

Forgiveness as a necessity to see the world holistically.

A good model or theory of forgiveness would however need to include all the above alternatives to unforgiving behaviours. It would also need to offer specific hypotheses to stimulate research; and it would need to stimulate the application of forgiveness-promoting interventions.

The aims of this thesis are therefore as follows:

- to demonstrate the application of forgiveness‑promoting interventions by means of Neuro‑Linguistic Programming
- to demonstrate the presence of all the above alternatives to unforgiving behaviours by means of the comments on the NLP interventions with regard to the six individuals who participated in this research study
- to offer specific hypotheses to stimulate research with regard to all the alternatives to unforgiving thoughts and emotions.

A broad outline of the complexity of contexts and perspectives in which forgiveness plays a role will now be presented as a backdrop to this study.

Perspectives on Forgiveness

Forgiveness has a longstanding and important place in theological and philosophical literature, but only recently has it attracted attention and been explored from various psychological perspectives (Enright, Santos and Al-Mabuk, 1989; Rosenak and Harnden, 1992; Hebl and Enright, 1993; Enright, 1994; Halling, 1994; Gassin and Enright, 1995; Mitchell, 1995; Enright,1996; Karen, 2001; Enright, 2001).

The term forgiveness conjures up an interplay of images, thoughts and emotions in the human mind. One thinks of people wounded by betrayal, who experience deep-seated hatred and thoughts of revenge, and others who forgive, forget and move on. One thinks of those who need to forgive or want to be forgiven by another, because of something that was said or done that caused emotional or physical pain. They may experience feelings of regret for having done something that cannot be reversed. Those who were irreversibly damaged may grapple with the decision to forgive or not to forgive. Something may erase the painful memory from their minds by relegating it to the past, or it may be maintained by

the tight grip of automatic recall which subjugates the conscious will to an unwilling replay of the painful incident.

The one who did the hurting may experience thoughts of self-accusation and guilt, resort to defensive explanations, and argumentation about the behaviour, openly acknowledge the guilt, or deny his/her part in the hurtful interaction. The one who did the hurting as well as the one who was hurt may experience past behaviours in the light of a negative future.

There can also be feelings of disappointment, disillusionment, suspiciousness, anger, mistrust, nausea, body pain, and a myriad of other combinations of feelings and negative emotions that are switched on without a conscious decision to do so. In many cases unfortunately, these feelings do not disappear, neither by trying to forget them, nor by a conscious decision or superhuman effort to forgive the one who hurt us.

When these feelings persist they could lead to guarded and more distanced interactions between the one who was hurt and the one who did the hurting. They could also lead to a fear of allowing the other one into their personal space, either emotionally or physically for fear of being hurt again. These recurring feelings are also able to pervade other areas in one's life by colouring one's perception of the motives of others. Promises may not be taken as seriously as before, and one's own promises may not be adhered to any longer.

A physical removal from the relationship may be a way to start a new way of conducting relationships, and a total break from the relationship may enable the hurt one to put the past into the past, to begin to live again, and to recover their characteristic new found *joi de vivre*. Withdrawing from the one who did the hurting, or openly confronting him/her about similar or related issues can also be a response in an attempt to overcome the hurt. At times physical, verbal and emotional retaliation will surface at the most inopportune times, causing others to remark "Wow, s/he is highly strung!" or "Gee, I didn't mean it that way!" "No wonder s/he left him/her!" The result is a dissatisfactory state of affairs for everyone concerned.

Despite these actions, recurrent thoughts and flashbacks of the incident may be experienced which can compel the hurt one to keep on remembering the hurt, and the one who did the hurting, to be continuously plagued by regret. The emotions that arise as a result of vivid flashbacks of the hurtful incident are often accompanied by thoughts of, "Why was this done to me?", "Why did s/he do that to me?", and, "What have I done to deserve this?", "What is it that makes him/her so mean?", "Is there something I did that brought on his/her behaviour?" Intense self-examination, and examination of the other will then take place, together with the relationship variables that contributed to the particular interactions over time.

To complicate matters, it seems that interacting with others in the course of our life appears to be and remain a learning process by trial and error. What seemed the right way in one situation was the wrong way in another, and what lead to being granted forgiveness in one situation was construed as overt manipulation in another. Individuals differ in many respects, and where the one needs and wants an explanation and an apology, another expects a silent acceptance of angry reprimands. Where the one wants to talk it over, another needs to work it through alone accompanied by silence.

In theory, forgiving another means that there are two individuals of which the one has committed a hurtful act wounding the other physically, psychologically or socially, and the other individual who was hurt, feels the pain, and needs to forgive the injurer. In a previous study I found that it is possible for one individual to forgive another even though the hurtful behaviour falls into the realm of unforgivable behaviour (Von Krosigk, 2000). My research also demonstrated that forgiving can occur without the help of therapeutic intervention. From the descriptions of the subjective experiences of those individuals who forgave their injurers without employing therapeutic assistance, it became clear that forgiveness is consciously willed (Von Krosigk, 2000; Enright and Fitzgibbons, 2000). As North (1987) suggests, and Von Krosigk (2000) and Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) corroborate, forgiveness seems to be an internal change of heart, which then results in the conscious will to forgive the injurer. A change of heart according to North (1987), Von Krosigk (2000), and Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000) is the successful result of replacing bad thoughts with

good thoughts, and anger with compassion and affection. The result of thinking thoughts of compassion and affection eventually diminishes the negative affect against the offender (Droll, 1984; Von Krosigk, 2000; Enright and Fitzgibbons, 2000). The individuals who forgave their injurers consciously decided to have a change of heart, by substituting a heart and mind full of anger and bad thoughts with good thoughts and compassion (Von Krosigk, 2000). When good thoughts have replaced bad thoughts, resulting in a diminishing of the negative affects against the injurer, and when successful forgiveness has taken place by means of mutuality and negotiation, the hurtful incident is often forgotten (Cunningham, 1985; Smedes, 1984). However, it may also happen that the incident is remembered, but the negative emotions that accompany the memory of the hurtful event before forgiveness has occurred, will disappear when the individual has achieved to forgive successfully (Von Krosigk, 2000). It thus becomes possible to think about the hurtful incident, without feeling the anger, or wanting to retaliate (Von Krosigk, 2000).

Forgiving can also be understood as a means to achieve peace of mind, the ability to let go of the past, and the conscious decision to focus on future concerns. It is thus an interesting mix of present, past, and future concerns. In the present, peace of mind can be achieved by employing our minds in a way which arrests our thoughts in their invasions into the unhappy and painful stories of our past. By refusing to revisit the past, and by employing our minds in a way which directs our thoughts towards doing things differently from now onwards, we are able to ensure that our future will be different from our past. "There is no time like the present', is an old saying, that contains more dynamite than we realise. The present is therefore the field in which the action takes place.

What makes it so difficult for us to be and to remain in the present? What comes to mind instantly is the difficult task of paying attention. By paying attention to whatever goes on at a specific moment in the present means that we need to expend energy to register in our mind's eye the occurrences that are happening out there. It also means that we suspend our judgement about what is happening out there, so that we are able to consider what this happening is about to convey to us. It also means that if what is happening is the result of social interaction, we are required to put ourselves into the shoes of the other person, and

attempt to relive what s/he is experiencing. This can be very strenuous indeed. It is therefore not surprising that we rather dwell in the past. Seemingly, dwelling in the past requires very little energy from us. Everything is already mapped out, and all we need to do is take a second look at what happened long ago. The more often we go back to that past scene, the better we begin to know it , and the easier it becomes to scan its features. Repetition is an excellent way of learning something well. When we have learnt our past history of failures, and mistakes by rehearsing it often, we will have learnt how to fail and make mistakes. The problem however is that with every repetition, we re-experience all the emotions, feelings and sensations that were present in the original occurrence, together with the accompanying physiological processes in our bodies, similar to those that were experienced when the original hurt was experienced. This onslaught of emotional pain, every time we visit the site of our past hurts, makes it difficult to understand, what it is that makes the past so attractive.

Learning is an ongoing process, and the more we repeat something, the better we will know it. By rehearsing our past hurts, we are learning something in the present, that will influence our future. The more we rehearse, the better are the chances that our future will be very similar to our past. Breaking the cycle of rehearsing our past pain, and learning new behaviours that propel us towards the ability to forgive is the focus of this study.

The process of forgiveness seems to occur in the same sequence in all individuals. Rosenak and Harndon (1992) have identified the emotional stages of hurt, anger, information gathering, and forgiveness, which are experienced in the same sequence by every individual on the road to forgiveness. Von Krosigk, (2000), Enright and Fitzgibbons, (2000), and Butler and Mullis, (2001) confirmed the sequence of the emotional stages, which culminate in the emotional stance of genuinely wishing the offender well. The signs of having accomplished forgiveness were found to consist of a lack of anger, a feeling of peace within, the ability to enjoy life, and the ability to pray (Rosenak and Harndon, 1992; Von Krosigk, 2000; Enright and Fitzgibbons, 2000; Butler and Mullis, 2001).

When interactions take place between individuals from different cultural groups, who hurt

one another in the course of life, the outcome can be unpredictable and incomprehensible. On that level the process of forgiveness and restoring a relationship can become a steep and rocky road. Notwithstanding, there lies the hope in the hearts and minds of many individuals, that one day union amongst individuals from all cultural groups on this earth will become a reality. Teilhard de Chardin (1964) already detected the realisation of this hope in his time in recognising the formation of millions of thinking units (individuals) who are imperceptibly internally attracted towards each other, and who by free choice complete a union of heart and mind. The option of being able to forgive others as opposed to implementing revenge can be understood as a way of regulating intimate and social behaviours without evoking the possibility of utter destruction and chaos in our highly complex and interrelated social, political, economic, and scientific structures. According to Bateson (1972;1971), Wilkinson and O'Connor (1982), and Becvar and Becvar (1996) all individuals, who can be understood as self-regulating systems are in reciprocal dynamic interaction with each other. Hurt and forgiveness necessarily occur in a context of relationships, and the idea of forgiveness as a powerplay, as Nietzsche (1913) had suggested, can only be understood from a dualistic viewpoint. Forgiveness as a powerplay can only flourish in situations in which one individual can dispense rewards and punishments to others while remaining unaffected by such attempts from them (Von Krosigk, 2000). Power over another is typically perceived when the action of one individual is described in terms of a linear unidirectional force within a hierarchy of power, in which the lowest levels are accorded no power, while the higher levels experience power in relation to those below but no power over those above (McCullough and Worthington, 1994a).

The dualistic viewpoint, however, is inadequate for understanding reciprocal interactional processes within systems, and therefore should be relegated to non-systemic issues (Von Krosigk, 2000) . From the systems perspective successful forgiving creates effects in the lives of those who forgive, which will be made clearer by investigating consciousness from a systems perspective.

A Systems View of Consciousness

The desire to have relationships with others is an inherently human desire for which we are many times willing to lie, betray, and kill (St Augustine, 397A.D.). The world's nations, communities, families, marriages, friendships and other relationships are all without exception bigger or smaller systems that are interlinked and in dynamic interaction with each other. We are therefore concurrently subjects and objects who are involved in each others' destiny. We are also entrenched in our personal belief systems with which we interpret and make sense of our world. The theories that underlie our personal belief systems are based on assumptions about how we believe the world is or will be. It is therefore important that we become conscious of the belief systems we use and their underlying assumptions, as well as the possibility that our epistemology can be pathological or logically inconsistent (Bateson, 1972). If however, we are committed to create a loving world, it is imperative that we find ways of living in community with each other, without being driven to actions that destroy the very thing we desire.

The act of forgiveness has often been treated with suspicion and sometimes even with contempt. Nietzsche (1913) understands forgiveness as an act of weaklings, who cannot assert their will when they are threatened by others. By that he implies that forgiveness necessarily separates a person from his/her aggressive self which is his/her true nature. When a separation from one's true nature has occurred, one has entered a state of alienation according to Nietzsche (1913). When one is separated from one's true nature and is in a state of alienation, one has reached the extreme position that some spiritual individuals sink into when they have lost touch with the vulgar animalistic side of their natures (Santayana, 1955). According to Santayana (1955) one needs to keep one's adopted ideal in mind while one recognises its relativity when one wants to walk the difficult middle path of forgiveness. Since forgiveness lies between the two extremes of fanatical insistence on an ideal, and the mystical disintegration of the self without attachment to any human interest, it is extremely difficult to walk the path of forgiveness. Forgiveness according to Santayana (1955) is absolutely authoritative and at the same time universally representative, which means that it takes all aspects into consideration

while it represents all possible interests. That is possibly the reason why forgiveness from the religious perspective has always been viewed as very difficult to attain.

The dynamics involved in the process of forgiveness are centrally hinged on the phenomenon of consciousness, which can also be described as the sensations, perceptions, and memories of which one is momentarily aware, which concerns those aspects of present mental life that one is attending to either externally or internally (Reber, 1995). Human beings, as conscious biological organisms, consist of a combination of biological, psychological, and social aspects that are in constant reciprocal interaction with each other. Consciousness can therefore be understood as a non-spatial aspect of our biological reality (Kriel, 2000).

From the perspective of the neurosciences and evolutionary biology, consciousness is understood as a property of the nervous system, and it is not consciousness that has developed, but rather the nervous system. The complexity of the nervous system would thus determine the degree of consciousness. According to Laughlin, McManus and d'Aquili (1990), the conscious organism represents a specific reality, which from a systems perspective, can be understood as a complex organism that transforms information into decisions. When an individual has gathered enough information about the reasons that lay behind the hurtful behaviour, s/he is able to make a decision to forgive or not to forgive the perpetrator. Since networks of neurons in the brain form pathways that can be likened to a network of roads in a city that can be traversed in both directions, decisions can be based on previous decisions that were originally based on information (Bateson, 1972, and 1971; Groves and Schlesinger, 1982; Wilkinson and O'Connor, 1982; Becvar and Becvar, 1996). The original reason for a certain decision is therefore impossible to find, and linear thinking in a context of relationships is a totally inappropriate strategy for resolving problems that have originated on the basis of reciprocal interactions.

In the last two decades, forgiveness has blossomed as a psychotherapeutic goal in the published literature as a possible solution for clients to heal their wounds (Layton, 1998; Elkin, 1998; Mc Cullough, Worthington and Rachal, 1997; Enright and the Human

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Development Study Group, 1996; Mc Cullough and Worthington, 1994; Flanigan, 1992; Coleman,1989; Hope, 1987; Fitzgibbons, 1986; Wapnick, 1985). That does not imply that therapists view the process of forgiveness as an easy path to pursue. On the contrary, they all agree that forgiveness requires some active, inner struggle in order to abandon the negative emotions. Hope, (1987) recognises the necessity that the client gives up the right to exercise the obvious response of revenge and power, and that s/he becomes humble inside through which s/he is eventually healed. Hope's (1987) view has also been confirmed by my previous explorative study, which has uncovered the relational aspect of forgiveness as a nourishing base for becoming a healed individual in the context of future relationships (Von Krosigk, 2000). The above view of forgiving is far removed from Nietzsche's (1913) idea of forgiving as a power play, which enables the forgiver a continued sense of superiority and disguised hatred towards the perpetrator.

Forgiving as Consciousness

Forgiveness results in peace of mind, and it saves the high cost of anger and hatred (Dyer, 1998). When people forgive each other they are given new hope for the future, the former President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Richard von Weizsäcker, told a symposium in Berlin after hearing South Africa's story in April 1999 (Tutu,1999). These observations are not only theoretical, and as we know from the recent political history in South Africa, they can be applied to tell us what to do to make certain changes in the context of the dynamic interactions between systems. Systems theory enables us to holistically describe relationships and patterns of interaction within the confines of a certain context, but forces within the network of social relationships can affect the individual psyche and the possibility and course of mental health, and mental illness in a positive or negative way (Wilkinson, and O'Connor, 1982). When we view the injured individual in dynamic interactional relationships with a number of other larger and smaller systems, the effects of the pain can be felt in all the other systems (Wilkinson and O'Connor,1982). What happens to a part happens to the whole, is the systemic perspective of one individual hurting another. Forgiveness from the systems perspective can thus be understood as follows: forgiveness

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as positive change in one part of the system will have positive effects and lead to subsequent changes in other parts of the system. From the systems perspective nothing ever happens in isolation, and everything is always connected. That means that "the various discrete segments and functions in it do not behave as isolated elements. All parts affect other parts. Every action has repercussions throughout the system, because all the elements are linked" (Scott, Mitchell and Birnbaum, 1981, p.44). The above ideas are also echoed in the Christian view in Matthew 25, verse 40: "Anything you did for one of my brothers here, however insignificant, you did for me".

Recent research into abusive behaviour has demonstrated that abusers do not stop their hurtful acts in spite of having been forgiven. They were found to continue to hurt others (Layton, 1998; Elkin, 1998). Forgiveness according to Elkin (1998) should therefore be understood as dynamic interactional behaviour, in which both the injurer and the injured are bound up together in an attempt to change their negative interactions into positive interactions. This may involve a separation between the injurer and the injured, or it may be resolved by remaining in the same area within the confines of new personal boundaries. Forgiveness can also be understood as a state of resignation, which brings the injured to the realisation that the injurer may never make an apology or attempt at reparation for the harm that was done (Elkin, 1998). It can also mean giving up hatred, revenge, punishment, and payment of debt (Layton, 1998). When the obsession to retaliate has abated, and fantasies of reparation, or the way we would have liked life to be, have disappeared, our spirit can begin to recover (Layton, 1998). It seems that walking the difficult middle path of forgiveness requires us to be something of a saint and something of a hero while being utterly human. By daring to be human we are able to acknowledge our vulnerability and lack of control with regard to external events (Santayana, 1955). When we accept that life is not always fair, and that this unfairness is unrelated to how we have behaved in the past, we have arrived at the point where we are ready to accept responsibility for the way we view life happening to us. Accepting responsibility for ourselves in a given situation is the mark of maturity according to Gerdes, Moore, Ochse, and Van Ede (1988). Forgiveness can thus also be viewed as feeling responsible for the way we decide to view a certain situation, action or event even though we may have had nothing to do with creating such

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a reality.

Subjectivity is seen as inevitable in the context of forgiveness, since the observer perceives, reacts on and creates his/her own reality in interaction with the observed. Moreover, this dialectical process of mutual interactions within a specific context must be considered non-causal, since both the observer and the observed are equally involved (Bateson,1971).

A Bio-Psycho-Social View of Consciousness

Science, mathematics and learned discussions are the paths that develop the mind. Every now and again however, we need to read poetry, play a game, watch a movie, go for a walk in nature, and listen to stories to experience joy and refreshment in our spirit. Stories, poems and sayings have been an important tool in solving life's problems long before they were documented. In the eighth century BC, Homer was famous for his epic poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey.* Pliny, the elder (23-79 AD) was the first historian, who associated the Dead Sea manuscripts, found in the ruins near Qumran, with the community of the Essenes (Vermes,1994). According to Pliny (Vermes,1994), the Essenes were a community that consisted of men only, who had no money, no women, and who had renounced all sexual desire. They offered refuge to many people, who were tired of life and wanted to learn to live differently. The Essene community near Qumran was established 390 years after the Babylonian exile, which according to our time dates around 196 BC (Vermes,1994). The teachings of the Essenes are very similar to the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, and for that reason, historians such as Vermes (1994, 1997) and Barthel (1987) believe that Jesus of Nazareth lived in the community of the Essenes before he began to preach in Galilee. Jesus also taught by means of stories, and his parables comprise a major chunk of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Stories are the fabric that ties us together on a human level. They contain truths that

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transcend the boundaries of race, culture, political and religious affiliation, and economic and social status. The truths that are found in stories endure the ravages of time, and they can be applied by anyone, young and old. That is why stories are used to help people change their thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

Thoughts, feelings and behaviour are the intimate expressions of our psychological and social natures, and they in turn are the underlying components of human consciousness of which forgiveness is a part.

Forgiveness will now be described within the following contexts:
* in the old and new testament
* in myths
* in a cultural context
* in a socio-political context
* in the context of human rights violations
* in a therapeutic context
* as a means to heal man's relationship with God

The bio-psycho-social view of consciousness, of which forgiveness is a part, forms the overarching and underlying premise within all contexts on which the concept of forgiveness rests.

Contexts of Forgiveness

The Old and New Testament

Forgiveness forms part of a value system that dates back to the time of the Old and New Testament (Metz, 1988). Between the time of Israel's occupation of Canaan around 1230

BC and the time of the New Testament, forgiveness has undergone a change in meaning. One meaning in the Old Testament refers exclusively to God's forgiveness of man. When a man has sinned and regrets having sinned, he engages in a ritual sacrifice, by which a penalty is laid upon him for having sinned. By this act his sins are atoned through the grace of God (Douglas and Hillyer, 1990). The other meaning is 'to lift' or 'to carry' which conjures up a vivid picture of the sin being lifted and carried away from the sinner (Douglas and Hillyer, 1990).

In the New Testament forgiveness means 'to deal graciously with', and 'to send away' or 'to loose'. Forgiveness according to Luke 6:37 'forgive and you will be forgiven', is used in the sense of 'to release' (Douglas and Hillyer,1990). When we contemplate these different meanings of forgiveness in the New Testament, a number of points need to be highlighted: 1) The sinner who has been forgiven must forgive others (Luke 6:37; Colossians 3:13; Matthew 18:23-25). 2) Forgiveness is directly linked with Christ. 'God in Christ forgave you'(Ephesians 4:32), 'Through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you' (Acts 13:38). 3) Being forgiven in Christ should always be seen in conjunction with the cross. The death of Christ is often said to be a death 'for sin' or 'for the atonement of sin' (Douglas and Hillyer, 1990).

Religious individuals, particularly those of the Christian faith, have always experienced forgiving as a valued and desirable act, and as the heart of the Christian message (Rosenak and Harnden, 1992). According to Luke 6:37, it supplies us with the means to be released from our wrongdoings and the resultant guilt. It also provides us with the inner peace essential for a good night's rest, which almost sounds like a command according to Ephesians 4:26 'do not let the sun go down on your anger'. Forgiveness can be considered to be an aspect of the religious life that heals relationships among people who live in close proximity 'forgive your brothers their misdeeds' (Genesis 50:17). Forgiveness thus seems to be the one aspect of human behaviour that needs to be done when relationships have been damaged, individuals have been hurt, and anger has invaded our hearts and minds. It is however known that forgiveness is a difficult and painful path to traverse successfully which also becomes evident in the large number of parables on

forgiveness in the New Testament, which is built upon the redemption of our sins by the living Christ on the cross.

Jülicher (1963) asserts that each parable was intended to illustrate one truth only, and that the later allegorisation of some of the parables, such as the ones of the sower and the tares, prevented a clear understanding of the parables. The parable of the prodigal son seems to be an exception, since it was obviously intended to teach a number of lessons simultaneously by demonstrating "the joy that God as father has in forgiving his children", "the nature of repentance", and "the sin of jealousy and self-righteousness". However, Jeremia (1970) insists that the parables must be understood in their original historical settings. The interpretation of the parable can therefore not be made unless one knows the context in which the parable was told.

Mark 4:10‒12 seems to suggest that Jesus' purpose with the parables was not to enlighten the unenlightened, but rather to harden the unbeliever in his/her unbelief. The parables of Jesus may have the effect of hardening the unbeliever, just as Isaiah prophesied with regard to the effects of preaching the word of God. To some extent the parables of other teachers can be separated from the teachers themselves, but Jesus and his parables are inseparable (Via, 1970; Linnemann, 1966). Failing to understand him, is to fail to understand his parables. Many of the parables are concerned with how man is to live in the light of the coming kingdom. We are thus encouraged to be persistent in prayer, to forgive others, to serve our neighbours, to use the gifts God has given us, to be free from covetousness, to be faithful stewards, and to remember that our final judgement is being determined by our present conduct (Via, 1970; Linnemann, 1966).

Forgiveness in Myths

Already in the fifth century BC the Greeks struggled with the limits and possibilities of forgiveness. The *Oresteian Trilogy* by Aeschylus (500 BC) deals with the profound subject of forgiveness in a dramatic way. The Trilogy consists of three parts, of which part one is

entitled *Agamemnon,* part two *The Libation Bearers,* and part three *The Eumenides.*

The play begins when the Greek general Agamemnon returns from the Trojan war. On his arrival, he is murdered by his wife Clytemnestra, and her lover Aegisthus. Aegisthus, the son of Thyestes, revenged his father's death by acting as an accomplice with Clytemnestra in murdering Agamemnon. A generation ago, Thyestes had cuckolded Agamemnon's father Atreus, and to revenge this deed, Atreus had invited Thyestes to a banquet on which Thyestes' two small children were served as the main course. Before sailing for Troy, Agamenon had promised to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenie to the gods if they granted good winds for the journey. Clytemnestra was outraged at the heartlessness of her husband, and she plotted to murder him on his return from Troy.

In part two, Orestes, the son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, revenges his father's death by murdering his mother Clytemnestra.

Part three depicts the persecution of Orestes by the Furies, the spirits of vengeance, that were unleashed by Orestes' violent deed of murdering his mother. The Furies, intent on avenging the violation of the sacred bond between a mother and her offspring pursue Orestes relentlessly. In his desperation he seeks refuge in the temple of Athena, the goddess of wisdom, who comes to his aid. Athena sets up a council of twelve wise men to decide the fate of Orestes. She did however, in the event of a tie, reserve the deciding vote for herself, which she cast in favour of Orestes when fate locked the jury into a tie. The Furies were unwilling to abate their vengeful persecution of Orestes. According to them, rationalisations and social reconciliation were insufficient to exonerate the violation of the blood bond between mother and son. Athena's repeated attempts to deflect the excessive rage of the Furies were simply disregarded. Only after her fifth attempt and the promise of a house in Athens, honour, and a new status as spirits of blessings did the Furies' anger melt. They did however still have the need to vent their angry feelings without being rejected and retaliated against. Only then did they surrender their insistence on vengeance and forgave Orestes for murdering his mother. They finally accepted Athena's gift that promised prosperity and protection to all who revered the Furies, and from then onwards they were honoured as kindly spirits and known as the Eumenides (Aeschylus,1969).

Despite the Greek world-view's strong sense of destiny and fate, Aeschylus dramatically expresses the capacity for radical transformation through forgiveness. Forgiveness breaks the cycle of victimisation, and the sins of the parents need no longer be visited upon the children (Cloke,1993). Revenge can be transformed into forgiveness by employing the magic of mediation. Athena performs the function of mediator in the Aschylusian tragedy by bearing the anger of the Furies without retaliating. She, the goddess of wisdom, is aware of the assumptions, excuses, ideas, myths, feelings and rationalisations that can lie behind the angry responses (Travis,1989). She is also aware of the ease with which forgiveness can be accomplished when it is voluntary, confidential, and facilitated by an unbiased third party such as a mediator (Cloke, 1993). The value of forgiveness for the "victim" lies in the cleansing of the wound allowing it to heal, and it supports the victim morally and emotionally with little cost to the victim (Cloke,1993).

Forgiving behaviour was thus encouraged by Aeschylus (500 BC) as it is still encouraged today. While the circumstances and the context of our behaviour changes with the times the internal thoughts and feelings remain constant.

Forgiveness in a Cultural Context

The literature and philosophies of the western world are mainly infused with underlying Judeo-Christian values, and the argumentation and thinking is characterised by a linear succession of events. There are other worlds that have adhered to a circular model of understanding for much longer than the western world has documented its own thinking. Circular thinking in the western world has only begun to gain in popularity during the last two decades as a result of advances in the biological sciences. A more comprehensive understanding of forgiveness should therefore include descriptions of ancient circular thought (3000 BC), as is evident in the religions of the central and north American Indians such as the Aztecs of Mexico, the Navaho of the western plains of North America, and the Eskimos of northern Alaska. Living in harmony with the seasons, by alternating their

working cycles with recreational, spiritual, and healing activities was a means of balancing their health. Physical health, mental health, and spiritual health were all given attention at a particular time and place during the year (Shoemaker, 2001). The central idea on which their trust hinged, was their belief in the Great Spirit who provided for their needs, and delivered them from danger, and evil (Sundstrom, 2001). A unified universe contained everything they needed. The stars in heaven were therefore as much a part of their life as the sacred geographical sites which were used as places of worship and healing. Places with an abundance of plant and animal life were particularly revered as places with a religious significance that were usually distinguished by healing rocks or healing waters (Sundstrom, 2001).

Forgiveness in the Culture of the Aztec

A group of Aztec scholars spoke these words to the first Franciscan missionaries in the newly founded capital of Mexico City in 1524: "You said that we know not the Lord of the Close Vicinity, to whom the heavens and earth belong. You said that our gods are not true gods. New words are these that you speak; because of them we are disturbed, because of them we are troubled. For our ancestors before us, who lived upon the earth, were unaccustomed to speak thus. From them we have inherited our pattern of life which in truth did they hold; in reverence they held, they honoured our gods" (Taube, 1993, p.31).

The main concern of the religion of the Aztec was their regard for nature. The observable cycles and rhythms of growth and decay, and the movement of the heavenly bodies in the universe were perceived to be arranged to protect man (Spencer and Jennings, 1965). To the Aztecs the universe was a religious concept rather than a geographical one, and it was viewed in terms of vertical and horizontal dimensions. The horizontal dimensions of the universe were associated with gods and their qualities which were concerned with human affairs and destiny, while the vertical dimensions of the universe were populated with gods of the over-world and the underworld who were concerned with the natural elements, death, life and cosmic forces (Spencer and Jennings, 1965). Directing the Aztecs intellectual life, keeping the calendars in harmony, and supervising the religious dramas were considered

the duties of the priesthood (Spencer and Jennings,1965). According to Taube, (1993) sacrificial ceremonies were central to the Aztec culture, and blood sacrifice, human sacrifice, and self sacrifice were the important ceremonies for balancing the forces of good and evil. Balance and harmony were considered to be of central importance for the well-being of the tribe, in which individuality was sacrificed for the well-being of the whole tribe. The concept of forgiveness was directly linked to the ceremony of confession, which was central to the worship of the goddess of dirt, the Earth Mother. She was the moral conscience of the whole tribe who ate the dirt, representing the sins of man. After the ceremony of confession, the goddess of dirt ate all the sins of the tribe, thereby cleansing the tribe of their sins.

Forgiveness in the Culture of the Navaho

The universe is a dangerous place from the perspective of the Navaho, since it contains both good and evil. Their conception of individual man is a harmoniously functioning entity in which body and mind is in alignment with the universe (Spencer and Jennings, 1965).When discord arises within the individual or amongst men chanting sacred songs is believed to rectify imbalances. Since the Navaho have no concept of an afterlife, their thoughts and actions are directed towards living in harmony with others during their present life (Reichard, 1950). The concept of forgiveness in the belief system of the Navaho is thus closely linked to living in harmony with others and maintaining a sense of harmony within themselves in conjunction with the universe.

Forgiveness in the Culture of the Eskimo

Death is the entry to a vague and gloomy realm of uncertainty for the Eskimo. According to Jenness, (1970) the Eskimo believe they live in a mysterious and dangerous world in which sickness and misfortune can strike them down at any time for no apparent reason. Young and old, good and bad, all share the same fate in this life. Since the future promises no hope or joy, the Eskimo focus on the present. Their entire concern is for their everyday

life, which is essentially the same in summer and in winter, in their youth and in their later years. Their belief system is marked by monism in which spirit and matter consist of one single substance, and when hurt is experienced, it is accepted as a mysterious occurrence, similar to their unquestioning acceptance of practical misfortunes. The Eskimo believe that animals are superior to men on a moral and intellectual basis, and when Eskimo offend an animal, they will be struck down by sickness or ill-fortune (Jenness, 1970; Spencer and Jennings, 1965). If they repent, their health and fortune are restored. The concept of forgiveness for the Eskimo is thus closely linked to repenting their wrongdoing that has led to illness or misfortune. Their fatalistic attitude concerning their present life tends to ward off thoughts of a distant and unknown tomorrow and focus on enjoying the abundant pleasures of the moment by observing the traditional taboos (Haase, 1987).

Forgiveness in a Socio-political Context

Forgiveness in a societal context is probably more difficult to attain than forgiveness in any of the other contexts. Throughout the history of the ages, the passage of time, and the rise and fall of empires and nations, is marked by a never-ending series of battles and wars between nations and countries (Cloke,1993). Political endeavours were firmly focussed on annexing as much land as possible, strengthening the country's boundaries, and becoming stronger and more powerful on an economical, and political level. Forgiveness in the world's political and societal past was non-existent and could best be described as a truce. As opposed to the past's expansionist view of the world, today's world has become smaller. The public nature of judgement has drawn us closer together by means of inter-communicational networks. Computer, telephone, and television put us in touch with one another within a split-second. Systemic thinking has allowed us to understand the subjective nature of right and wrong, beauty and ugliness, and what is deemed desirable and undesirable. A paradigm shift has occurred regarding the idea of power. The power to lord over others has been replaced by the power to attempt to find solutions to

communal problems. International peace has become the preferred point of interest on a political level, which makes forgiveness a relevant issue in today's world. Forgiveness on a socio-political basis has now become a possibility. Individuals and peoples need a sort of healing of past memories so that past evils will not come back again, and forgiveness has thus become accepted as an essential aspect of lasting peace.

The irrational basis on which all governments rest, misrepresent the true interests of those who live under them. They usually pursue conventional and fault-finding ends which are still diligently applied and worked through with public energies. The Romans closely approached the creation of an ideal state, because their vast military power stood behind their governors and magistrates. Today, this ideal state could become a reality when science and commerce unite within the context of two or three governments who would renounce the urge to steal (Kelly and Nelson, 2003). Adhering to the principles of honesty and equity will create a climate of trust and fairness, which will encourage joint participation in eliminating the problems that contribute to the maintenance of dysfunctional systems. A fundamental change needs to occur in the basis of society if we are to eradicate system practices that are based on racial hatred, sole ownership rights in the context of scientific progress for the overall health of the human race, and fiscal policies that exclude certain countries from participating in world trading practices. Lazareth (1971, p. 237) underscores the above ideas regarding universal peace by suggesting the following: "In this world, independent, sovereign nations must prepare the path for a worldwide community of mankind. Such a worldwide community can only be built onto the foundations of fairness and equality amongst all peoples". According to Webster (1991) empirical and theoretical work in sociology has demonstrated the social character of science and technology. Discourses surrounding scientific and technological contributions have drawn on ideas from philosophy, political theory, social ethics, and scientific discourse itself. This means that a view of science, technology, and philosophy without including their social character will lead to inhuman practices based on the premises of linear thinking (Bateson, 1971; 1972; 1976). Since we are all involved in technology in one way or another technological products in interaction with human beings should be seen as a giant social experiment. By making this interaction a part of the public discourse, everyone of us would

be involved in the debate regarding the ethics surrounding the products we send into the world (Kelly and Nelson, 2003). This would lead us back to a systems view that reigned in the "old cultures" such as the Eskimos, the American Indians, and the San Bushmen (Booysens, 1984; Bleek, 1875; Jenness, 1970; Spencer and Jennings, 1965; Reichard, 1950). Their worlds may have been technologically speaking impoverished in terms of gadgets, while their interactional skills were very well developed. They were all consistently involved in learning and executing pro social behaviours. They also utilised their interactional skills to maintain a peaceful existence among the members of the tribe. In the case of the San they even disseminated peace amongst their own and other tribes (Booysens, 1984; Bleek,1875). Lack of practice or disuse in human interactional processes as a result of a preoccupation with technological, scientific, or ideological products may lead to an inability to positively interact with others (Mussen, Conger, Kagan, and Huston, 1984). This inability may in turn keep one's interactional thinking style fixated on a linear course of cause and effect, which leads to the well-known dichotomies of love and hate, war and peace, and right and wrong. Mutual interactions are characterised by a combination of factors that are simultaneously causes and effects of each other and for each other (Bateson, 1971; 1972, 1976; Keeney, 1990). That means the other side of right can also be right. Forgiving from this perspective can thus be understood as enduring the other's perspective in conjunction with one's own perspective (Von Krosigk, 2000).

Forgiveness is often thought of in terms of forgiving a close friend or relative for hurtful behaviour. It can however also refer to having to forgive an anonymous body that caused some individuals hurt. For example:

- When a political prisoner is allowed to embrace his wife for the first time in twenty-one years, can he forgive the government, which was responsible for his imprisonment, for the wasted years of his youth?

- Can a man forgive the reigning government for discriminating against individuals on the grounds of race, colour, social or economic standing, religious orientation, or physical appearance?

- Is it possible to forgive something for which nobody seems to be responsible?

The above questions are directly linked to the political ideology to which a country subscribes. They are also linked to the fact that many people on earth have an ethnic identity as well as cultural, religious, professional, social, political and economic identities. In the context of having to forgive the government for hurtful acts against its citizens brings up the theme of justice (Ferguson, 1999; Friedman,1996). When many ethnic groups live under the same government, does each ethnic group understand the same thing by justice, or is one group's justice another groups wrong? If a government holds out infinite forgiveness, it simultaneously holds out an infinite temptation to commit evil. Therefore, we can say that society depends on justice. From a social perspective justice is within the control of society, and must come first, while repentance and reparation is controlled by the individual and therefore comes second (Friedman, 1996). We must therefore conclude that social justice must be done so that the individual can begin the long road of repentance, attitudinal change, reparation, discarding or forgetting old behaviours, substituting new behaviours, and finally making peace with him/herself, and one's own and others' inadequacies (Von Krosigk, 2000).

Violations of international covenants such as the 'United Nations Charter', the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights', the 'International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination', the 'International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights', and the 'International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights', can be defined as the violation of human rights (Hinds,1978). Human rights violations can be understood as violations against human beings by virtue of their political beliefs, their race, colour, ethnic origin, social position, and economic status (Hinds,1978). Violating a person's freedom and basic human rights has been considered intractable and unforgivable (Hinds,1978; Medina Quiroga, 1988; Lavik, Nygård, Sveaass and Fannemel,1994; Skaar,1994; Krog,1998), but the Christian conviction that our relationship to others is central to human existence has given rise to the idea that reconciliation after conflict is the way to act, both on a personal and a political level (Tutu,1999; Mandela,1997). As a result of the 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' process "no problem anywhere can ever again be considered to be intractable . . . there is life after conflict and repression, and because of

forgiveness, there is a future" (Tutu,1999, p.230). Everyone has been granted limited time on this earth, and when one is struck with illness one realises acutely that there is not enough time to be nasty (Von Krosigk, 2000). Reconciliation, like forgiveness and relaxation means different things to different people. Mrs Kondile says: "It is easy for Mandela and Tutu to forgive... they lead vindicated lives. In my life nothing, not a single thing, has changed, since my son was burnt by barbarians... nothing. Therefore I cannot forgive" (Krog, 1998, p.109).

Tutu (1999) on the other hand transcends the boundaries of race, by appealing to his society to forgive one another, and to rejoice in the individual differences so that new meanings and identities can emerge. Tutu's view can be termed objective as opposed to Mrs Kondile's subjective view. Ntombizanele Elsie Zingxondo was tortured, and for her it was even difficult to be with people after the incident, since being with them reminded her of being tortured (Krog, 1998). Her view is one of an intensely intimate personal involvement. When she was tortured, the pain and humiliation were imprinted in her physiological being like an automatic memory response, which reoccurs at the slightest hint of a similar event. This process has been well documented (Selye,1956; Rossi,1993). We have also learnt from victims of terror that the traumatisation of their body and mind takes a very long time to heal, scarring them for life (Seligman, Walker and Rosenhan, 2001; Carson, Butcher and Mineka, 1998).

The dictionary definitions of 'reconciliation' converge towards bringing things together again; to become friendly with someone after estrangement; to acquiesce to an unpleasant situation (Collins,1995). These meanings have derived from the Latin 'to be friendly again', which refers to situations of unfriendliness. It does however not come close to the heinous deeds against individuals which have surfaced during times of war and as a result of hatred (Akhtar, Kramer and Parens, 1995). Torture, consciously molesting, hurting or injuring others to an extreme degree in the context of having power over the other individual does not fall into the same category as being unfriendly (Von Krosigk, 2000). When working towards forgiveness and reconciliation within the context of human rights violations, the inequalities between victims of extreme torture and their perpetrators need

to be addressed (Von Krosigk, 2000).

In *Illusions of justice*, Hinds (1978, p. 405) alleges that "the United States Government by its domestic conduct violates the spirit and letter of its legal and moral obligations as a member of the United Nations and the international community of humankind". The 'Charter of the United Nations' part 3, article 10, states:

"All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person".

"The penitentiary system shall comprise treatment of prisoners the essential aim of which shall be their reformation and social rehabilitation. Juvenile offenders shall be segregated from adults and be accorded treatment appropriate to the age and legal status..." (Hinds, 1978, p.417- 418).

Bedell, Challis, Cilliers, Cole, Corry, Nieuwoudt, Phayane, Zachariades (1998) state that recidivism after imprisonment in South Africa is high, and juvenile offenders seem to learn better ways of contravening the law during imprisonment. Such an outcome is in direct opposition to the legal and moral obligations of members of the United Nations and the 'Charter of the United Nations' and thereby falls into the realm of human rights violations (Von Krosigk, 2000).

Skaar (1994, p. 91) asserts that "the rules or framework for the human rights policies to be followed were largely set at the transition from one regime type to another through agreements". The three concepts "truth", "justice", and "reconciliation" are a part of the ethical / political dilemma of human rights violations. When discussing highly emotive issues it is very difficult to remain neutral, since an objective "truth" does not exist, and all facts are open to interpretation (Tutu,1999; Skaar,1994). When an impersonal state hands down punishment without considering neither the victim nor the perpetrator, retributive justice is accomplished (Tutu,1999). Another kind of justice according to Tutu (1999) is restorative justice as it was practised in the traditional African systems of justice. Restorative justice does not focus on retribution or punishment, but rather attempts to heal the breaches, to redress the imbalances, and to restore broken relationships, all in the

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spirit of *ubuntu.* Restorative justice is a very personal approach to healing broken relationships, by seeking to rehabilitate the victim and the perpetrator, and by reintegrating both into the community (Tutu,1999). Reconciliation can therefore be facilitated by allowing the victim and the perpetrator to each tell their stories in the language of their choice (Tutu,1999; Estés,1992). This process was adhered to during the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and according to Estés (1992) telling their stories of hurt is the medicine that heals. Storytelling is however not the only work that must be done. Within the context of human rights violations, the issues that lead to those violations need to be addressed, before forgiveness and healing can occur.

To many people these hearings have provided the world with "a possible paradigm for dealing with situations where violence, conflict, turmoil and sectional strife have seemed endemic, conflicts that mostly take place not between warring nations but within the same nation" (Tutu,1999, p.229). The years do not erode the memories, but they do heal the bleeding wounds and the disillusioned minds provided the stories are heard, the issues that lead to those violations have been addressed, and justice has been done (Sifrin, 1996; Friedman, 1996; Estés, 1992).

The modes of transition between the outgoing military government and a democratically elected government usually sets the framework for democratic consolidation. That means, that there is pressure to bring the military under civilian rule, which inherently involves resolving the legacy of the past gross human rights violations, and on the other hand, to refrain from provoking the military into staging authoritarian reversals (Skaar,1994). This process however is one in which every civilian in the country is involved, and in which every civilian plays a role in the consolidation of democracy.

Forgiveness in a Therapeutic Context

Forgiving others, oneself, and seeking forgiveness for past wrongdoing, is known as the

"forgiveness triad" in therapeutic circles. Only recently has the concept forgiveness been investigated from the psychological point of view (Gassin and Enright, 1995; Sandage, Wibberley and Worthington, 1995; Enright, 1994, and 2001; McCullough and Worthington, 1994; Di Blasio and Proctor, 1993; Rosenak and Harndon, 1992; North,1987; Droll, 1984; Trainer,1981; Karen, 2001) . In the past, forgiveness has been experienced as a valued and desirable act by religious individuals, particularly as a part of confession as a customary practice in the Catholic Church (Metz,1988). However, the inherently human need to forgive, which is also an essential part of the therapeutic process, has heightened the awareness of clients and therapists alike that forgiveness needs to be explored (Elkin, 1998; Horowitz, 1989).

Symington (1994) tried to combine psychotherapy with religion because he was convinced that there was a wisdom in the religious traditions which had been lost, and that the idea of what constitutes mental health was not clear at all. He argues that "one of the problems is that psychoanalysis has sort of alienated itself from that type of religious philosophy, and that psychoanalysis needs that sort of philosophy to really bring human beings to fulfilment, and that one of the problems with traditional religions is that although they have got the right philosophy tucked away inside somewhere, their knowledge of the emotional field is absent" (Symington,1994, p.20).

Throughout life, we are hurt many times, and we often tend to deny these insults in order to avoid losing the object of our affection. We do however feel the apparent loss on an emotional and psychic level, even though the people who hurt us remain a part of our life (Marks, 1988). Forgiveness after having suffered is often correlated to finding meaning in the suffering, which according to Gassin and Enright (1995) and Frankl (1959; 1987) is a very important dimension in the process of interpersonal forgiveness. It is therefore neither right nor wrong, if a victim of emotional abuse does not want to forgive a perpetrator, particularly if the perpetrator is entrenched in denying the fact that s/he has wronged another individual (Enright, 1996, and 2001). However, in order to arrest unnecessary suffering, the victim does need to forgive the self (Enright, 1996; Karen, 2001).

The philosophical analysis of forgiveness grounds the act of forgiveness in self-respect and human concern, and the psychological analyses of outcome studies, support the fact that forgiving behaviours enhance psychological health (Enright, 1996, and 2001; Fow, 1996). When we can test hypotheses concerning the consequences of forgiveness, more researchers will formulate theories of forgiveness, and counsellors will be encouraged to test these theories in their practices. Smedes (1984) asserts that the victim of hurt will know when healing has begun, since the desire to retaliate will have abated, and a feeling of wishing the offender well will appear. Lapsley (1966) has based his belief about the difficulty to forgive upon the psychodynamic explanation for being arrested at a certain psychosexual stage of development. From this perspective, the goal of psychodynamic therapy addresses the need to permit the arrested individual to move beyond that stage in order to be freed towards forgiving.

Another possible reason for the seemingly reluctant attitude of some to right their wrongs in relation to others could be the inherent difficulty of the act of forgiveness. Although many attempts to explain forgiveness have been made, there is to date no coherent, comprehensive socio-psychological framework for achieving interpersonal forgiveness (McCullough, Worthington,Jr and Rachal, 1997; Shontz and Rosenak, 1988).

Achieving forgiveness seems to be a very difficult path indeed, and therapy alone does not seem to be well enough equipped to facilitate the arousal of the desired thoughts, feelings and behaviours in an emotionally wounded individual. The absence of a coherent socio-psychological framework for achieving interpersonal forgiveness has thus sparked off research into the process of forgiveness (Enright, 1994). The focus of other research has been the formulation of a stages model in the process of forgiveness (Rosenak and Harndon, 1992), an attempt to formulate a theory of forgiveness (Droll, 1984), and the recognition of the psycho-spiritual importance of sin, and that ministers need to help people understand that one can sin without being aware of doing so, or intending to do so (Cavanagh,1992).

Forgiveness in a Spiritual Context

Written and spoken language are inexorably tied to linearity, since one word follows another, but a semblance of circularity can be created by means of the connotative function of language (Tomm, 1984). Issues that are relatively simple can be presented one after the other in linear and sequential form, belong to a culture that values debate, while dialogue, discussion groups and brainstorming sessions, are part of a culture that experiences problems as interconnected. (Ong, 1967).

If one compares the kind of communication fostered in our electronic world with the existence of earlier communication between humans, our present day communication is neither more nor less dehumanising than earlier forms of communication. By using metaphors, similes, analogies and stories, images and patterns can be evoked (Tomm, 1984). The academic cultivation of rhetoric and dialectic was extremely important in Christian education, since the Hebreo-Christian God was believed to be approachable through argumentation (Ong, 1967).

Modes of description, that were known to be satisfactory for argumentative purposes, were studied until they were mastered. In today's time, learning by rote has become unsuitable, and spiritual guidelines have as a result become less readily available for men and women. According to Richards and Bergin (1997) a theistic world view is lacking in the lives of today's people.

Being able to forgive another through an overt act of forgiveness requires immense effort and is preceded by much time and groundwork that has accumulated enough trust and love to enable an open discussion of past damages (Hargrave, 1994). Often this stage is not reached, particularly when other options are available, such as divorce, breaking off a friendship, resigning from work, or moving to another city. Having to deal with pain, anger, and disillusionment are however a part of every individual's existence, which bear the possibility of union between God and man when man has traversed through the depths of despair (Richards and Bergin, 1997). When we however refuse to travel the road of

despair by evading the issue of facing our pain, we will wait in vain for the words: Your sins are forgiven. Yogananda (1893-1952) illustrates this illusion of failing to face our pain and suffering as functional by directing our thoughts towards having falsely identified ourselves with the pseudo-soul or ego. When we transfer our sense of identity to our true being, the immortal Soul, we discover that all pain is unreal, since we are no longer able to imagine the state of suffering (Dyer, 1998).

Being human means we are fallible. That means we are capable of sinning with and without realising it or intending to do it (Cavanaugh, 1992). Trying to be good is therefore an unattainable goal that can only lead to rationalisations concerning our intentions and circumstances, while it does not take away the pain we have caused another, albeit unwittingly. The one who has sinned or hurt another often tries to make peace by explaining his/her position, but does not change their reasonable decision for doing what s/he believes to be fair (Mitchell, 1995). Worship, supplication, and reliance on God, all express the overwhelming sense of impotence that may consume a mind which is aware of its physical dependence without spiritual dominion. Reciprocity in our interactions with God is what is needed to realise our immortality and spiritual dominion, despite our physical constraints and human fallibilities. When we believe in God's omnipotence, and also know that we are physically impotent, our beliefs may later be seemingly contradicted by outside forces and events. However, no matter how disappointed we may be with the contradictory messages we may receive as a result of the incongruence between our wishes and the physical events, it is not our faith that will be shattered. Instead, our faith will grow stronger, particularly when we use our material disappointments as a foundation for attaining spiritual peace. Finding spiritual peace is the goal we strive towards while we live this life amongst its billions of desires, yearnings, aspirations, cravings, and lusts. And when we have reached the stage where we have no more childish expectations of superfluous things, and our cravings, lusts and aspirations have disappeared, our immortality may begin to dawn on us, and we are ready to accept forgiveness of our sins, and thereby heal the damage in our relationship with God. These thoughts echo the thoughts and insights of enlightened individuals, who have traversed this earthly life in search of meaning such as Saint Augustine (397A.D.), Gollwitzer, (1954), Frankl,(1959;

1987), Philbert, (1964), Nee, (1977), and Von Dietfurth,(1989). Our search for meaning in whatever befalls individuals or the whole of mankind drives us to do what we do, and the meanings we attach to seemingly unrelated events are born out of our desire to know why these events are happening to us. The thirst for knowledge is the one desire that damages our relationship with God, for its pursuit leads us into detailed digressions of infinite minutiae that are irrelevant to how we relate to our fellow human beings (Von Krosigk, 2000). Relating to others in a loving way is the only task that is required of us, and to fulfill that task, we need the ability to forgive ourselves and others, and to ask for forgiveness. God will answer every human being who asks (Von Krosigk, 2000).

The origins of man's separation from God are described in a similar manner by De Lubac (1943) and by Schucman and Thetford (1976). Forgiveness is understood as a necessity in healing the separation between God and mankind. Forgiveness can therefore be understood as the way to unite mankind with God, by the act of union amongst mankind. Union amongst mankind can only be achieved by forgiving others in order to heal and restore formerly damaged or broken relationships. Sin means separation, and separation needs to be atoned (Schucman and Thetford,1976; De Lubac,1943). Atonement, or at-one-ment, means to become one again. Therefore we can become one again with each other by forgiving each other, and by asking for and accepting forgiveness from God we become one with Him. The separation has thus been healed, and God and mankind are one.

By focussing on the Christian era in which the topic of forgiveness can be recognised as an important part of our intellectual heritage, we become aware that forgiveness is a fundamental human capacity that is tied to a particular religious culture and time, while forgiveness hardly features in some of the eastern religions.

Forgiveness from a Bio-Psycho-Social Perspective

Elements of quantum theory, neuroscience, linguistics, computer systems, systems theory, developmental psychology, ethnography, cognitive psychology and biology seem to be the components that are necessary to explain the biopsychosocial phenomenon of consciousness, of which forgiveness is a part. The complexity of the nervous system, the basis for consciousness, can only be vaguely suspected, and what separates us on the biological level from the worm, the fish, and other mammals seems to be only a matter of the complexity of our nervous system (Groves and Schlesinger, 1982; Janov, 1982). The limbic system comprised of the hippocampus, anterior thalamus, amygdala, septum, hypothalamus and their interconnecting fibre bundles, is the most primitive part of all human brains, and yet, it is the interaction of these structures that produce all emotional states (Janov, 1982; Groves and Schlesinger, 1982; Solomon and Corbit, 1974). We can therefore deduce that all living organisms who are in possession of a brain and a limbic system are emotionally aroused and / or motivated when faced with danger or pleasure. Janov (1982) explains that fighting to defend oneself is a biological necessity, since it is an involuntary response to pain with the function to protect oneself. In dangerous situations, the fight or flight response is evident in all species with a limbic system, and the production of all emotional states (painful as well as pleasurable) is always accompanied by physiological arousal (Groves and Schlesinger, 1982; Janov, 1982; Izard, 1977).

Religious experiences are also suggested to originate in the limbic system (Joseph, 2001; D'Aquili and Newberg, 2000). When one is for example in an altered state of consciousness, such as having a mystical experience, the images one experiences in the sensorium are as real as those experienced when one is in a conscious state (Laughlin, McManus and d'Aquili, 1990). D'Aquili and Newberg (1993) suggest that the highly interactive structures of the limbic system are responsible for the occurrence of vivid hallucinatory and mythopoetic religious experiences, and that their function is integrated into an extremely complex neurostructural whole. It therefore seems that the mind cannot be what it is without the brain, and "the brain cannot exist without striving to create the mind" (Newberg, d'Aquili and Rause, 2001, p. 33). Franz Brentano (1960) and Edmund Husserl (1989) understand mental states such as perceiving, believing, and intending as being directed at an object which can either be real or imagined. Martin Heidegger (1968)

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however discovered that the mental aspects and the world of the body or things cannot be understood as separate. He maintains that the everyday activity of the way human beings are in this world can be described in words, without being conscious of the self. The self can be described as the embodied practical activity which is involved when subjects give meaning to objects. According to Heidegger (1956) what is called theoretical is specifically cognitive, even though it may involve practical-technical aspects. For example when a human body performs an action the conditions for performing this specific action are not fulfilled by merely moving the body parts that are necessary to perform the action. The intentionality of the individual inside the body / brain results in a sequence of bodily movements which comprise the intended action provided the body is functioning coherently. The world is thus continuously rediscovered through the activity of existing in this world (Heidegger, 1956).

Forgiveness as a Union of Brain and Mind

Consciousness can also be described as the unity of brain and mind, which is a momentary awareness that includes the sensations, perceptions, and memories of what one is attending to internally and/or externally (Reber, 1995). The universality of the neurobiological systems has been found by analysing religious and mystical experiences in different cultures across the world (D'Aquili and Laughlin, 1975). In spite of different doctrines and beliefs amongst the different cultures, the mental experiences were found to have a similar form, their interpretation however depended on the way the different cultures transmitted the meaning to others in their culture (Enright and Fitzgibbons, 2000; Prince, 1982). In subjective terms, they also differed from normal subjective experiences and the psychological functioning of each individual during an alert state of waking consciousness (Enright and Fitzgibbons, 2000; Prince, 1982). Laughlin, Mc Manus and d'Aquili (1990, p.95) suggest that "our conscious network is a system that perpetually transforms its internal organisation and its engagement with the world". We seem to have the ability to experience dreams for a time, and take them as real while we are having them, but what happens during a dream experience seems to depend on what has

happened, happens or will happen in our waking state. Our brain (the biological aspect), our mind (the psychological aspect), and our culture (the social aspect) are evidently implicated in our waking conscious states, as well as in alternate conscious states such as mystical experiences and drug induced conditions (Prince, 1982). Prince (1982) points out that opiates can operate as painkillers, and do not necessarily create a pleasant state of euphoria after a single dose. The normal human attributes of consciousness have been documented in the past, and consciousness as a non-spatial aspect of biological reality can now be mapped as a result of our advanced conceptual understanding of neurological functioning, linguistics, and computer systems (Maturana, Cummins and Cummins, 2000) .

Enright and Fitzgibbons,(2000) distinguish between the conscious decision to forgive by equating forgiveness with its usefulness to reduce anger, anxiety and related emotions. Forgiving as a moral principle founded on the goodness of the forgiver may seem to be seen as a process, while the conscious decision to forgive, and to actually do the forgiving, may seem to be similar to a technique. However, the conscious decision to forgive in conjunction with the moral principle of goodness of heart should rather be understood as a process that develops out of the moral sense of the person's goodness.

Presentation

In Chapter 2, the philosophical perspective of forgiveness, and the existing psychological literature on forgiveness is described.

Chapter 3 contains a detailed exposition of the qualitative methods that were used to collect the data. The qualitative approach and strictures that were adhered to in order to analyse and integrate the different kinds of qualitative data will then be described.

Chapter 4 describes the Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) approach to changing cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and physiological problems of which forgiving is an incidence.

Chapters 5 to 10 are each comprised of one participant's story of unforgiveness, together with a description of the context in which the story was told to me. The NLP interventions and my comments on the strategies and the process of intervention for achieving forgiveness follow. To round off the process, and to link the stories to the existing literature, discourse analysis is performed. Each chapter is allocated to an individual's story and the corresponding integrated results. The names of the hurt individuals have been changed in order to protect their identities.

Chapter 11 consists of a full description of a model of forgiveness based on the grounded theory approach from my previous study (Von Krosigk, 2000). The description highlights the emerging features that are essential to formulate a model of forgiveness, and the concluding remarks end this study by referring to one way of improving mental health.