

*Definitions of Forgiveness*  
*A Sample from Empirical Research in This Area*

1. Forgiveness “overcomes the negative affect, . . . cognition, . . . and behaviour . . . toward the injurer and substitutes more positive affect, cognition, and behaviour toward him or her” (Al-Mabuk, Enright, & Cardis, 1995, p. 427).
2. “Forgiveness is a complex affective, cognitive, and behavioral phenomena in which negative affect and judgment toward one’s offender are reduced, not by denying one’s right to such affect but by viewing the offender with compassion, benevolence, and love.” (McCullough & Worthington, 1995, p. 55)
3. Interpersonal forgiveness is “the set of motivational changes whereby one becomes (a) decreasingly motivated to retaliate against an offending relationship partner, (b) decreasingly motivated to maintain estrangement from the offender, and (c) increasingly motivated by conciliation and goodwill for the offender, despite the offender’s actions.” (McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal 1997, p.321)
4. Forgiveness is “the overcoming of negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in response to an offender’s considerable injustice.” (Rye & Pargament, 2002, p. 114).
5. “Forgiving is a willingness to abandon one’s right to resentment, negative judgement, and indifferent behavior toward one who unjustly injured us, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward him or her” (Hart & Shapiro, 2002, treatment manual, p. 27).
6. “forgiveness [is] replacing the bitter, angry feelings of vengefulness often resulting from a hurt, with positive feelings of goodwill toward the offender. Potentially, this is a complex process where those who have been hurt replace hostile, unforgiving feelings with more positive emotions toward the offending person *without giving up appropriate physical and/or emotional boundaries* that provide safety from hurtful people” (Wade, Bailey, & Shaffer, 2005).