

FORGIVENESS, PERFECTIONISM, AND THE ROLE
OF SELF-COMPASSION

By

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To the balance of process and outcome

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Research supports psychological, emotional, and physical benefits of forgiveness for well-being. Research also reveals the destructive impact of perfectionism on individuals, particularly when there is a high perceived discrepancy between one's performance and one's expectations. Self-compassion, though recently gaining prominence in the current psychological literature, has held promise for improving mental health and well-being for many years. The current study expands recent research by investigating forgiveness and perfectionism, and the role of self-compassion in mediating the forgiveness-perfectionism relationship. Based on a general adult sample (N =309) in which participants completed measures online, findings indicated a significant inverse relationship between forgiveness and perfectionism, in that adults most likely to express forgiveness-related attitudes or beliefs were also those least likely to be perfectionistic. Self-compassion was found to be a partial mediator of that association. Contributions to future research on the development of perfectionism, relationship to identity, and use of self-compassion or forgiveness in therapeutic practice are also discussed. Common themes amongst experiences of forgiveness and perfectionism are also discussed using qualitative response data.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Is it really better to forgive? Recent research has supported the psychological, emotional, and physical benefits of forgiveness for well-being (e.g., Lawler, Younger, Piferi, Billington, Jobe, Edmonson, et al., 2003; Witvliet, 2001, 2005; Worthington, 2005; Worthington & McCullough, 2004). At the same time, the field of psychology has gained much knowledge regarding perfectionism and its potentially destructive impact on individuals (see Blatt, 1995). Though both forgiveness and perfectionism have been researched independently thus far, significant evidence exists to support a relationship between these two constructs that may prove an important contribution to both future research and therapeutic practice. As psychology has advanced, research has begun to shift from investigating the pathological to examining both the positive, healthy, and adaptive characteristics of well-being as well as the more destructive aspects. In this vein, the current study provides an in-depth investigation of the relationship between two well-known constructs, perfectionism and forgiveness, and explores the role of self-compassion in their relationship.

Research on perfectionism has developed extensively over time. It was originally considered as a construct having only one definition and entirely negative consequences, but further insights support the idea that perfectionism contains both positive and negative dimensions. Though discussion continues regarding the adaptive and maladaptive dimensions of perfectionism (e.g., Bieling, Israeli, & Antony, 2004; Suddarth & Slaney, 2001), research has focused predominantly on clarifying and solidifying the essential aspects of the maladaptive dimension of perfectionism. Since the first research began on perfectionism, its characteristics have been linked to a variety of

psychological distresses and disturbances (Hamachek, 1978). These include personality disorders (Hewitt, Flett, & Turnbull, 1992), obsessive-compulsive disorders (Hewitt & Flett, 1991a; Rice & Pence, 2006; Ye, Rice, & Storch, 2008), eating disorders (e.g. Axtell & Newlon, 1994; Hewitt, Flett, & Ediger, 1995; Shafran, Cooper, & Fairburn, 2002), high shame (Ashby, Rice, & Martin, 2006), and low self-esteem (e.g. Ashby & Rice, 2002; Mobley, Slaney, & Rice, 2005; Rice, Ashby, & Slaney, 2007). Perfectionists have also been found to have high levels of anxiety (e.g., Rice & Slaney, 2002) and depression (e.g., Blatt & Zuroff, 1992; Enns & Cox, 2005; Hewitt & Flett, 1990, 1991b). Nothing ever seems to be quite good enough for perfectionists, they judge their work to be of lower quality than non-perfectionists (Frost & Henderson, 1990; Frost & Marten, 1991), have been reported to make lower salaries than those not suffering from perfectionism (Burns, 1980), have lower quality intimate partnerships and premarital adjustment (Aldea & Rice, 2006; Ashby, Rice, & Kutchins, 2008; Shea, et al., 2006) and exhibit lower levels of academic adjustment and integration (e.g., Rice, Leever, Christopher, & Porter, 2006). Perfectionism has also been linked to increased brooding, rumination, and negative affect (Hewitt, Flett, Besser, Sherry, & McGee, 2003), hopelessness (e.g., O'Connor, O'Connor, & Marshall, 2007), and a greater potentiality for suicide (e.g., Blatt, 1995; Callahan, 1993).

Important parallels exist within the forgiveness literature. Lower levels of forgiveness have been found to relate to higher levels of hostile thoughts and rumination (Thompson et al., 2005), vengeance (Stuckless & Goranson, 1992), negative affect (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), and greater levels of depression (Thompson, & Snyder, 2003). There exists much debate as to the conceptualization of forgiveness, and

most have considered forgiveness of transgressions *interpersonally* to be the quintessential definition of forgiveness. However, strong trends in measuring forgiveness have now advanced the notion of assessing forgiveness using multiple aspects in a more comprehensive and dispositional manner. Forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others, and forgiveness of situations beyond one's control now help to flesh out the theory and measurement of forgiveness for more accurate future research. Thompson and colleagues (2003) have introduced and provided strong evidence for considering forgiveness under this new framework, in which it is defined as "...the framing of a perceived transgression such that one's attachment to the transgressor, transgression, and sequelae of the transgression is transformed from negative to neutral or positive" (p. 302).

Under this current approach, forgiveness is considered as a primarily *intrapersonal* phenomenon, having to do with a person's internal process of transforming the valence of their attachment to an event or outcome. Perfectionism conceptualization has been parted along similar lines, with the introduction of self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism dimensions (Hewitt & Flett, 1989; Hewitt, Flett, Turnbull-Donovan, & Mikail, 1991). Self-oriented and other-oriented perfectionism are both described as originating from within an individual, while socially prescribed perfectionism has gathered some controversy due to its focus on the expectations of others. According to Shafran, Cooper, & Fairburn (2003), interpersonal processes are not necessary, perfectionism may occur predominantly by the imposition of self-imposed and personally demanding standards. This means that, similar to forgiveness, the construct of perfectionism has been described using both *interpersonal* and *intrapersonal* terms, though trends support the notion that the intrapersonal aspect may be most salient, in

particular when it comes to psychologically destructive consequences. The negative effects of perfectionism have occurred most strongly for self-oriented perfectionists, providing further support for emphasizing an intrapersonal focus in research. Continued perfectionism research has given us a measure that more closely approximates the essence of maladaptive perfectionism – the distress resulting from a negatively perceived difference between one’s standards and one’s evaluation of one’s performance, termed Discrepancy (Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi, & Ashby, 2001). Discrepancy appears to be an intrapersonally evaluative phenomenon in which maladaptive perfectionists engage in harsh self-criticism and judgment of their performance, continually finding themselves lacking when compared with their self-imposed and impossibly high standards.

The similarities between forgiveness and perfectionism highlight the possibility of an important relationship between the two, which has not previously been investigated in research on either phenomenon. It is possible that a destructive element at play here may be an inability for perfectionistic individuals to forgive themselves. Low propensity for forgiveness in an individual could foster the kind of mental landscape that supports an "all-or-nothing" critical mentality. The current study investigated the primary hypothesis of a strong inverse relationship between forgiveness and perfectionism, in order to expand the window into the particularly destructive internal processes occurring within individuals with maladaptive perfectionism. Once a perceived failure or inadequacy occurs, these individuals become incredibly vulnerable to future perceived failures, engaging in evaluative and critical condemnation of themselves or others, potentially demonstrating a low level of dispositional forgiveness. Those with higher levels of forgiveness would refrain from engaging in this condemning, judgmental evaluation,

instead transforming their negative affect into neutral or positive affect, and thus successfully avoiding the pitfalls of maladaptive perfectionism. Given the parallels between the processes of perfectionism and forgiveness, and the respective ramifications or benefits found with regard to well-being, this conspicuous gap in the literature merits further investigation.

Understanding perfectionistic and forgiving individuals may unearth new personal qualities useful for encouraging forgiveness and reducing maladaptive consequences of perfectionism. Self-compassion, though recently introduced into the current psychological literature (Neff, 2003a), has held promise for improving mental health and well-being for many years. This has been particularly prevalent within eastern philosophical perspectives. More recently, self-compassion has made its way into the psychological arena, with strong empirical support for its benefits. Self-compassion has been found to have a significant inverse relationship with perfectionism (Neff, 2003b), in that the more self-compassion the lower the maladaptive perfectionism. Self-compassion has not previously been related to forgiveness, making the current study the first to do so. Self-compassion, containing components of mindfulness, the ability to see one's experiences and feelings as part of a common human experience, and kindness toward oneself, offers a potential link between the processes of forgiveness and perfectionism. Self-compassionate individuals look with understanding upon their experiences rather than criticize them, take a balanced perspective toward negative feelings, see commonalities between their experience and those of others, accept inadequacies as implicitly part of the human condition, and create a mental space in which to be mindful of their feelings and internal processes (Neff, 2003a). With maladaptive perfectionism

enacting a harsh judgment on inadequacies or negative experiences, it makes sense that a mindful, understanding, and kind perspective toward oneself may help save an individual from becoming entrenched in a perfectionistic mindset. The common humanity aspect of self-compassion, the ability to see oneself as similar to others, with implicit failures, mistakes, and inadequacies, increases a sense of interconnectedness (Neff, 2003b). This sense of belonging is often absent in maladaptive perfectionists, who exhibit low levels of social connection (Rice, et al., 2006). The current study hypothesized that self-compassion will relate to higher levels of forgiveness and lower levels of perfectionism. Higher forgiveness levels may activate self-compassion, thus leading to lower maladaptive perfectionistic tendencies. Forgiveness is considered to be the intrapersonal transformation of the valence of an event from negative to neutral or positive. Releasing oneself from the negative valence of an event may help to create the mental space needed to experience feelings of commonness with humanity and a kindness toward self, all of which are present in self-compassion. The current study examines the potential mechanism employed by individuals who are more forgiving to encourage self-compassion and avoid the potential destructive elements of perfectionism, providing new insight into the forgiveness-perfectionism relationship.

Though self-compassion has been related to perfectionism, and the ability to see oneself as similar to others has been found to be correlated with forgiveness (Exline, Baumeister, Zell, Kraft, & Witvliet, 2008), the possibility of a link between forgiveness and perfectionism, particularly one mediated by self-compassion has never been investigated. In addressing this question, the current study helps link two popular bodies of literature, that of forgiveness and that of perfectionism. The current study provides

necessary theoretical and empirical foundation for future research in perfectionism and forgiveness, as well as a foundation for development of psychologically therapeutic interventions that address forgiveness and self-compassion when working with perfectionistic individuals in a clinical setting.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to explore the relationship of forgiveness to perfectionistic tendencies it is important to flesh out the recent literature in both areas. The review will pay particular attention to similarities and differences between the concepts of interest on a descriptive level, as well as the measures of well-being that have been found to have significant relationships with both forgiveness and perfectionism. Attention will also be paid to how self-compassion may influence or help explain forgiveness and perfectionism, given the theoretical and empirical support presented.

Forgiveness

There exists much debate as to the conceptualization of forgiveness. Most consider forgiveness *interpersonally* as the defining feature of forgiveness. However, approaches to measuring forgiveness range from presenting events of specific transgressions hypothetically committed towards a respondent and asking their propensity to forgive such an event, to more broad statements intended to gauge one's disposition to forgive events beyond one's control. The most recent and comprehensive approach has been to consider forgiveness as an *intrapersonal* phenomenon, and having to do with a person's transforming the valence of their attachment to an event or occurrence. The spectrum of forgiveness conceptualizations and measurement, and the evolution of the construct as both a vital aspect of well-being and ultimately as a dispositional, intrapersonal experience will be discussed in this section.

Many researchers agree upon the benefits of forgiveness and the drawbacks or consequences of not forgiving (see Neto & Mullet, 2004 table for review). Narcissism, neuroticism, anger, anxiety, depression, hostility, and resentment have all been associated

with low levels of forgiveness (Ashton, Paunonen, Helmesa, & Jacksona, 1998; Enright et al., 1992; Worthington, 1998). An inability to forgive has also been found to correspond with higher levels of hostile thoughts and rumination (Berry, Worthington, Parrott, O'Connor, & Wade, 2001; McCullough et al., 2001; Thompson et al., 2005), vengeance (Berry, Worthington, O'Connor, Parrott, Wade, 2005; Stuckless & Goranson, 1992), negative affect (Watson, et. al, 1988), a neurotic defense style (Macaskill, Maltby, & Day, 2002; Maltby & Day, 2004), the personality dimension of Neuroticism (Neto & Mullet, 2004), anger and fear (Berry et al., 2005), physiological stress and coronary heart disease (Witvliet, 2001), greater anxiety, and higher levels of depression (Seybold, Hill, Neuman, & Chi, 2001; Thompson, & Snyder, 2003; Subkoviak, Enright, Wu, Gassin, Freedman, Olson, et al., 1995). Conversely, high levels of forgiveness have been associated with many factors of psychological, emotional, and physical well-being (e.g., Denton & Martin, 1998; Lawler, Younger, Piferi, Jobe, Edmondson, & Jones, 2005), such as happiness (Maltby, Day, & Barber, 2005), better sleep quality, less fatigue, and fewer somatic complaints (Lawler, et al., 2005), greater life satisfaction, less anxiety and reduced depression (e.g., Al-Mabuk, Enright, & Cardis, 1995; Coyle and Enright, 1997; Freedman and Enright, 1996; Hebl and Enright, 1993), greater altruism (Ashton, et al., 1998), empathy (Berry et al., 2005), and gratitude (McCullough et al., 2002; Neto & Mullet, 2004). Forgiveness has also been associated with the personality dimensions of Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Religiousness, and Responsibility (Ashton, et al., 1998; Berry et al., 2001), a secure adult attachment style (Lawler-Row, Youger, Piferi, & Jones, 2006; Webb, Call, Chickering, Colburn, &

Heisler, 2006), increased hope, and spiritual well-being (Maltby, Day, & Barber, 2004; Saucier & Goldberg, 1998).

However, researchers do not agree upon a clear definition of forgiveness, and a consensus has not yet been reached regarding whether forgiveness truly occurs inter- or intra- personally. As such, debate continues as to whether it ought to be measured using a situation-specific or dispositional approach. Mauger and colleagues (1992) were among the first to differentiate between types of forgiveness, created the Forgiveness of Self (FS) and Forgiveness of Others (FO) scales, which fall under the greater umbrella of the construct of forgiveness. These measures generally take the approach of measuring forgiveness from the negative standpoint, in that they appear to be using endorsement of unforgiveness as an indication of one's lack of forgiveness of self or others. This implies that unforgiveness and forgiveness would exist on a continuum in which one is said to have more or less forgiveness overall, regardless of the negative or positive standpoint of the measure. The FO items revolve particularly around taking revenge, justifying retaliation, holding grudges, and seeing other people as apt to cause one hurt, while the FS items tapped feelings of guilt, seeing oneself as sinful, and having a variety of negative self-attitudes (Mauger et al., 1992).

Enright and others (Subkoviak et al., 1995; Hebl & Enright, 1993) preferred to assess forgiveness using transgression-specific means, subscribing to the mindset that forgiveness is something that occurs between two people, or solely interpersonally. They define forgiveness as “a willingness to abandon one's right to resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behavior toward one who unjustly hurt us, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward him or her”

(Enright et al., 1998, pp. 46-47). This definition clearly exhibits the necessity for benevolence in order for forgiveness to occur. Enright and Zell (1989) also assert that, “the fruition of forgiveness is entering into loving community with others” (p.99), suggesting that reconciliation may be a required part of forgiveness as well. Though respondents are asked to respond to hypothetical as well as one real situation, the narrow focus of a transgression-specific approach constricts the external validity and limits the applicability of forgiveness to other more trait-based psychological constructs.

Berry and colleagues (2001) also endorse a transgression-specific definition of forgiveness. Similarly, McCullough (2000) and colleagues conceptualize forgiveness as a construct emphasizing prosocial changes in motivations. Under their definition one specifically experiences decreased motivation to avoid personal and psychological contact with the offender, to seek revenge or to see harm come to the offender, and increased benevolence motivation toward the offender, implying that forgiveness of others is the basic component. Under this framework, again, forgiveness is defined in terms of interpersonal process rather than an experience that may occur intrapersonally.

The two components of their definition are motivations to avoid contact, and motivations to seek revenge or see harm come to the transgressor (McCullough et al., 1998), emphasizing mostly the negative aspects as representative of one’s lack of forgiveness.

Hargrave and Sells (2007) offer a definition of forgiveness that includes the component of love: “effort in restoring love and trustworthiness to relationships so that victims and victimizers can put an end to destructive entitlement” (p.43). They assert two broader levels of forgiveness, exonerating (involving insight and understanding) and forgiving (involving the overt act of forgiving as well as giving the opportunity for compensation,

meaning the ability for interactions with the transgressor in a way perceived by that person as non-threatening and encouraging of emotional bonding. Hargrave and Sells (1997) see forgiveness as having two components, forgiveness and pain, and have developed a measure with four interesting subscales: insight, understanding, giving the opportunity for compensation, and the overt act of forgiving. Here we see a conceptualization of forgiveness that approaches intrapersonal emphasis, but still falls short. Examination of the construct of forgiveness using specific descriptions of events does not allow for a broader generalizability of forgiveness as attributed to the respondent as well as to be related to other psychological constructs.

Kamat and colleagues (2006) found evidence for forgiveness as a more stable dimension of personality, and current trends in the forgiveness literature support the idea that forgiveness is more accurately and appropriately characterized as dispositional in nature (Thompson et al., 2003). The current study argues that the superior approach to measurement of forgiveness is both through a non transgression-specific framework, and is incorporative of the self, others, and situational components of the forgiveness construct, in line with the definition of forgiveness put forth by Thompson and Snyder (2003):

We define forgiveness as the framing of a perceived transgression such that one's attachment to the transgressor, transgression, and sequelae of the transgression is transformed from negative to neutral or positive. The source of a transgression, and therefore the object of forgiveness, may be oneself, another person or persons, or a situation that one views as being beyond anyone's control (e.g., an illness, "fate," or a natural disaster). (p. 302)

This definition is arguably the broadest and most encompassing definition yet available, in that it includes the possibility of feeling transgressed upon in an impersonal manner, and thus allows for the forgiveness of situations to exist as a distinct and important aspect of dispositional forgiveness. The authors' most compelling argument for the understanding of forgiveness as dispositional rather than transgression-specific is the assertion that forgiveness itself occurs only *intrapersonally*. In other words, the target of forgiveness does not matter; it is the motivation and behavior of the forgiver that exemplify forgiveness as a disposition. This measure created by Thompson and colleagues, the Heartland Forgiveness scale (HFS; Thompson et al., 2005), measures forgiveness of self, others, and situations. This is the measure chosen for the current study and will be discussed in detail later.

In the realm of clinical practice, models have begun to be established for forgiveness. Denton and Martin (1998) found that experienced clinicians identified forgiveness as an inner process that was central to psychotherapy. Clinicians corroborated the idea that forgiveness is a predominantly intrapersonal process, in which an individual releases those negative feelings and no longer seeks to return hurt within (Denton & Martin, 1998). Worthington and Wade (1999) have set forth a model incorporating forgiveness and its related areas, in which the personal attributes of the participants and of the relationship at hand before a transgression factor into the propensity and likelihood of an individual to forgive. First, the person's perceptions of the events take place, and their initial emotional reaction to the events occurs. Then interpersonally active responses, such as revenge/retaliation, pro-relationship behavior, and perception of the offender's response occur, as well as the intrapersonally passive response of rumination.

Within this model, an emotionally dissonant event occurs that changes one's initial reaction to the event, leading to emotional dissonance. This aspect is considered crucial. "Underlying forgiveness is an emotional dissonant event. Thus, a victim's ability to forgive will be influenced partially by his or her ability to comprehend and successfully resolve incompatible emotions, which is the core of the hypothesized construct of emotional intelligence" (Worthington & Wade, 1999, p. 395). At this point, self-compassion may play its part in the forgiveness process. The more one is able to take a compassionate standpoint toward one's own actions or feelings that may provoke an initially negative response, the more likely one may be to be open to and familiar with the choice of extending this understanding and compassion to events involving others (or situations). In kind, the more one considers oneself to have a kinship or similarity with others, who also have broadly imperfect human experiences, the more forgiving and the less self-critical or perfectionistic the person may be.

Another model of forgiveness has been proposed within the psychotherapeutic context that highlights intrapersonal process, and the role of attending to the similarities and humanity of another person. Rosenak and Harnden (1992) describe a model in which, after an offensive event, victims experience hurt that leads to anger. After the realization and expression of hurt and anger comes, a therapeutic information-gathering stage occurs within a client, in which the client needs to glean more knowledge about the transgressor. This information is thought to then promote a better understanding from the other person's perspective, leading to a true forgiveness.

Current trends in forgiveness research support the idea that forgiveness occurs as an intrapersonal process. In a meta-analysis of forgiveness interventions, Baskin and

Enright (2004) found that, when compared with control groups on forgiveness and other emotional health measures, process-based individual interventions showed large effects and process-based group interventions showed significant effects, while decision-based interventions had no effect. These findings highlight the effectiveness of focusing on the process of forgiveness occurring within a person. The Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS; Thompson, Snyder, Hoffman, Michael, Rasmussen, et al, 2005) has been developed based upon this very conceptualization, and serves as the most encompassing defining of the construct of forgiveness to date. Under this framework, someone can be relieved of the negative attachment through transforming the negative cognitions, emotions, and/or behaviors to either neutral or positive, as well as through weakening the attachment by releasing the perception of a strong connection between oneself and the transgressor or transgression (Thompson & Snyder, 2003). This does not necessitate a forgetting of the event, nor preclude the person from taking any actions, legal or otherwise. The emphasis is on the valence of the attachment, and forgiveness is said to occur as long as the motivation does not involve negative attachment (e.g., vengefulness). Instead, forgiveness is understood as a *process* “through which people synthesize their prior assumptions and the reality of the transgression into a new understanding of the transgression, transgressor, transgression sequelae, and potentially, of themselves, other people, or the world” (Thompson et al., 2005, p. 318). The authors are groundbreaking and unique in their perspective that only the shift from a negative to a neutral attachment is necessary and sufficient to constitute forgiveness, rather than needing empathy or compassion to be demonstrated.

Perfectionism

Over the years and through a variety of research avenues, perfectionism has evolved from a simple to a multidimensional construct. Researchers have increasingly become interested in perfectionism in relation to psychological well-being, and there is currently a growing debate with regard to what conception and aspects of perfectionism may or may not be detrimental, or maladaptive. Burns (1980) continued this work with more detailed descriptions of a perfectionist's self-defeating thoughts and attitudes that can lead to higher anxiety, depression, and mood swings. Blatt (1995) later elaborated on the self-destructiveness of perfectionism, linking it to a self-critical depression and general psychopathology. However, Hamachek (1978) and others advanced the notion very early on that perfectionism may be more complex than it seems at first glance, and may contain adaptive as well as maladaptive functions, which he described as "normal" perfectionism and "neurotic" perfectionism.

The adaptive functions of perfectionism serve to motivate an individual to achieve and strive to meet high standards, while the more maladaptive perfectionistic characteristics may lead individuals to experience a variety of psychological distress and disturbance, such as personality disorders (e.g., Flett, Endler, Tassone, & Hewitt, 1994; Rice, et al., 2007), obsessive-compulsive disorders (e.g., Hewitt & Flett, 1991a; Rice & Pence, 2006; Ye, et al., 2008), low self-esteem (Ashby & Rice, 2002; Gzregorek et al., 2004; Mobley, Slaney, & Rice, 2005) and high shame (Ashby, Rice, & Martin, 2006), high levels of anxiety (e.g., Flett, Hewitt, & Dyck, 1989; Mobley et al., 2005), eating disorders (e.g., Axtell & Newlon, 1994; Hewitt, Flett, & Ediger, 1995), and Type A behaviors (e.g., Flett, Hewitt, & Blankenstein, 1994). Those with high levels of perfectionism have an extreme vulnerability to failure, experiencing each fault as

catastrophic. Across cultures, they very often exhibit higher levels of depression (e.g., Shahar, Blatt & Zuroff, 2003; Enns, Cox, & Clara, 2002; Wang et al., 2007).

Perfectionists judge their work to be of lower quality than non-perfectionists (Frost & Henderson, 1991; Frost & Marten, 1991), have been reported to make lower salaries than even those not suffering from perfectionism (Burns, 1980), have lower quality intimate partnerships and premarital adjustment (Aldea & Rice, 2006; Ashby, Rice, & Kutchins, 2008; Shea, Slaney, & Rice, 2006), and exhibit lower levels of academic adjustment and integration (Rice & Dellwo, 2001, 2002; Rice & Mirzadeh, 2000; Rice, Vergara, & Aldea, 2006). Perfectionism has also been linked to increased brooding and rumination (Hewitt, Flett, Besser, Sherry, & McGee, 2002; O'Connor, O'Connor, & Marshall, 2007), hopelessness (Rice, et al., 2006; O'Connor et al., 2007), and a greater potentiality for suicide (e.g., Blatt, 1995; Hewitt, et al., 1992; Hewitt, Flett, & Weber, 1994).

Carver and Ganellen (1983) support the idea that this self-punitiveness reflects an inability to tolerate failure in meeting one's high standards and a tendency to generalize a single failure to all aspects of the self. Carver and Scheier's (1986) model of self-regulatory processes also focuses on whether standards are attained and supports the idea that these individuals will continue to pursue unattained goals even when abandoning such goals may be highly adaptive. If they do meet their standards, the standards are then considered insufficiently demanding (Shafran, Cooper, Fairburn, 2002). Perfectionistic individuals have actually been reported to make lower salaries than individuals not suffering from perfectionism (Burns, 1980). Nothing ever seems to be quite good enough for the maladaptive perfectionist. They judge their work to be of lower quality than non-perfectionists (Frost & Henderson, 1990; Frost & Marten, 1991). Perfectionism is also

associated with procrastination problems (e.g., Flett, Blankenstein, & Hewitt, 1992), and debilitating performance anxiety (Mor, Day, Flett, & Hewitt, 1995).

Earlier measurement development yielded two main scales that consider perfectionism to be a multidimensional construct, though they are based upon slightly different conceptualizations. Hewitt and Flett (1990, 1991) developed their Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS) based upon three types of perfectionism: self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism, and furthered research from within this same theoretical conceptualization. The inclusion of self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism dimensions means that the construct of perfectionism is now described using both *intra*-personal and *inter*-personal terms. Self-oriented perfectionism is described as the presence of unrelentingly high, self-imposed standards for self, as well as an inability to accept flaws, faults, or failures of any kind across multiple domains of life. Other-oriented perfectionism demands that others meet exceedingly high and unrealistic standards. Though self-oriented perfectionism was found to contribute to a person's resourcefulness and constructive striving, it also acts destructively during negative life circumstances to produce higher levels of depression (Flett, Hewitt, Blankenstein, & Mosher, 1995; Flett, Hewitt, Blankenstein, & O'Brien, 1991). Hewitt & Flett (1990) found self-oriented perfectionism to be significantly correlated with both the Efficacy and the Self-Criticism components of the Depressive Experiences Questionnaire (DEQ; Blatt, D'Affiti, & Quinlan, 1976), a finding that also occurred with the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale of Frost and colleagues (1990). Socially prescribed perfectionism means a belief that others hold unrealistically high standards and expectations, and that acceptance and approval are

contingent upon meeting these impossible standards (Frost et al., 1990). Socially prescribed perfectionism, self-oriented perfectionism, and perceiving events as falling unbearably short of expectations or standards have all been linked to suicidal ideation (Baumeister, 1990; Delisle, 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991a), particularly for perfectionistic individuals who have recently had an experience of failure (Flett, Hewitt, Blankenstein, & Mosher, 1991, 1995; Hewitt & Flett, 1993).

The Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS) of Frost, Marten, Lahart, and Rosenblatt (1990) assesses perfectionism using multiple aspects of their definition, which includes subscales for concern over making mistakes, high standards, perceptions of high parental expectations and parental criticism, and preferences for order and organization. Though a few of these subscales, such as high standards, have been related to positive striving and achievement, many have been related to a range of psychological or clinical disorders, especially depression. Factor analysis on both multidimensional perfectionism scales has revealed that they contained two factors, the first reflecting maladaptive and critical evaluative concerns, and the second, positive achievement striving. Frost and colleagues (1993) found that the overall perfectionism scores on their scale correlated primarily with self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism on the Hewitt and Flett scale.

Further scales have been developed by perfectionism researchers that highlight the importance of measuring both adaptive and maladaptive aspects of perfectionism. The Adaptive/Maladaptive Perfectionism Scale (AMPS; Rice & Preusser, 2002) was developed for children, expanding the availability for research across a broader age range. This scale assesses domains such as sensitivity to mistakes, contingent self-esteem,

compulsiveness, and need for admiration. However, research in the field of perfectionism has predominantly utilized a college student population. This has been understandable considering some two thirds of college samples may be classified as perfectionistic (Grzegorek, Slaney, Franze, & Rice, 2004). College honors or gifted samples may typically consist of more perfectionistic individuals than non-honors samples (Leever, Rice, Christopher, & Porter, 2006), and interest in the study of perfectionism with this population has gained some ground. Adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism has been found to relate in the expected directions with hopelessness, social connectedness, perceived academic adjustment, depression, and perceived stress in high-achieving honors students and effects were found to be moderated or partially mediated by level of perceived stress and social connection (Rice et al., 2006).

Some have focused mainly on the cognitive aspects of perfectionism. Rumination over one's mistakes and inadequacies has been noted often in the perfectionism literature (e.g., Frost & Henderson, 1991; Frost, Trepanier, Brown, Heimberg, Juster, Markis, & Leung, 1997). Some assert that perfectionistic individuals have an ideal self-schema at work (Hewitt & Genest, 1990) and that perfectionists have more automatic thoughts that reflect perfectionistic themes, such as failure to attain perfection in the past or future (Ferrari, 1995). A brooding ruminative response style has been found to be a mechanism that may help explain, in part, the perfectionism-distress relationship (O'Connor, O'Connor, & Marshall, 2007).

However, it is well argued that some aspects of previous scales may in fact measure consequences of being a perfectionist, rather than the essential elements of perfectionism itself (Slaney, et al., 2001), and that existing measures do not reflect the

original concept of perfectionism (Shafran & Mansell, 2001). In other words, “the subscales composing the Maladaptive factor seem to be based on assumed causes, concomitants, or the resulting effects of being perfectionistic rather than a definition of perfectionism itself” (Slaney et al., 2001, p.132). The Almost Perfect Scale (APS; Johnson & Slaney, 1996; APS-R; Slaney et al., 2001) was developed to emphasize both the positive and negative dimensions of perfectionism itself. Based upon two qualitative studies (Slaney & Ashby, 1996; Slaney, Chadha, Mobley, & Kennedy, 2000) these researchers developed a scale that emphasized the apparent importance the distress associated with the difference, or discrepancy, between an individual’s high standards for performance and their perceptions of success in meeting those high standards. This Discrepancy subscale was thought to best capture a more definitive quality of the maladaptive perfectionist, and became one of the most important contributions of this scale (APS-R; Slaney et al., 2001) to the growing body of perfectionism literature. The APS-R uses the following premises:

...an adequate and useful definition of perfectionism would seemingly need to meet at least four criteria: (a) It should clearly specify the variables that define perfectionism as discriminated from variables that are seen as causal, correlational, or the effect of being perfectionistic; (b) it should pay close attention to the empirically supported negative and positive aspects of perfectionism; (c) it should be closely related to commonly held ideas about perfectionism as exemplified in the dictionary definitions, and (d) it should be empirically sound (Slaney et al., 2001, p.132).

The APS-R (see Appendix B) includes three subscales supported by factor analysis: Discrepancy, High Standards, and Order. Having high standards for oneself reflects perfectionism in general, and high Discrepancy scores then distinguish the negative or maladaptive dimension. This scale was found in a factor analysis study to have two factors (one positive, one negative) consistent with the findings of Frost and colleagues (Slaney, Ashby, & Trippi, 1995). Subsequently, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the scales, which similarly supported an adaptive and a maladaptive perfectionism (Rice, Ashby, & Slaney, 1998). High Standards and Order are subscales included in the original APS as well as the APS-R, and are said to measure these domains without any negative preconceptions, which is reflected in their combined high correlation to positive striving and their weak negative correlation to the original maladaptive evaluation concerns factor of the APS (Slaney et al., 1995). Frost and colleagues (1990) considered organization to be irrelevant to perfectionism, and Johnson and Slaney (1996) found a very minimal correlation of High Standards and Order with anxiety and depression. It has been advanced that setting and striving for high standards is not in and of itself pathological (Frost, et al., 1990). The Discrepancy subscale has been shown to strongly tap the maladaptive dimension of perfectionism. Discrepancy, introduced in the APS-R, measures the perception that one's high personal standards are consistently not being met (Slaney et al., 2001), and is associated with high psychological distress and many of the destructive elements that accompany perfectionism. The High Standards and Discrepancy subscales are considered virtually independent, highlighting the complexity of the construct (Slaney et al., 2001). The Order subscale has not been found to be essential for maladaptive or adaptive perfectionism (Stoeber & Otto, 2006).

Since the development of the APS-R much research investigating the positive and negative dimensions of perfectionism has occurred. The Discrepancy subscale has become particularly useful as a tool for tapping maladaptive perfectionism using its defining quality, rather than other characteristics that may merely be consequences of already being perfectionistic. Based upon APS-R scores, some researchers have begun to develop ways to cluster perfectionists into groups: maladaptive perfectionists, adaptive perfectionists, and nonperfectionists (Rice & Slaney, 2002; Rice & Ashby, 2007). Previous cluster analytic studies have been performed using the Frost et al. (1990) scale (e.g., Rice & Mirzadeh, 2000; Rice & Lapsley, 2001) and have also found support for some healthy advantages to adaptive perfectionism and strong disadvantages to maladaptive perfectionism. Using the APS-R, perfectionists were distinguished from nonperfectionists using their high scores on High Standards and Order, while the maladaptive perfectionists were distinguished from the adaptive perfectionists by their high Discrepancy scores (Rice & Slaney 2002; Rice & Ashby, 2007). Discrepancy scores for adaptive perfectionists actually tended to be lower than those for nonperfectionists, with maladaptive perfectionists having the highest relative Discrepancy scores (Rice & Slaney, 2002). Further validation of efficient methods for classifying nonperfectionists, maladaptive perfectionists, and adaptive perfectionists benefits both further research and clinical use.

Maladaptive perfectionism, measured using the Discrepancy subscale of the APS-R, has been found to possess substantial stability over time, even when controlling for other dimensions of perfectionism and depression (Aldea & Rice, 2006). Maladaptive perfectionism, assessed using the APS-R Discrepancy subscale has been found to be

significantly related to depression in particular (e.g., Rice & Slaney, 2002; Rice & Aldea, 2006; Rice & Ashby, 2007), along with shame (Ashby, et al., 2006), lower self-esteem (e.g., Rice & Slaney, 2002), lower satisfaction with life (e.g., Rice & Ashby, 2007), higher trait anxiety (Mobley, Slaney, & Rice, 2005), lower satisfaction with GPA (e.g., Grzegorek, et al., 2004; Mobley, et al., 2005), and Neuroticism, as measured using the NEO-Five factor personality inventory (Rice, Ashby, & Slaney, 2007). Adaptive perfectionism has been associated with higher satisfaction with GPA (Grzegorek et al., 2004), the NEO-Five factor personality inventory dimension of Conscientiousness (Rice, Ashby, & Slaney, 2007), higher self-esteem (Ashby & Rice, 2002), and coping and achievement (Parker, 1997; Rice & Lapsley, 2001). Adaptive perfectionism has been associated with more healthy adult attachment styles, while maladaptive perfectionism has been related to less healthy adult attachment styles (Rice, Lopez, & Vergara, 2005).

Discrepancy is arguably the most quintessential aspect of the maladaptive form of perfectionism. Discrepancy has recently been found to be a strong underlying indicator of Evaluative Concerns perfectionism (Blankstein, Dunkley, & Wilson, 2008), as compared with Personal Standards perfectionism. Evaluative Concerns perfectionists "perceive that excessively high, rigid standards are imposed on them by others, perceive a discrepancy between the standards and the motivation, abilities, and skills required to reach the level of performance or success required by the imposed standards, are concerned about making mistakes and doubt their actions, engage in relentless self criticism, and perceive consistent failure to meet the high standards set for them by others" (Blankstein, et al., 2008, p.32). The high factor loading of Discrepancy on Evaluative Concerns perfectionism reflects this construct as an underlying and unifying factor in the

conceptualization of maladaptive perfectionism, while also distinguishing that having high personal standards is not necessarily maladaptive. This finding is consistent with the views of previous researchers (e.g Slaney, Rice, & Ashby, 2002; Suddarth & Slaney, 2001) who proposed that Discrepancy as central to maladaptive perfectionism.

With the advancement of such a useful measurement tool for Discrepancy, research in a wide variety of domains has become possible. High Standards appears within both the adaptive and maladaptive dimensions of perfectionism, so the introduction of the APS-R Discrepancy subscale, which teases apart the maladaptive quality of the construct itself, has been extremely beneficial to both future research as well as theoretical conceptualization of perfectionism. Higher distress over the perceived discrepancy between one's high personal standards and one's meeting such standards seems to be at the heart of the maladaptive and destructive element of perfectionism. "High standards combined with excessive concerns about mistakes seem to be especially maladaptive, whereas high standards but low concerns about mistakes may be adaptive" (Rice & Lopez, 2004, p.118). In examining this description, it appears that previous descriptions of a 'concern over mistakes' have helped further the understanding of what is a perceived discrepancy between standards and performance. Discrepancy is not the same as a concern over mistakes, however. Though perfectionism scales and conceptualizations are evolving based upon a fairly similar understanding of the construct, the addition of the Discrepancy subscale now allows for an arguably more accurate theoretical and empirical measure of the maladaptive dimension.

Discrepancy is essentially an intense dissatisfaction and experienced distress over a perceived discrepancy between one's standards and one's ability to meet these high

standards. Evidence has been found that both perfectionism and forgiveness tend to be dispositional, fairly stable constructs related to personality (see Rice, Ashby, & Slaney, 2007 and Rice & Aldea, 2006 for perfectionism; see Thompson et al., 2005 and Kamat, Jones, & Row, 2006 for forgiveness). The current study hypothesizes that forgiveness will be significantly related to perfectionism in the expected directions, in that higher levels of forgiveness will predict lower levels of maladaptive, or self-critical, perfectionism. An ability to forgive oneself, others, and situations beyond one's control may prevent the possibility of intense psychological distress regarding not meeting one's high standards. It is expected that those scoring high on Discrepancy, individuals who have very negative self-evaluation of their performance, will subsequently exhibit a lower propensity for forgiveness. In other words, in the instances where standards may not be met, this inability to forgive leads such individuals to perceive their performance as a failure and would report a larger discrepancy between their standard and their performance. The relationship between forgiveness and perfectionism has not yet been explored and represents an important theoretical and empirical gap in the literature. Detailed hypotheses and the potential roles of self-compassion in the relationship of forgiveness and perfectionism will be discussed in a later section. In order to accurately conceptualize the model of forgiveness, perfectionism, and self-compassion put forth for examination in this study, a grasp of the literature and scales for measuring self-compassion is needed.

Self-Compassion

Throughout the history of mental health and well-being research, the predominant focus of study has been pathological in nature. In other words, researchers and the mental health field in general have often studied the negative or self-destructive constructs

related to disorders or distress in individuals. However, a trend toward the study of positive well-being attributes has taken hold in the field of mental health as well, often termed positive psychology. Self-compassion springs from the tenets of positive psychology, and the confluence of eastern and western influences.

A mix of western psychology and eastern philosophy has brought the mental health field many useful concepts for the study of well-being, particularly for understanding processes of self. One such concept, self-compassion, has been understood to contribute to well-being in for many years and has been extensively discussed in books on mindfulness, loving kindness, and finding loving balance in one's life (e.g., Bennett-Golemen, 2001; Brown, 1999; Hahn, 1976, 1997; Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Kornfield, 1993; Salzberg, 1997). Neff (2003a, 2003b) has brought this concept into the psychological literature and research field through her extensive theoretical contribution to the literature as well as her development of a viable and reliable measure of self-compassion. Self-compassion is directly related to feelings of compassion and concern for others – patience, kindness, and a nonjudgmental understanding, along with an ability to acknowledge that all humans are imperfect and make mistakes (Neff, 2003b). Self-compassion expands compassion toward oneself in acknowledgement of one's membership as part of the human race, with its implicit imperfection.

Self-compassion involves being open to and moved by one's own suffering, experiencing feelings of caring and kindness toward one's inadequacies and failures, and recognizing that one's own experience is part of the common human experience. Because self-compassion is directly related to feelings of compassion and concern for others, being

self-compassionate does not entail being selfish or self-centered, nor does it mean that one prioritizes personal needs over those of others. Instead, self-compassion entails acknowledging that suffering, failure, and inadequacies are part of the human condition, and that all people – oneself included – are worthy of compassion (Neff, 2003b, p. 224).

Since self-compassion requires that one be aware of feelings of inadequacy, while adopting a compassionate, nonjudgmental understanding, the mindset of the self-compassionate individual would leave no room for the unforgiveness or destructive self-criticism that may lead to high levels of psychological distress, unforgiving attitudes, and maladaptive perfectionism. Neff (2003b) describes self-compassion as having three crucial components:

- 1) extending kindness and understanding to oneself rather than harsh self-criticism and judgment, 2) seeing one's experiences as part of the larger human experience rather than as separating and isolating; and 3) holding one's painful thoughts and feelings in balanced awareness rather than over-identifying with them. These aspects of self-compassion are experienced differently and are conceptually distinct, but they also tend to engender one another (p.224).

It is because the process of self-compassion involves an understanding of self and other as related, and involves the emphasis of universal human commonalities, that self-compassion is often related with increased feelings of interconnectedness and decreased feelings of separation (Neff, 2003b). People have also been found to be more forgiving if they see themselves as similar to offenders, or capable of committing similar offenses

(Exline et al., 2008). Previous research on perfectionism has found that maladaptive perfectionism is associated with much lower levels of social connectedness than nonperfectionism or adaptive perfectionism – high Discrepancy scores have been associated with low feelings of social connectedness, while high standards (adaptive perfectionists) have been associated with higher levels of social connection (Rice et al., 2006). Using the same Social Connectedness Scale (SCS; Lee & Robbins, 1995), Neff (2003b) found that self-compassion is also significantly positively related to feelings of social connectedness. Given the similarities between the well-being effects of forgiveness and self-compassion, as well as the detrimental effects of maladaptive perfectionism, the current study will include self-compassion as a potentially crucial factor in the relationship between perfectionism and forgiveness.

Supporting her argument that self-compassion transforms negative affect, Neff (2003b) has found that self-compassion is strongly associated with lower levels of depression and anxiety, as well as higher satisfaction with life. Though self-compassion has been found to positively relate to self-esteem and to encompass similar construct characteristics, evidence of self-esteem and self-compassion as distinct constructs has been established. Although self-compassion has been found to have a significant moderate correlation with self-esteem, a significant relationship with Narcissism was not found (Neff, 2003b), as had been found with measures of self-esteem. Self-compassion also had a significant negative correlation with rumination, and a positive correlation with emotional coping (Neff, 2003b). This supports the idea that self-compassion is not based upon self-pity for one's feelings as unique and distinct from others, or on the overemphasis on liking oneself, but instead involves nonjudgmental understanding and a

balanced emotional perspective that one's experiences of inadequacy are common to humanity. Self-compassion allows individuals to experience feelings of kindness and understanding "without having to protect or bolster ones self-concept" (Neff, 2003b, p. 225). This is because self-compassion does not engage the evaluative process that can lead to destructive criticism or narcissistic esteem for self. In fact self-compassion is said to enhance compassion and concern for others (Neff, 2003a), which is theoretically consistent with the idea that self-compassion may be the mechanism that promotes an ability to forgive oneself, and may explain how self-compassion could extend to a forgiveness of others and of situations beyond our control. This potential role of self-compassion for promoting forgiveness is a key component of the current study's investigation.

Neff's (2003b) Self-Compassion Scale (see Appendix C) consists of three subscales, tapping the three faces of Self-Compassion: Self-Kindness versus Self-Judgment, Common Humanity versus Isolation, and Mindfulness versus Over-Identification. These three components interact and enhance each other. For instance, the detached, nonjudgmental stance provided by a mindful frame of mind allows for a degree of mental distance from a negative event, giving space for feelings of a commonality amongst humanity, as well as kindness or understanding toward self to arise (Jopling, 2000). This ability to take a balanced and broader perspective allows for the reduction of overidentification with a particular negative event, countering the egocentrism that can cause feelings of being isolated and separate. This increases the feeling of interconnectedness (Elkind, 1967). Experiences of self-compassion and interconnectedness then serve to further increase mindfulness (Neff, 2003a) – essentially

each one promotes more of the others. In self-compassion, one would not run away from or away with one's thoughts or emotions (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987).

Self-Compassion resonates well with many psychological approaches, offering an especially useful therapeutic tool for helping clients with self-acceptance, harsh criticism, and the ability to use suffering or negative feelings as opportunities for personal growth. Neff (2003a) reviews many ways in which self-compassion fits well into established frameworks, such as those of humanistic psychologists like Abraham Maslow, Jordan's (1997) self-in-relation model of women's psychological development, and emotional regulation literature, in which paying attention to the processes involved in emotional arousal, intensity, and duration can transform the nature of these states and promote psychological well-being when faced with particularly distressing or powerful emotions (Thompson, 1994). Neff (2003b) also found a strong link between self-compassion and emotional intelligence, the ability to experience one's feelings with greater clarity and regulate negative moods. Self-compassion has been positively associated with a healthier emotion-focused coping strategies (seeking emotional social support, positive reinterpretation and growth, acceptance, and focus on and venting of emotions), and was negatively associated with avoidance-oriented strategies, such as denial, and mental and behavioral disengagement (Neff, Ya-Ping, & Kullaya, 2005).

The relationship of self-compassion with perfectionism has recently been investigated as well, along with achievement goals and the ability to cope with academic failure - two areas in which perfectionism research has thrived. Neff (2003b) provides evidence supporting the relationship between self-compassion and maladaptive perfectionism (using Discrepancy scores on the APS-R), finding that the two constructs

have a significant and negative relationship, $r = -.57$. Self-compassion has been positively associated with mastery goals, and negatively associated with performance goals; this relationship was mediated by a lesser fear of failure and greater perceived competence of self-compassionate persons (Neff, et al., 2005). In other words, self-compassion may help an individual be less hard on him or herself when it comes to performing a task or reaching a personal standard. If so, it would make theoretically consistent sense that self-compassionate individuals would have lower Discrepancy when it comes to perfectionism. High Discrepancy basically defines the maladaptive dimension of perfectionism, as was discussed previously, so it is possible that self-compassion may be a key component through which individuals prevent engaging in the detrimental and destructive self-critical backlash of maladaptive perfectionism.

As discussed previously, self-compassion is composed of three distinct facets - common humanity, mindfulness, and self-kindness. All three are said to influence and promote one another. It is said that being mindful and kind to oneself may provide the mental space for a more balanced perspective to arise, in which recognition of one's feelings as part of the greater human experience results in greater feelings of interconnectedness (Neff, 2003a). Also, seeing commonalities in the human experience may promote the ability to be kinder to oneself, and to encourage a more mindful approach to one's potentially negative feelings or experiences in the future. If all aspects of self-compassion are distinct but also encourage and influence each other, it is unclear whether cultivating one of these aspects could be sufficient to help promote the other aspects and result in the well-being benefits of self-compassion. In teasing apart the role of self-compassion in the relationship between forgiveness and perfectionism, the current

study will also look at which aspect of self-compassion relate more significantly with both forgiveness and perfectionism. Forgiveness may activate and amplify this common humanity element, increasing feelings of connection and decreased feelings of isolation and judgment associated with perfectionistic thinking.

The ability to see similarities between one's own experience and the experience of others has been discussed as beneficial for the mind and heart, and is associated with being more loving, compassionate, and kind (Hahn, 1997). This would mean seeing the whole of one's experiences (the positive as well as the seemingly negative) as beneficial, providing opportunities to practice lovingkindness, mindfulness, and humility. In a similar psychological domain, universal orientation, or the ability to attend to similarities between self and others, has been related to higher acceptance and lower discrimination based on ethnicity, a concern about or valuing of human equality, a responsibility to others, greater empathy, and a preference for nonhierarchy (Phillips & Ziller, 1997). Choosing to emphasize differentiation between self and others decreases the chance of finding common ground, or seeing oneself as capable of the actions and feelings of others. Individuals that perceive themselves as capable of another's actions report having higher levels of forgiveness (Exline et al., 2008). Within the mindset of an individual able to perceive common humanity, the self-criticism and judgmental or evaluative aspect would be greatly reduced, leading to a higher propensity for forgiving, and a lower incidence of harsh criticism for one's mistakes, failures, or inadequacies in living up to one's high standards (as is present in maladaptive perfectionism). Essentially, the idea is that when one allows oneself to be human, to experience all the intrinsic imperfections

associated with being a member of the human race, better mental health and interpersonal relationships will follow in kind.

Many have purported that this differentiation between self and others is the first problematic step in relationships, leading to interpersonal and potentially intrapersonal conflict, negative comparison of self and others (Phillips & Ziller, 1997, p. 430), and problem-solving approaches that preference self-over-others rather than creating solutions that work for all (Abdullah, 1999). Similar thinking and justification appears to occur in individuals low in forgiveness and high in Discrepancy - they are unable to see commonality between their feelings and others' feelings, their imperfections and the similar imperfections of others, and are therefore unable to extend kindness or compassion toward themselves. It is in this manner that seeing a common humanity would be expected to encourage kindness toward self. The conflict resulting from an overemphasis on differences may occur within the self, in regards to a distressing perception of the difference between one's standards and one's performance (high in Discrepancy and low in forgiveness of self), between self and others (low forgiveness of others or high other-oriented perfectionism), or conflict regarding one's current life circumstance (low forgiveness of situations).

Satisfaction with Life

Positive psychological research continues to foster a better understanding of preventing and combating the pathological, while encouraging the beneficial, within our daily lives. The foundation of the current study asserts that perfectionism, as measured by Discrepancy, negatively impacts well-being, while the ability to forgive and to have compassion for oneself has a positive impact on general well-being and mental health. This ultimately allows for a happier, more satisfying life. To address this, a way to tap

global life satisfaction from a subjective standpoint was necessary. Shin and Johnson (1978) define life satisfaction as "a global assessment of a person's quality of life according to his chosen criteria" (p.478). The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was developed from this standpoint. The primary advantage of this scale is that criteria for evaluating satisfaction are not externally imposed or defined by the researcher (Diener, 1984). The SWLS is a measure of subjective well-being designed to tap global life satisfaction, meaning satisfaction of life as a whole rather than specific aspects of life. The SWLS has many benefits that other related measures lack, such as positive affect and happiness, making it most suitable for the current study. For example, the SWLS addresses life satisfaction directly rather than by including related aspects such as a zest for life, or apathy, and retains higher validity in using a multiple item format, while others rely on a single item. Due to its measurement of life satisfaction as a cognitive-judgmental process, this scale complements the theme of the current study in tapping evaluative processes, as also found in the constructs of Discrepancy and the ability to forgive or not forgive.

Purpose of the Study

This study served to address a fundamental gap in the literature between two constructs of well-being, perfectionism and forgiveness. In particular, this study intended to provide support for an inverse relationship between forgiveness and maladaptive perfectionism. Specifically, higher levels of forgiveness were expected to be related to lower levels of perfectionism. Given the plethora of psychological distress and disorders associated with maladaptive perfectionism, the relationship of this dimension of perfectionism with forgiveness is of particular interest.

In the current study, perfectionistic tendency is based upon scores on the Discrepancy subscale, a measure that taps the difference between one's expected performance and one's perceived performance. Previous literature has revealed that the most detrimental aspects of perfectionism overwhelmingly appeared in those individuals with high Discrepancy, making this factor the focus of the current study.

Above all it is expected that higher scores on the Discrepancy subscale of the APS-R will relate to lower levels of forgiveness across the board. In other words, a strong inverse relationship between Discrepancy (representing the maladaptive aspect of perfectionism) and Forgiveness is expected to be confirmed. It was also expected that forgiveness and self-compassion will be positively related with well-being, namely Satisfaction with Life, while high Discrepancy will be inversely related to Satisfaction with Life. Maladaptive perfectionism would be expected to relate with low forgiveness levels because an inability to forgive would fuel a perception of an unacceptable discrepancy between expected and perceived performance. The most detrimental impact on well-being tends to occur for maladaptive perfectionists, making the focus of the current study Discrepancy, which is the quintessential maladaptive aspect of perfectionism.

Another aim of the current study was to examine the potential role of self-compassion as a mediator in this relationship. Mediators are said to account for or explain the relationship between the predictor and the criterion, while moderators affect the strength/direction of the relationship (Baron & Kenny, 1986). A mediator should at least meet the following conditions:

(a) variations in levels of the independent variable significantly account for variations in the presumed mediator (i.e., Path a), (b) variations in the mediator significantly account for variations in the dependent variable (i.e., Path b), and (c) when Paths a and b are controlled, a previously significant relation between the independent and dependent variables is no longer significant... (Baron & Kenny, 1986, p. 1176).

Thus, all paths in the current model will be examined. Baron and Kenny's (1986) model for testing mediation has begun to face criticism and trends in testing mediation now encourage different procedures. MacKinnon and colleagues (2002) argued against the use of the normal distribution model for assessing significance. The distribution of the indirect effect in mediation models is often skewed rather than normal, so a symmetric confidence interval based on the assumption of normality will typically yield underpowered tests of mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008). Currently, many argue that the stronger approach is to use a bootstrapping methodology, a nonparametric approach that makes no assumptions about the shape of the distributions (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Shrout & Bolger, 2002; see Rice, et al., 2006 for an example). The approach is to bootstrap the sampling distribution of ab and derive a confidence interval with the empirically derived bootstrapped sampling distribution, which alleviates the power problem found in asymmetries (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). A bootstrapping approach takes a large number of samples (typically 1,000) with size n (n = current study sample), sampling with replacement, and determines the indirect effect (ab) for each sample (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Given that research does not support the automatic

assumption of normality and symmetry in the case of the concepts examined, the bootstrap approach was preferable for the current study.

Another important contribution of the current study to the literature is the expected replication of previous relationships between constructs using an unrestricted, adult population. The population will not be limited to college students, and will thus provide another window into perfectionism as it operates outside of the college realm, further validating the use of the chosen measures on a nonclinical, adult population. Some research with non-college student populations has been conducted using the APS-R (Ashby, et al., 2008; Rice, Tucker, & Desmond, 2008), providing a basis for comparison with the current study's population that serves to validate the use of this measure with a broad, adult population. The current study is also expected to provide further evidence for the negative relationship of maladaptive perfectionism with factors of well-being (forgiveness, self-compassion, life satisfaction), and support forgiveness and Self-Compassion as related to a higher degree of positive subjective evaluation of global Satisfaction with Life. Broadly, this study will also support the notion that maladaptive perfectionism holds detrimental effects on well-being, and that Self-compassion holds promise for positive mental health.

In summary, the current study is designed to a) test the association between forgiveness and perfectionism, and b) test self-compassion as a potential mediator of the proposed forgiveness-perfectionism relationship. Thus, the current study will help unify two large bodies of literature, that of forgiveness and that of perfectionism, using the lens of self-compassion, and will provide needed direction on both fronts for future research and therapeutic practice.

Hypotheses

Primary Hypotheses

- 1) Forgiveness will be negatively correlated with Discrepancy. Forgiveness of Self, Forgiveness of Others, and Forgiveness of Situations subscale scores will also each inversely relate with Discrepancy scores.
- 2) Forgiveness will positively relate with Self-Compassion Scale. Forgiveness of Self, Forgiveness of Others, and Forgiveness of Situations will also each positively relate with Self-Compassion.
- 3) Forgiveness will show a positive relationship with general well-being, as measured by Satisfaction with Life. Forgiveness of Self, Others, and Situations subscales will also each show a positive relationship with Satisfaction with Life.
- 4) Discrepancy will be negatively related with Self-Compassion.
- 5) Discrepancy will be negatively related with Satisfaction with Life.
- 6) Self-Compassion will have a significant positive relationship with Satisfaction with Life.

Secondary Hypothesis

- 7) Self-Compassion will significantly mediate the relationship between Forgiveness and Discrepancy. Specifically, a significant indirect effect will be found, with a 95% confidence interval.

CHAPTER 3 METHODS

Participants

A number of tools were used to estimate sufficient sample size for the current study design and proposed statistical analyses. First, Tabachnick and Fidell's (2001) formula for sample size with multiple regressions was employed: $n > 104 + m$, where "m" equals the number of independent variables. With measured predictor variables (Forgiveness, Discrepancy, Self-Compassion, Satisfaction with Life) and demographic information all being possible independent variables, "m" in the equation is equal to 18 ($104 + 18 = 122$), suggesting that the number of participants required for this study was 122. This is the most conservative estimate, as all independent variables would be used simultaneously only for the purposes of non-hypothesized exploratory analysis. Secondly, given the hypothesis of a mediation component for the current study, samples size suggestions for adequate mediation testing were strongly considered. It is argued that only samples of 200 participants or higher have been found to have sufficient power ($>.80$) when using tests of mediation (Hoyle & Kenny, 1999). To be conservative, a sample size of 200 was used as the required minimum for the current study at the beginning of data collection. The final sample for the current study consisted of 309 adult participants.

Participant ages ranged from 18 to 76 years, with $M = 40.58$. There were 71 men and 237 women. Approximately 78.3% of participants self-identified as White/European American, 5.5% as Hispanic/Latino, 4.2% as Asian/Asian American, 3.6% as Biracial/Multiracial, 3% as Black/African American, 1.9% as American Indian/Alaska Native, 0.3% as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 2.9% as other. Approximately 0.3% of participants indicated having an education level of High School or Equivalent, 3.9% Some College/University (no degree), 1.9% Associate's

Degree(s), 6.8% Bachelor's Degree(s), 15.5% completed some Graduate Study (no graduate degree), 29.1% Master's Degree(s), and 42.4% Doctorate and/or Postgraduate Degree(s). Approximately 54.4% of participants reported living in suburban, 40.1% urban, and 5.5% in rural settings.

Instruments

The Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS; Thompson et al., 2005). The HFS was developed with adults to assess the dispositional tendency to forgive. The HFS includes 18 items (see Appendix A), endorsed on a 7-point Likert Scale ranging from almost always false of me to almost always true of me. Higher total scores indicate a high propensity for forgiving.

Subscales included in the HFS are Forgiveness of Self, Forgiveness of Others, and Forgiveness of Situations. This measure of forgiveness was chosen because of its ability to tap interpersonal as well as intrapersonal forgiveness on a dispositional level across different contexts; the HFS is the only existing forgiveness scale which taps forgiveness of situations, now considered to be an important aspect of dispositional forgiveness.

Adequate internal consistency reliability of HFS scores has been supported, with alphas on the total scale ranging from .84 to .87, and alphas on the subscales ranging from .71 to .83. Test-retest reliability of the HFS, on the basis of a 3-week follow-up period, was .83 for the total score and ranged from .72 to .77 (Thompson & Snyder, 2003) for the subscales. The psychometric properties of the HFS have been adequately demonstrated with both student and nonstudent samples, and it has been found to correlate in the expected directions with other dispositional measures of forgiveness.

The HFS has been found to correlate in the expected directions with other dispositional measures of forgiveness as well as measures of related psychological

constructs. The HFS shows positive correlations with established forgiveness measures (Thompson & Snyder, 2003). The HFS has demonstrated much higher correlations with dispositional measures of forgiveness, rather than the transgression-specific measures, although positive correlations were found with all measures of forgiveness examined (Thompson, et al., 2005). The HFS was also found to negatively correlate as expected with scores on measures of related constructs. Thompson and colleagues (2005) also found moderately large negative correlations of the HFS with the Hostile Automatic Thoughts scale, the rumination subscale of the Response Style Questionnaire (Thompson et al., 2005), and the Beck Depression Inventory (Thompson & Snyder, 2003) as well as the Vengeance Scale (VS; Stuckless & Goranson, 1992), and the negative affect of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (NAS; Watson, et al., 1988). Forgiveness involves transforming mental energy away from negative behaviors and thoughts.

The HFS was also evaluated to determine its predictive power of forgiveness in romantic relationships using a non college-age, adult population. Participants were given the HFS as well as measures of hostility, trust, relationship satisfaction, and relationship duration once and again nine months later. Forgiveness was revealed as a stronger predictor of relationship satisfaction than hostility, and satisfaction was also significantly predicted by how trusting the person was of their partner and their perception of how trusting their partner was of them (Thompson & Snyder, 2003, Thompson et al., 2005). All of these studies support the premise that the HFS is a reliable, valid, and useful measure for evaluating the dispositional tendency for forgiveness of self, others, and situations. The HFS demonstrated strong reliability in the current study, with $\alpha = .91$ for

HFS, $\alpha = .85$ for Forgiveness of Self, $\alpha = .79$ for Forgiveness of Others, and $\alpha = .86$ for Forgiveness of Situations.

The Almost Perfect Scale – Revised (APS-R; Slaney, et al., 2001). The APS-R consists of 23 items (see Appendix B) that measure the multidimensional construct of perfectionism. The APS-R makes the important distinction between neurotic, or maladaptive, perfectionism and adaptive perfectionism. The subscales include Standards (7 items), Order (4 items), and Discrepancy (12 items), and uses a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The subscales of focus for the current study will be the Standards and Discrepancy subscales, the former tapping more adaptive aspects of perfectionism and the latter capturing maladaptive perfectionism well (Ashby & Rice, 2002). The 7-item Standards subscale measures level of personal standards (i.e., adaptive perfectionism), and includes items such as “I have high standards for my performance at work or at school.” The 12-item Discrepancy subscale measures distress resulting from a perceived discrepancy between performance and standards (i.e., maladaptive perfectionism) and includes items such as, “My best just never seems to be good enough for me.” The validity and reliability of scores derived from the APS-R have been demonstrated in a multitude of previous research, with alphas of .92 and .81 for Discrepancy and High Standards, respectively, for comparative non-college populations (Ashby, Rice, & Kutchins 2008). The APS-R demonstrated similarly high reliability in the current study, with $\alpha = .92$ for APS-R, $\alpha = .97$ for Discrepancy, $\alpha = .89$ for High Standards, and $\alpha = .94$ for Order.

Self-Compassion Scale (SCS; Neff, 2003b). The Self-Compassion scale includes 26 items (see Appendix C) tapping the tendency to be compassionate. Self-Compassion is

measured across three dimensions using six factors, Self-Kindness vs. Self-Judgment, Common Humanity vs. Isolation, and Mindfulness vs. Over-Identification. Self-Kindness includes items such as “I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don’t like” while Self-Judgment includes items like “When I see aspects of myself that I don’t like, I get down on myself”). Internal consistency reliability for the Self-Kindness and Self-Judgment subscales were .78 and .77, respectively. The Common Humanity subscale includes items such as “I try to see my failings as part of the human condition”, while the Isolation subscale includes items like “When I fail at something that’s important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure”. Internal reliabilities for these subscales are .80 and .79, respectively. Lastly, the Mindfulness subscale includes items like “When something upsets me, I try to keep my emotions in balance”, while the Over-Identification subscale includes items such as “When something painful happens, I tend to blow the incident out of proportion”. Internal reliabilities are .75 for the Mindfulness subscale and .80 for the Over-Identification subscale (Neff, 2003b). Test-retest reliability for the SCS has been strong: SCS = .93, Self-Kindness = .88, Self-Judgment = .88, Common Humanity = .80, Isolation = .85, Mindfulness = .85, and Over-Identification = .88. The SCS has been previously established with college-age students as well as subsamples of non-college adults (Neff, 2003b), and internal consistency for the complete 26-item SCS is .92. The SCS also demonstrated high reliability in the current study, $\alpha = .94$ for SCS, $\alpha = .90$ for Self-Kindness, $\alpha = .87$ for Self-Judgment, $\alpha = .85$ for Common Humanity, $\alpha = .82$ for Isolation, $\alpha = .79$ for Mindfulness, and $\alpha = .84$ for Over-Identification.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, et al., 1985). The Satisfaction with Life scale is a measure of subjective well-being designed to tap global life satisfaction, meaning satisfaction of life as a whole rather than specific aspects of life. It consists of 5 items (see appendix D), in which respondents choose their agreement or disagreement with each statement using a 7-point Likert scale with higher numbers indicating more agreement. The SWLS has been found to have favorable psychometric properties, including high internal consistency ($\alpha = .87$) and temporal reliability ($\alpha = .82$) (Diener, et al., 1985). It has also demonstrated positive correlations with other subjective measures of well-being as well as relationships in the expected directions with personality domains (ex: negative correlation with neuroticism and positive with self-esteem). This scale has been found useful and reliable with college-age and geriatric populations, and demonstrated high reliability in the current study, $\alpha = .88$.

Procedures

Data collection occurred exclusively online and lasted approximately three months. Participants were recruited using online list serves, email lists, discussion boards, Yahoo groups, and other online resources. In an effort to obtain a sufficiently random sample that spans a broad demographic range, invitations to participate were posted via emails and list serves, and participants were allowed to freely forward the invitation to participate onto others at their own discretion. This study attempted to reduce bias through use of a wide variety of listservs with high traffic (Kaye & Johnson, 1999), aiming for a large sample with no systematic selection for or against a particular characteristic. To identify appropriate Listservs, any Google group lists with over 1000+ members, high traffic, and messages in English were initially selected, excluding those

whose primary purpose was indicated as "Adult-only erotic-content". Only groups that allowed research solicitation were used for recruitment. Examples include those with specified topics of religion, philosophy, literature, science, politics, sports, computers, and fine arts, for example, Alt.Arts.Ballet, Indian movies, Computer Games Interest Group, alt.3d.studio (3d graphics art list), and alt.sport.racquetball. Given the topic of the current study, the e-mail was also sent to "CESNET-L", a listserv concerning counselor education & supervision, "GSTALT-L", an ICORS sponsored listserv for therapists with an interest in Gestalt and related approaches, and "AUCCD-L", a listserv for the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors. Invitations were also distributed to a list of public school system personnel with potential interest in the subject matter. Given that there was no expectation of age differences within an adult age range, the only age stipulation for eligibility was that a participant be at least 18 years old. Prior to completing the survey, participants read about the purpose and the methods of the study and electronically endorsed a consent form. They were then presented with the battery of measures and provided all responses in one sitting.

Analytic Strategies

Primary hypotheses were examined using Pearson's product-moment correlation analyses. In cases where a significant correlation was found between a measure and a descriptive variable, such as age or High Standards, correlation analyses were conducted to investigate whether the significant relationship held when accounting for the relevant descriptor.

Mediation. Analyses were then performed to examine self-compassion as a mediator of the established forgiveness-perfectionism relationship. Many researchers

have differing opinions regarding how mediation analyses ought to proceed, and debate continues in the literature. According to Baron and Kenny (1986) and Judd and Kenny (1981) who established well-known seminal knowledge of mediation, four foundation steps must occur to provide support for a mediational model. They define mediation as a reduction of the effect of the initial predictor variable, X (in this case forgiveness), on the outcome or dependent variable, Y (in the current study, Discrepancy scores). Using these four steps, a relationship would first be established between forgiveness and perfectionism by performing a regression equation with forgiveness as the predictor and perfectionism as the outcome variable, in order to show there is an effect to be mediated. Then, forgiveness would be correlated with the mediator, M, self-compassion, with forgiveness entered as the predictor and self-compassion as the outcome variable. Next, the self-compassion must be shown to affect the outcome variable, perfectionism, using perfectionism as the criterion variable and forgiveness and self-compassion as the predictors (controlling the initial variable to establish the effect of the mediator on the outcome). For complete mediation the effect of forgiveness on perfectionism controlling for self-compassion would be zero. The significant extent to which the relationship is reduced would indicate partial mediation. However, recent research has established more powerful procedures for testing mediation, including bootstrap methods, which have advantages over conventional methods in that no assumptions are made about the sampling distribution. The current study established that Baron and Kenny (1986) criteria were met and proceeded using bootstrapping methods to test the indirect effects (see Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

Given the strong theoretical rationale for a relationship between forgiveness and perfectionism, and forgiveness and self-compassion, as well as the preliminary empirical evidence of self-compassion's relationship with perfectionism, the mediation model best fits the current study's premise. According to Frazier and colleagues (2004), the correlation between X and M should be comparable in strength to the r between M and Y, or ideally the latter should be stronger. A previous relationship has been found between self-compassion (M) and perfectionism (Y, Discrepancy scores), $r = -.57$ (Neff, 2003b). Therefore, given the theoretical rationale for a significant relationship between forgiveness and perfectionism, it was expected that these relationships will be comparable in strength. Furthermore, the issue of mediator reliability has been introduced as a common problem found in the studies using meditational models and the use of a measure with strong reliability, ideally .90 or higher, is recommended to address this concern (e.g. Frazier, Tix, Barron, 2004). The Self-compassion scale has been found to have a Cronbach's coefficient alpha of .92 (Neff, 2003b), which reduced this particular concern in the current study.

Previous research has not examined perfectionism and forgiveness together, nor explored self-compassion as a mediator. Given the preliminary empirical evidence for a relationship between perfectionism and self-compassion, and the theoretical rationale for a model of forgiveness, self-compassion, and perfectionism, the current study provides a strong foundation for further research. Knowledge of self-compassion's role in the forgiveness-perfectionism relationship will help guide future intervention approaches for improving self-compassion and forgiveness, in order to increase the positive impact on perfectionistic individuals' lives and general well-being.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

At the end of data collection, the total number of participants who began the study and either dropped out or completed it was 439. Most participants not completing the study dropped out after answering only a few items and before providing demographic information, leaving the majority of their response set incomplete, and therefore were not retained in final analysis. To address the possibility of random responding, the survey included three checkpoint items requiring compliance with specific instructions, such as "Please choose the number '1' for this item". Any respondents not answering all checkpoint items correctly were excluded (amounting to only 3 people). Only data from participants completing the entire study and correctly answering checkpoint items was retained, yielding $N = 309$ complete response sets.

Participants were presented with one of four differently ordered versions of the questionnaires, to address possible order effects. MANOVAs were conducted for the primary constructs of interest, including Forgiveness (using the HFS), Discrepancy (using the APS-R), Self-Compassion (using the SCS), and Satisfaction with Life (using the SWL scale), in order to determine whether any significant differences existed between groups on the primary constructs of interest based upon survey order. No significant differences between groups were found. On basis of these preliminary analyses, complete combined data were used for all main analyses.

Descriptive statistics for all scales and subscales appear in Table 4-1. Cronbach's alpha results ranged from .79 to .97 for all subscales, which fell well within acceptable

ranges for internal consistency and were comparable with results obtained in previous research.

Analysis of Hypotheses

Data were first examined for significant relationships between constructs of interest and descriptive factors. It is noteworthy that some significant relationships were revealed with age, in that greater ages were associated with higher levels of Forgiveness, Self-Compassion, Mindfulness, and Self-Kindness, while younger ages were associated with higher perfectionistic tendencies, Self-Judgment, Isolation, and Over-Identification. Small but significant differences appeared for gender, with men scoring higher on Mindfulness and females scoring higher on High Standards. A significant relationship of Discrepancy with High Standards occurred, which slightly exceeds that expected. As a precaution, relationships of interest were examined using partial correlations for all primary and secondary hypotheses to account for age, gender (coded 0, 1), and High Standards. All relationships held in expected directions with $ps < .001$. Results reported control for these factors (see Table 4-2).

Primary hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 predicted that scores on the HFS, and all forgiveness subscales, would reflect a significant inverse relationship with Discrepancy, in that high levels of forgiveness would be associated with lower levels of this maladaptive perfectionism. Strong relationships were supported between Discrepancy and Forgiveness components in expected directions. Effect sizes considered to be large (Cohen, 1988, 1992) were found for Forgiveness, Forgiveness of Self, and Forgiveness of Situations ($r = -.60, -.60, \text{ and } -.53$, respectively), with a medium effect size for Forgiveness of Others ($r = -.34$).

Hypothesis 2 predicted a significant relationship between Self-Compassion and Forgiveness, and among the relevant subscales, in that greater levels of forgiveness would be associated with greater levels of Self-Compassion. This hypothesis was supported, with large effect sizes found for Forgiveness, Forgiveness of Self, and Forgiveness of Situations ($r = .71, .72, \text{ and } .64$, respectively), and a medium effect size for Forgiveness of Others ($r = .40$). All Self-Compassion subscales demonstrated medium to large effect sizes for Forgiveness, Forgiveness of Self, and Forgiveness of Situations, with r ranging from $.38$ to $.72$, and medium effect sizes for Forgiveness of Others, with r ranging from $.25$ to $.40$.

Hypothesis 3 predicted a significant relationship between Forgiveness and Satisfaction with Life, with more forgiveness being associated with greater satisfaction with life. This hypothesis was supported, with medium effect sizes demonstrated for Forgiveness, Forgiveness of Self, Forgiveness of Others, and Forgiveness of Situations ($r = .48, .44, .27, \text{ and } .47$, respectively).

Hypothesis 4 predicted a significant relationship between Self-Compassion and Discrepancy, in that low Self-compassion would relate to high levels of perceived discrepancy between one's expectations and one's performance. This hypothesis was supported in expected directions, with a large effect size detected for Discrepancy and SCS scores ($r = -.64$). Medium to large effect sizes were found for all subscales of Self-Compassion, with r ranging from $-.40$ to $-.55$.

Hypothesis 5 predicted a strong relationship between Discrepancy and Satisfaction with Life, in that those individuals high on Discrepancy would report lower satisfaction with their lives due to the anticipated detrimental effects on well-being. A

significant inverse relationship was supported between SWL scores and Discrepancy, with a medium effect size ($r = -.48$) found.

Hypothesis 6 predicted a strong positive relationship between Self-Compassion and Satisfaction with Life, with more self-compassion relating to higher satisfaction with one's life in general. Data support this hypothesis, with a large effect size detected for SCS and SWL scores ($r = .50$). All subscales of Self-Compassion revealed significant relationships in expected directions, and medium effect sizes, with r ranging from .30 to .46.

Secondary hypothesis. This study advanced a secondary hypothesis of a mediation role for Self-compassion in helping to explain the strong negative relationship between Forgiveness and Perfectionism, as measured by HFS scores and Discrepancy. Total HFS scores were used to represent forgiveness in the mediational model, due to their established reliability and validity as a collective measure of dispositional forgiveness. The strong intercorrelations amongst the subscales and the fact that the significant relationships found occurred with the same level of significance, in the same expected directions, when related with the other constructs of well-being also support the use of comprehensive scores on the HFS. Though the effect sizes found for Forgiveness of Others tended to be less than those found for Forgiveness of Self or Forgiveness of Situations across the board, all were of medium to large size and behaved as expected in relation to each other construct of interest.

Mediation is essentially concerned with whether a significant effect can be fully or partially explained by a third variable, providing a mechanism through which the predictor is hypothesized to act upon the outcome. Mediation is said to occur if the

mediator (Self-Compassion) is significantly associated with the outcome (Discrepancy), and if the effect on an outcome is significantly reduced when the mediator is included in the model. By convention, it was first confirmed that the Baron and Kenny (1986) criteria were met for testing mediation in the current study.

As asserted by Hayes (2009), bootstrapping procedures offer advantages over other traditional approaches to testing mediation, such as the Sobel (1982, 1986, 1990) test, often used to supplement the Baron and Kenny approach. The main advantages of bootstrapping are that it makes no assumptions of normality regarding the shape of the sampling distribution and it has the best Type I error control (Hayes, 2009). The sampling distribution of the indirect effect tends to be asymmetric, with nonzero skewness and kurtosis (Bollen & Stine, 1990; Stone & Sobel, 1990). As Hayes (2009) asserts, "We should not be using tests that assume normality of the sampling distribution when competing tests are available that do not make this assumption and that are known to be more powerful than the Sobel test" (p.441).

The current study implemented bootstrapping methodology to estimate the size of the indirect effects and further test mediation results with routines available for bootstrapping indirect effects utilizing SPSS (see Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Research has supported bootstrapping as one of the more valid and powerful methods for testing mediation (MacKinnon, 2008; MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004; MacKinnon, et al., 2007; Williams & MacKinnon, 2008). The estimates were based upon 1,000 random samples, sampling with replacement, from the original data set. The approach is to bootstrap the sampling distribution of ab and derive a confidence interval with the empirically derived bootstrapped sampling distribution,

which alleviates the power problem found in asymmetries (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Tests were based on a 95% confidence interval (CI) for the size of the indirect effect, with confidence intervals that include zero indicating a non-significant indirect effect and those that do not include zero supporting a significant indirect effect. Conceptually, this is the same as rejecting the null hypothesis that the true indirect effect is zero (Hayes, 2009).

With Self-compassion in the model, the initial effect of HFS scores on Discrepancy was reduced from $\beta = -.61$ to $\beta = -.27$. The 95% CI (-.46 to -.26) did not include zero and therefore supported a significant indirect effect, providing evidence for a partial mediating role for Self-compassion in explaining the forgiveness-perfectionism relationship (see Figure 4-1 for model).

Exploratory Analyses

Due to the interest of the current study in examining forgiveness, and the general significance of this construct within religion or spirituality, participants were asked to provide further information in this domain. Approximately 11.7% of participants self-identified as Agnostic, 5.2% Atheist, 3.6% Buddhist, 12.0% Catholic, 22.7% Christian (non-Catholic), 12.0% Christian (Non-denominational), 1.0% Hindu, 4.9% Jewish, 19.1% Spiritual with no specific religion, 5.5% Other, and 1.6% Unsure. When asked the degree to which their religion or spirituality influenced their daily life, 8.1% of respondents indicated it was “always or extremely influential”, 15.9% “influential only regarding big decisions”, 33.7% “somewhat influential”, 3.2% “rarely influential”, and 39.2% “never influential”. When asked whether forgiveness was considered something to strive toward in their religion or spirituality, approximately 11.7% of respondents who self-identified as religious or spiritual answered “Yes, very much so”, 6.5% “Yes, it is

considered a good idea”, 1.3% “Yes, but it is optional or not emphasized”, 4.9% “No, it is not considered important”, 22.7% “No, it is actually discouraged”, and 53.1% “It is not a part of my religion/spirituality”.

To further explore attitudes toward forgiveness and perfectionist tendencies in a more qualitative manner, respondents were asked follow-up descriptive questions. When asked whether they consider themselves a compassionate person, only three participants responded “Yes, compassion for self and others is very important”, three answered “Yes, mainly toward others”, 101 responded “Yes, mainly toward myself”, 202 responded “No, but I am working on it”, and zero participants answered “No, I don't think compassion is important”. When asked whether they consider themselves to be perfectionistic, 22 answered “Yes, very much so, in personal and work domains”, 90 answered “Yes, in work or school only, 7 answered “Yes, in my personal life only”, 75 chose “Yes, but infrequently”, and 115 responded “No, not at all or never”. For those who considered themselves perfectionistic, 7.1% considered their perfectionistic tendencies in their life to be “Very beneficial, I would be lost without them”, 1.3% “Somewhat beneficial, they help me strive to be better”, 7.1% “Slightly beneficial, from time to time I see the benefit”, 10.0% “Slightly detrimental, they probably do me more harm than good”, 25.9% “Detrimental, they have a fair amount of negative impact on me”, and 45.6% “Very detrimental, I am often negatively impacted in a variety of ways”, and 2.9% “Not applicable (I am not at all perfectionistic). When given the forced choice question, “If you could choose to wake up tomorrow and be rid of your perfectionistic tendencies, would you do so?” only 22.3% chose Yes, while 70.2% chose No (7.5% chose not applicable). Additionally, when given a similar forced-choice question, “If you could

choose to wake up tomorrow and have forgiven yourself, others, situations, or anything/anyone else, would you do so?”, 87.7% answered Yes and 12.3% answered No. Space was then provided for respondents to elaborate on their answers to the above two forced-choice questions. Settings on the survey were set to require all respondents to enter something into the space provided, which yielded 266 usable responses (excluding those who entered irrelevant statements, only spaces, or wrote that they decline to respond). An overview of participant responses to how or why they decided to answer Yes or No to the two forced-choice questions revealed some common underlying themes. These included the impact of perfectionism on relationships, forgiveness as a process rather than simply an outcome, the burdens and potential benefits of perfectionism, the freedom that comes from forgiveness, and the struggles with both forgiveness and perfectionism. It is apparent from the responses that both forgiveness and perfectionism are subjects that most individuals have strong opinions about and that many recognize affect their life and emotional well-being. Discussion of significant qualitative statements in the context of current study findings appears in the discussion section (see Appendix G for selected responses).

In the vein of therapeutic approaches, the write-in question of this study allowed participants to address forgiveness and perfectionism on a more personal level that provided insight into the emotions, thoughts, and experiences with regard to perfectionism and forgiveness. An overview of responses revealed common themes. These included: 1) struggling with forgiveness, 2) the emotional benefits of forgiveness and the drawbacks of a lack of forgiveness, 3) the negative consequences of being perfectionistic and the benefits of being less perfectionistic, 4) seeing forgiveness of self

as especially challenging as well as highly desired, 5) seeing perfectionism as part of one's identity, 6) potential benefits of perfectionism, 7) mindfulness and ability to be present as positive experiences or goals, and 8) acknowledging forgiveness as an intrapersonal process.

Many describe forgiveness as offering a positive feeling or sensation and freeing up energy. For example, "I hold grudges and I realize that at the end of the day, the only person the grudge is taking energy out of is me", "Holding grudges is exhausting", "Forgiveness removes a heavy feeling and provides relief", being able to forgive is "...worth it in the long run in that it will ultimately set you free", "...not forgiving is painful to me", "When I forgive myself it feels like a fresh start", "Being upset with myself, others or situations is energy consuming and forgiving always seems like a sigh of relief – it's much healthier", and "Forgiveness allows for acceptance and good relationships". One participant effectively highlights the intrapersonal experience of forgiveness, stating "Forgiveness is not a service to the person who is forgiven but rather to the self...The past will always be the past. Forgiveness simply makes room for the future". Additionally, many people described forgiveness of self as the most challenging but desired kind of forgiveness. For instance, "I usually give others the benefit of the doubt and can forgive them, but it is almost impossible to forgive myself", "I forgive everyone but myself", and "I can forgive others, but experience a lot of self guilt". Other participants agreed forgiveness was a beneficial goal, but stated they would not choose to wake up having forgiven due to a desire to experience the forgiveness process and learn from it. For example, "I am able to forgive after I have learned from the situation", "Forgiveness is key to growth and learning that life has a flow and it is a process", "...I

need to go through the process of forgiving, of letting go, not just magically forgive...”, “You really learn how to look at the person and not their actions”, and “There is so much learning about yourself and through the process of forgiving...I would not want that taken away!” Only a few participants voiced opposition to forgiveness, stating “Some people/situations do not deserve forgiveness” or “While I believe that forgiveness is good I do not fundamentally believe that everything should be forgiven”.

Regarding perfectionism, many described detrimental aspects, such as “...I put all that added stress onto myself to be perfect and to be the best”, “Perfectionism is like a burden”, “Holding myself to unrealistically high standards has caused me stress”, ...my perfectionism is tied in with my procrastination”, “I associate my perfectionism with self-criticism/self-consciousness...”, “My perfectionistic tendencies are a burden and leave me feeling inadequate and upset at myself”, “It hinders my performance and abilities, and it limits me to doing things within my comfort zones”, “I cannot be kind to myself and it makes me unhappy”, they ...”cause me to be callous and cruel to myself at times”, and “...I don’t always let others in, or give myself the break I deserve”. However, many participants described some benefits they perceive from perfectionism, in particular with regard to work or school endeavors. For instance, “Perfectionism helps me strive to do better”, perfectionistic tendencies “...help me do well in school...”, “...stay organized and on top of obligations...”, “...helps my work be of very good quality...”, and “It helps me to accomplish things professionally at a high level”. Finally, a strong attachment to perfectionism and the association of perfectionism with identity was revealed as a prominent theme. This is evident in the statements, “...I feel it is [an] important contribution to who I am...”, “It is part of who I am – my identity”, “It’s basically what

defines me and keeps me focused”, “Perfectionism is part of my personality – without it I would not be ‘me’”, and “I don’t know any other way of being aside from being a perfectionist, so I would be uncomfortable without being that way”.

Table 4-1. Means, standard deviations, and Cronbach alphas

	Min.	Max.	M	SD	α
1. HFS	37	125	91.63	16.49	.91
2. Forgiveness of Self	12	42	30.33	6.75	.85
3. Forgiveness of Others	12	42	30.50	6.10	.79
4. Forgiveness of Situations	7	42	30.80	6.83	.86
5. Discrepancy	12	84	34.81	17.96	.97
6. SCS	37	128	84.91	17.75	.94
7. Self-Kindness	5	25	17.07	4.29	.90
8. Self-Judgment	5	25	14.25	4.38	.87
9. Common Humanity	4	20	13.55	3.71	.85
10. Isolation	4	20	11.83	3.82	.82
11. Mindfulness	4	20	14.04	3.01	.79
12. Over-Identification	4	20	11.68	3.76	.84
13. SWL	5	35	25.08	6.25	.88

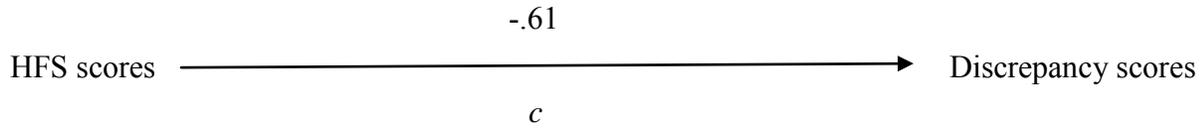
Note: $N = 309$.

Table 4-2. Scale and subscale partial correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. HFS													
2. Frgv. of Self	.84 (.85)												
3. Frgv. of Others	.77 (.77)	.42											
4. Frgv. of Sit.	.88 (.89)	.65	.53										
5. Discrepancy	-.60 (-.61)	-.60 (-.61)	-.34 (-.35)	-.53 (-.54)									
6. SCS	.71 (.72)	.72 (.73)	.40 (.41)	.70 (.66)	-.64 (-.66)								
7. Self-Kindness	.59	.64	.31	.50	-.53	.82							
8. Self-Judgment	-.56	-.61	-.27	-.49	.50	-.80	-.63						
9. Cmn. Humanity	.47	.49	.29	.38	-.41	.70	.52	-.40					
10. Isolation	-.46	-.45	-.25	-.45	.55	-.76	-.48	.55	-.42				
11. Mindfulness	.55	.53	.32	.51	-.40	.74	.57	-.46	.49	-.46			
12. Over-Ident.	-.62	-.55	-.38	-.60	.50	-.74	-.47	.51	-.35	.56	-.50		
13. SWL	.48 (.47)	.44 (.43)	.27 (.28)	.47 (.46)	-.48 (-.45)	.50 (.46)	.46 (.43)	-.34 (-.32)	.31 (.30)	-.40 (-.37)	.39 (.37)	-.37 (-.34)	

Note: N=309. All partial correlations significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed). All results control for High Standards, Gender, and Age. (For comparison, full correlations for primary constructs of interest are reported in parentheses).

A



B

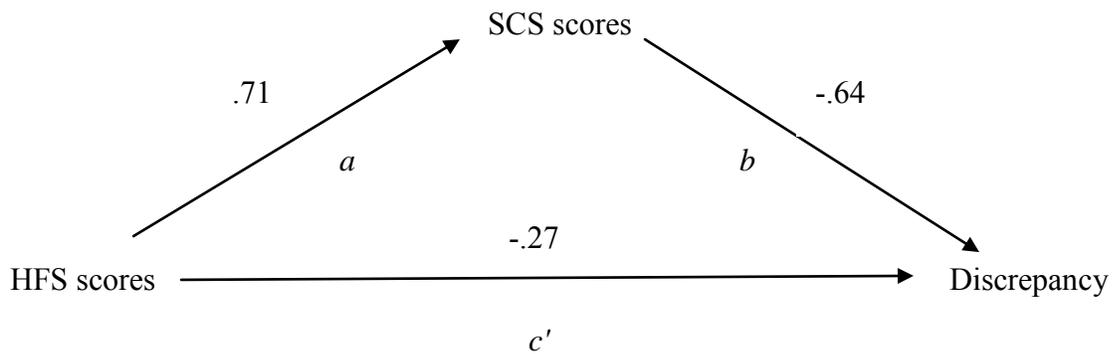


Figure 4-1. The partial mediation model. A: The direct effect of forgiveness (HFS) on perfectionism (Discrepancy). B: The mediation model with self-compassion (SCS) as a mediator between forgiveness and perfectionism. Path coefficients are shown, with c' representing the inclusion of self-compassion in the model.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Results of the current study offer significant support for the primary hypotheses. A significant relationship was found between the two primary constructs of well-being examined, Forgiveness and Perfectionism, which have not previously been examined in concert. The relationships revealed in this study further an understanding of both forgiveness and perfectionism, while also lending credence to a role for Self-compassion in helping to explain this relationship. As hypothesized, a strong inverse relationship was detected between Discrepancy and Forgiveness, as well as between Discrepancy and other positive aspects of well-being, in particular Satisfaction with Life, Self-Compassion, Forgiveness of Self, Others, and Situations, Self-Kindness, Common Humanity, and Mindfulness. A strong positive relationship was established between Forgiveness and Self-compassion, as well as between all subscales of forgiveness and the positive subscales of Self-Compassion. These results continue support for the idea of Discrepancy as maladaptive and detrimental to well-being, while supporting forgiveness and self-compassion as beneficial for mental health and well-being.

Given the study of Self-Compassion is relatively new within psychological literature, the current study adds to the growing support of Self-Compassion as a reliable, valid, and noteworthy construct in the study of mental health and psychological well-being. Though Forgiveness is a well-studied construct within the realm of positive psychology, there exists much debate measures and conceptualizations of Forgiveness. This study provides further evidence for the effective use of the SCS and the APS-R with an adult population, as well as the HFS, a relatively new measure of dispositional forgiveness and the only measure to include Forgiveness of Situations as a key component. Though most previous research has

focused on college-age students, the high reliability and validity findings in the current study support the use of these measures with a diverse adult population. The reliability estimates in the current study were comparable, in fact often higher than, those generated from in-person data collection or data collection limited to college campuses in previous studies employing the same measures. This provides significant support for online research as a tool for reaching diverse audiences without compromising reliability. The strong relationship found between HFS scores and the maladaptive aspect of perfectionism, Discrepancy, offers a new window into the study of perfectionism as aided by the large body of forgiveness and self-compassion literature available.

The current finding of self-compassion as a partial mediator in the relationship of forgiveness and perfectionism lends empirical support to the theory that higher forgiveness levels may activate self-compassion, which may reduce maladaptive perfectionistic tendencies. Forgiveness is considered to be the intrapersonal transformation of the valence of an event from negative to neutral or positive. Releasing oneself from the negative valence of an event may help to create the mental space needed to experience feelings of common humanity, kindness toward self, and mindfulness, all of which are present in the having overall self-compassion. Low ability to forgive may then activate Self-Judgment, Isolation, and Over-Identification, all of which are components of a lack of self-compassion, fueling higher levels of Discrepancy.

Given the consistency with which Discrepancy is associated with psychological problems, such as higher levels of depression, shame, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, this finding provides solid support for future theoretical and clinical research avenues for forgiveness and self-compassion in effecting therapeutic change with perfectionistic

individuals. With empirical evidence and theoretical rationale for a link between forgiveness, perfectionism, and self-compassion, future research may begin extrapolating from the theoretical to the clinical. For instance, a longitudinal study with perfectionistic individuals, using an intervention designed to increase forgiveness or self-compassion in a clinical setting may reveal a decrease in Discrepancy, manifesting in lower depression, anxiety, shame, or suicidal ideation. It may also prove fruitful to explore which component of Self-compassion - Self-Kindness, Common Humanity, or Mindfulness - may offer the most promise for improving well-being and decreasing Discrepancy when cultivated. Similarly, understanding which component contributes most to a lack of Self-Compassion, Self-Judgment, Isolation, or Over-Identification, thus fueling higher levels of Discrepancy. In a short-term longitudinal study with college students, social connection emerged as a significant moderator in lessening the effects of maladaptive perfectionism on concurrent hopelessness (Rice et al, 2006), with higher levels of self-critical and discrepant perceptions between expectations and performance being associated with high social disconnection. This is consistent with general psychological and sociological perspectives on suicide and suicidal ideation (Baumeister, 1990; Durkheim, 1897/1951; Trout, 1980), wherein a social network and feelings of connection with others may influence individuals toward or away from considering suicide as a “solution” (Institute of Medicine, 2002, p. 194). Perhaps social connection offers a means of reinforcing self-compassion and forgiveness, in community with others. Investigating the relationship between Social Connectedness and Self-Compassion, in particular the subscales of Isolation, Common Humanity, and Over-Identification, may offer further evidence for interventions targeted to increase social connection as a means of improving self-compassion in perfectionistic individuals.

Further study of age differences may also be warranted. The significant relationship found between Forgiveness, Discrepancy, and age in the current sample, in that the older ages were associated with higher levels of forgiveness, and lower levels of Discrepancy, across the board is noteworthy. Though all significant relationships held when controlling for age, this trend remains an interesting prospect for further investigation from a developmental perspective. Perfectionism has been studied with younger ages in conjunction with depression (e.g., Rice et al, 2007), but most forgiveness and self-compassion research has focused on adults and college ages. Examining the progression of Forgiveness, Self-Compassion, and Discrepancy with age in a longitudinal study may help shed light onto how or when Self-compassion develops, as well as provide further clues into the dispositional or situation-specific nature of forgiveness as a construct, which is a highly debated topic within the field.

Although the current study provides strong empirical and theoretical support for a relationship between perfectionism and forgiveness, and a role for self-compassion in mediating the effect of low forgiveness on Discrepancy, the findings must be tempered by the limitations of the study. Due to the correlational nature of the study design, a causal relationship between the constructs cannot be determined. A longitudinal design employing an intervention for Forgiveness based upon Self-Compassion, which investigates the ability of this intervention to predict Discrepancy scores at a later time would help provide further evidence for the mediator role of Self-compassion in the Forgiveness-Perfectionism relationship as well as support Self-compassion and Forgiveness as effective means of decreasing Discrepancy and reducing its detrimental effects on well-being. Furthermore, this study does provide more support for the use of the SCS, HFS, and APS-R scales with an

adult population beyond college students. However, the use of these scales or their equivalents with younger child and adolescent populations is limited and would be a beneficial direction for future research, along with investigation into whether the partial mediation role of self-compassion holds with a younger population. Also, despite efforts to gain an unrestricted normative population, the current sample demographics reflected higher education levels, and greater numbers of females and Caucasian-Americans than the general population. This may reflect some bias regarding interest in participating in the study or the study's topics, or the high numbers of females in education or psychology and counseling fields. As well, those in the academic and social science fields may have more general interest in participating in such research.

The additional investigative information gathered in the current study did provide interesting foundations for further research. Nearly 81% of those in the current study reported that forgiveness was “not important”, “discouraged”, or “not a part of” their religion or spirituality, though the majority of them self-identified as religious or spiritual. Given the common interplay between religion or spirituality with forgiveness in societal perceptions, as well as previous forgiveness literature, this finding may seem surprising. Furthermore, when asked “If you could choose to wake up tomorrow and have forgiven yourself, others, situations, or anything/anyone else, would you do so” an overwhelming 88% said they would choose to do so. Additionally, when asked whether they consider themselves to be a compassionate person 303 out of 309 respondents answered either “Yes, mainly toward myself” or “No, but I am working on it”, and not one respondent answered “No, I do not think compassion is important”. It is evident in this finding that compassion is valued and considered a quality to strive for amongst most participants and one with which they also

struggle. This may indicate a common internal struggle with forgiving, and a general striving toward compassion. Most participant responses indicated a recognition of the negative effects of not forgiving, implying forgiveness is an important and common question for most individuals regardless of belief system, rather than a specifically spiritual or religious question.

The current study also highlights the strong attachment many perfectionistic individuals have to their perfectionistic tendencies regardless of the detrimental impact or psychological problems that may arise as a result. Despite the ability of 82% of respondents to admit that their perfectionistic tendencies “probably do more harm than good”, “have a fair amount of negative impact”, and often negatively impact them “in a variety of ways”, when asked if they could wake up and be rid of their perfectionistic tendencies, 70 % said they would not choose to do so. Herein exemplifies the difficulty present for clinicians in effecting therapeutic change with perfectionistic individuals. Relational factors have increasingly become a focus of perfectionism research, including difficulty developing therapeutic alliances (Blatt, Zuroff, Bondi, Sanislow, & Pilkonis, 1998; Zuroff, Blatt, Sotsky, Krupnick, Martin, & Sanislow, 2000) and intimate relationships, such as attachment bonds with parents and romantic partners (Habke, Hewitt, & Flett, 1999; Hill, Zrull, & Turlington, 1997; Rice, Lopez, & Vergara, 2005; Rice & Mirzadeh, 2000; Shea, et al., 2006). It has been asserted that perfectionism may be a personality characteristic centered on personal adequacy (Rice et al, 2006), with negative or positive views toward self contributing to varying degrees of comfort and engagement in relationships (e.g., Bowlby, 1988). Given this propensity, studies exploring therapeutic change in perfectionists within group therapy settings aimed at

improving self-compassion in a community where social connection is also encouraged may be worthwhile.

It may also be that the idea of perfection, seen as an attainable target, and the intermittent positive rewards that striving to be perfect sometimes offers may seem too alluring to give up despite the costs. In the mind of an individual with high discrepancy, wherein their perceived performance constantly falls short of their expectation, perhaps even entertaining the idea of life without perfectionistic tendencies would be seen as a failure. It is also possible that these individuals would not want to give up the potentially positive benefit of having high standards. Previous research has supported the theory that those with High Standards but low Discrepancy manifest adaptive perfectionism that can often bypass the detrimental psychological problems found in those with high Discrepancy (Ashby, Kottman, & Shoen, 1998; Rice & Slaney, 2002; Rice et al. 2007; Slaney et al., 1995; Suddarth & Slaney, 2001). Future research could be well served to distinguish adaptive from maladaptive perfectionists, perhaps using a method similar to that outlined by Rice and Ashby (2007), when studying therapeutic interventions using the findings from this study. Examining self-compassion and forgiveness in both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionists, and using an intervention targeted to increase self-compassion or forgiveness in exploring the impact on Discrepancy, would provide helpful information for developing therapeutic approaches tailored for both groups of individuals.

In sum, the present study provides evidence for strong relationship between perfectionism and forgiveness and highlights the need to continue investigating Self-Compassion with regard to perfectionistic individuals. This study contributes to the growing literature on perfectionism through the finding of a strong inverse relationship with

forgiveness and a partial mediating role for self-compassion, along with supporting the reliability and validity of the perfectionism, self-compassion, and forgiveness measures employed with an adult population and using an online medium. On the basis of this and previous research, it has been established that maladaptive perfectionism adversely affects almost every aspect of psychological well-being assessed. This study also supports forgiveness and self-compassion as positive components of well-being, and advanced them as important for an individual's satisfaction with life as a whole. The additional investigative questions provide important personal insights into the commonality of struggles with forgiveness despite acknowledged benefits, the difficulty of giving up perfectionistic tendencies despite the acknowledged costs, and forgiveness as an intrapersonal process. This study helps unify two large bodies of literature, and introduces promising new components, forgiveness and self-compassion, for inclusion in future studies with perfectionistic individuals both in therapeutic and theoretical capacities.

APPENDIX A
HEARTLAND FORGIVENESS SCALE (HFS; THOMPSON, ET AL., 2005)

Directions: For each of the following items, choose the number (from the scale) that best describes how you typically respond to the type of situation described. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as honest as possible.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Almost Always False of Me		More Often False of Me		More Often True of Me		Almost Always True of Me

- (1) Although I feel bad at first when I mess up, over time I can give myself some slack.
- (2) I hold grudges against myself for negative things I've done.*
- (3) Learning from bad things I've done helps me get over them.
- (4) It is really hard for me to accept myself once I've messed up.*
- (5) With time I am understanding of myself for mistakes I've made.
- (6) I don't stop criticizing myself for negative things I've felt, thought, said, or done.*
- (7) I continue to punish a person who has done something that I think is wrong.*
- (8) With time I am understanding of others for the mistakes they've made.
- (9) I continue to be hard on others who have hurt me.*
- (10) Although others have hurt me in the past, I have eventually been able to see them as good people.
- (11) If others mistreat me, I continue to think badly of them.*
- (12) When someone disappoints me, I can eventually move past it.
- (13) When things go wrong for reasons that can't be controlled, I get stuck in negative thoughts about it.*
- (14) With time I can be understanding of bad circumstances in my life.

(15) If I am disappointed by uncontrollable circumstances in my life, I continue to think negatively about them.*

(16) I eventually make peace with bad situations in my life.

(17) It's really hard for me to accept negative situations that aren't anybody's fault.*

(18) Eventually I let go of negative thoughts about bad circumstances that are beyond anyone's control.

Forgiveness of Self Subscale: Items 1-6

Forgiveness of Others Subscale: Items 7-12

Forgiveness of Situations Subscale: Items 13-18

** These items are reverse scored.*

APPENDIX B
THE ALMOST PERFECT SCALE - REVISED (APS-R; SLANEY, ET AL., 2001)

Directions: Please choose the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements, on a scale from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree.

- (1) I often feel frustrated because I can't meet my goals.
- (2) My best just never seems to be good enough for me.
- (3) I rarely live up to my high standards.
- (4) Doing my best never seems to be enough.
- (5) I am never satisfied with my accomplishments.
- (6) I often worry about not measuring up to my own expectations.
- (7) My performance rarely measures up to my standards.
- (8) I am not satisfied even when I know I have done my best.
- (9) I am seldom able to meet my own high standards for performance.
- (10) I am hardly ever satisfied with my performance.
- (11) I hardly ever feel that what I've done is good enough.
- (12) I often feel disappointment after completing a task because I know I could have done better.
- (13) I have high standards for my performance at work or at school.
- (14) If you don't expect much out of yourself you will never succeed.
- (15) I have high expectations for myself.
- (16) I set very high standards for myself.
- (17) I expect the best from myself.
- (18) I try to do my best at everything I do.
- (19) I have a strong need to strive for excellence.

(20) I am an orderly person.

(21) Neatness is important to me.

(22) I think things should be put away in their place.

(23) I like to always be organized and disciplined.

Discrepancy subscale: Items 1-12

High Standards subscale: Items 13-19

Order subscale: Items 20-23

APPENDIX C
SELF-COMPASSION SCALE (SCS; NEFF, 2003B)

Directions: Please indicate how often you typically act in the manner stated in each of the following statements, on a scale from 1=almost never to 5=almost always.

- (1) I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.
- (2) I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering.
- (3) When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.
- (4) I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies.
- (5) I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain.
- (6) When I see aspects of myself that I don't like, I get down on myself.
- (7) When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself.
- (8) I can be a bit cold-hearted towards myself when I'm experiencing suffering.
- (9) I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.
- (10) I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.
- (11) When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy
are shared by most people.
- (12) I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.
- (13) When I'm down and out, I remind myself that there are lots of other people in the world
feeling like I am.
- (14) When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone
goes through.
- (15) When I fail at something that's important to me I tend to feel alone in my failure.

- (16) When I think about my inadequacies it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world.
- (17) When I'm feeling down I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.
- (18) When I'm really struggling I tend to feel like other people must be having an easier time of it.
- (19) When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.
- (20) When I'm feeling down I try to approach my feelings with curiosity and openness.
- (21) When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation.
- (22) When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective.
- (23) When something upsets me I get carried away with my feelings.
- (24) When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong.
- (25) When something painful happens I tend to blow the incident out of proportion.
- (26) When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.

Self-Kindness subscale: Items 1-5

Self-Judgment subscale: Items 6-10

Common Humanity subscale: Items 11-14

Isolation subscale: Items 15-18

Mindfulness subscale: Items 19-22

Over-Identification Subscale: 23-26

APPENDIX D
SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE (SWLS; DIENER, ET AL., 1985)

Directions: Please indicate your agreement with each item by choosing the number along the scale provided. Please be open and honest in your responding.

- 1= Strongly Disagree
- 2= Disagree
- 3=Slightly Disagree
- 4=Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- 5=Slightly Agree
- 6=Agree
- 7=Strongly Agree

- (1) In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
- (2) The conditions of my life are excellent.
- (3) I am satisfied with my life.
- (4) So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
- (5) If I could live my life over I would change almost nothing.

APPENDIX E
DEMOGRAPHIC/OTHER INFORMATION

1. What is your current age? (pick from drop down menu)___

2. What is your race/ethnicity?
____ American Indian/Alaska Native
____ Asian/Asian American
____ Black/African American
____ Hispanic/Latino
____ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
____ White/European American
____ Biracial/Multiracial
____ Other (Please specify): _____

3. What is your gender?
____ male
____ female
____ other (please specify) _____

4. What is your highest level of education?
____ Some High School
____ High School Graduate/Equivalent
____ Vocational Training and/or Certificate
____ Some College/University (no degree)
____ Associate's Degree(s)
____ Bachelor's Degree(s)
____ Some Graduate Study (no graduate degree)
____ Master's Degree(s) _
____ Doctorate and/or Postgraduate Degree(s)
____ Other (please specify): _____

5. In what type of town or city do you primarily live?
____ Urban
____ Suburban
____ Rural (population of less than 2500)

6. What is your religious or spiritual affiliation?
____ Agnostic
____ Atheist
____ Buddhist
____ Catholic
____ Christian (non-Catholic)
____ Christian (Non-denominational)
____ Hindi
____ Jewish

- Spiritual, no specific religion
- Other (please specify) _____
- Unsure

7. How influential is your religion or spirituality in the way you live your everyday life?

- always or extremely influential
- influential only regarding big decisions
- somewhat influential
- rarely influential
- never influential

8. Do you consider yourself someone who regularly practices religion or spirituality?

- Yes, all the time, everyday
- Yes, very frequently
- Yes, more often than on major holidays only
- Yes, on major holidays only
- No, very rarely
- No, almost never or never

9. In your religion or spirituality, is forgiveness considered something to strive toward?

- Yes, very much so
- Yes, it is considered a good idea
- Yes, but it is optional or not emphasized
- No, it is not considered important
- No, it is actually discouraged
- It is not a part of my religion/spirituality
- Not applicable (I am not at all religious/spiritual)

10. Do you consider yourself to be a compassionate person?

- Yes, compassion for self and others is very important
- Yes, mainly toward others
- Yes, mainly toward myself
- No, but I am working on it
- No, I don't think compassion is important

11. Do you consider yourself to be perfectionistic?

- Yes, very much so, in personal and work domains
- Yes, in work or school only
- Yes, in my personal life only
- Yes, but infrequently
- No, not at all or never

12. How beneficial do you consider your perfectionistic tendencies to be in your life?

- Very beneficial, I would be lost without them
- Somewhat beneficial, they help me strive to be better
- Slightly beneficial, from time to time I see the benefit
- Slightly detrimental, they probably do me more harm than good
- Detrimental, they have a fair amount of negative impact on me
- Very detrimental, I am often negatively impacted in a variety of ways

13. If you could choose to wake up tomorrow and be rid of your perfectionistic tendencies, would you do so?

- yes
- no

14. If you could choose to wake up tomorrow and have forgiven yourself, others, situations, or anything/anyone else, would you do so?

- yes
- no

Write-in question: Please briefly state how/why you decided the way you did *on each of the previous two* questions:

APPENDIX F INFORMED CONSENT

Purpose of the research study:

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of perfectionism and well-being.

What you will be asked to do in the study:

You will be asked to complete an online questionnaire having to do with your attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and personality.

Time required:

Questionnaires will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

Risks and Benefits:

There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. Potential benefits include self-insight and reflection on self, personality, values, and relationships.

Confidentiality:

Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. No names, email or IP addresses, or other information that could link respondents to their survey responses will be collected or maintained, and as a result your responses will be anonymous. Online data will be collected and maintained through SurveyMonkey, accessible via password protection only to the principal investigator, and deleted as soon as the data have been analyzed.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. There is no compensation to you for participating in the study.

Right to withdraw from the study:

You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:

Brooke Mistler, M.S., Graduate Student, Department of Psychology, PO Box 112250, Gainesville, FL, 32611, email: study@onlinepsy.com.

Kenneth G. Rice, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Psychology, PO Box 112250, Gainesville, FL, 32611, email: kgr1@ufl.edu, phone: (352) 273-2119.

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:

IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; phone (352) 392-0433.

By clicking here I consent to voluntary participation in the study described above, and agree that I am over 18 years of age.

APPENDIX G SELECTED WRITE-IN RESPONSES

My perfectionistic tendencies are only a problem when I get carried away. Most of the time, those tendencies help me to do well in school and at work. Forgiving others is hard in and of itself, but I tend to do pretty well with that. I cannot forgive myself because I feel as though I'm allowing myself to get away with actions/habits that are not beneficial to me in the long run.

I think my perfectionist tendencies help me to be successful and work hard to become better and to always improve. I would choose to forgive people if I had the ability to forgive them for any wrong doings because it is good to forgive but not forget.

Perfectionism helps me strive to do better. Some people/situations do not deserve forgiveness.

I would not get rid of my perfectionistic tendencies because I attribute much of my success as a student and leader to my drive toward perfection. It helps me to stay organized and on top of obligations and motivates me to work for success. I would choose to forgive others or situations because I consider myself a very forgiving person (sometimes to my detriment).

My personality is who I am. My flaws make my personality and I wouldn't feel like the same person otherwise.

I am not a complete perfectionist but I am when it comes to school and work. My perfectionist tendencies in these settings have allowed me to succeed. I would choose to forgive because it would free me from the guilt and hatred I sometimes feel towards myself and others.

I think that being a perfectionist can help you do things better. And I would love to not worry about what others have done in the past.

I feel like my perfectionistic tendencies help my work be of very good quality and it makes me feel proud of the things I have accomplished. On the other hand, I have something that I regret in my life and I would love to wake up tomorrow and forgive myself for that mistake and move on from it.

I feel my perfectionist tendencies help me do well in school, and that they constantly push me to do better. Sometimes that can be very stressful though because I put all that added stress onto myself to be perfect and to be the best. I don't like holding grudges - it wastes too much energy. So yes, if I could wake up tomorrow and forgive myself/others/etc, I would do so.

Perfectionism is like a burden. It would be much more relaxing to not have it on my mind all the time.

Holding grudges is exhausting. I have been taught in my religion the importance of forgiveness, and it is something that I struggle with. Therefore, I think it would be great to be rid of all hard feelings toward myself and others.

I am always happier when I am able to accept myself and my flaws and holding myself to unrealistically high standards has caused me stress.

My perfectionistic tendencies have certainly created rewards, but they have also created stress, ridicule, and taken some valuable time away from me. I am slow at forgiving myself which I know is detrimental to my own future success and would love to wake up and leave all guilt behind

I think having perfectionistic qualities have benefits for myself most of the time and helped me become the person I am today, I also would like to forgive others easily, I do not think it is helpful or healthy to hold grudges, although I have difficulty letting go of things.

I see my perfectionistic tendencies as being related only to my school/professional life and as sources on motivation that encourage me to give my best effort in all I do in these areas. As for the second, I honestly feel life is too short to always be angry at someone (including yourself), so waking up and being able to forgive everything is worth it in the long run in that it will ultimately set you free.

I think my perfectionism is helpful, because it helps me give all I can to others, to projects, etc. God plays a huge role in why I consider forgiveness so important; Jesus is the ultimate example of forgiveness, so I try to live by that. Additionally, I believe being unforgiving is detrimental to your emotional well-being. I sometimes have a difficult time forgiving myself for things I do...I second guess myself a lot!

I like my perfectionistic behaviors in school and believe they help me succeed. However, it is very hard for me to forgive myself for being imperfect in my personal life, which is why I'd like to learn how to forgive myself. I usually give others the benefit of the doubt and can forgive them, but it is almost impossible to forgive myself.

A little bit of anxiety is a good thing. I find more enjoyment in life when I can live in the present, instead of focusing on the past.

I put undue pressure on myself to succeed, and I would like to reduce the anxiety that this causes me. It hinders my performance and abilities, and it limits me to doing things within my comfort zones. I can't imagine answering no. It would be silly to continue wanting to blame myself for past actions - I want to forgive myself for things I have done in the past, but I have not made full repairs to others or myself.

Having these tendencies have kept me disciplined, determined and dedicated.

Although my perfectionistic tendencies can be negative at times, I attribute them to my success thus far in school, which is very rewarding to myself. Being upset with myself, others, or situations, is energy consuming and forgiving always seems like a sigh of relief- it's much healthier.

I am in recovery for an eating disorder so my perfectionist tendencies have ruined many aspects of my life. I cannot be kind to myself and it makes me unhappy. Perfectionism has helped me in my work ethic as I am in grad school, but I think I could be successful without perfectionism. I forgive everyone, but myself. I would be so thankful to be able to wake up and accept myself as I am. I think if I could forgive my shortcomings, like I do for everyone else, I would be much more happy and present in daily life situations.

I know that holding grudges/irrational expectations against myself and others does not help anyone, but I have a tendency to hold onto negative feelings that then fester. These impact me both emotional and physically, so if I could be rid of them completely I would to it.

I'm known by colleagues and peers as perfectionist and goal-oriented. It's basically what defines me and keeps me focused. I have made mistakes in the past and feel that being a perfectionist helps me to accomplish my goals, keeps me motivated and feeling productive and fulfilled in life. I guess it holds me accountable to myself.

I believe that having a perfectionistic tendency makes me work harder and makes me strive to be the best. I have many strengths and it is my strive to always want to do the best that I can that pushes me to continue working hard even when I'd rather take the easy way out. I am proud of my perfectionistic tendencies and feel it has significantly more benefits than weaknesses. Regarding my idea to forgive others, I don't see a reason why not to forgive. I believe that forgiveness is important and that it frees the person of holding hate or negative thoughts toward others. The more you are able to forgive the more you can move on from whatever has wronged you so it doesn't take hold of your life.

I would feel more comfortable and at peace with myself and the world if I was less perfectionistic and was able to forgive, especially forgive myself.

Perfectionistic tendencies help me be the best "me" I can be. I will always want to be the best me. I feel when you forgive someone or yourself, you are taking a great weight off of your soul and will live a longer, healthier life by doing so.

If I wasn't so hard on myself I probably wouldn't experience anxiety like I do. This is a struggle for me. I can forgive others but experience a lot of self guilt.

My perfectionistic tendencies have their pros and cons but overall they are a part of who I am. I don't really feel that there is anything that I need to forgive of myself or anyone that I have not already forgiven. While I believe that forgiveness is good I do not fundamentally believe that everything should be forgiven.

My perfectionistic tendencies are necessary to help me excel in graduate school. Without them I wouldn't have the determination to complete my requirements so I wouldn't want them to go away. I believe in forgiveness because it takes less energy than holding a grudge.

I believe that my perfectionism is tied in with my procrastination - I think about doing something right but it's either too big of a job or I don't think I can do it right and then I just don't do anything. I think the combination of the two keep me from trying things because I'm afraid to fail or be rejected. 20. I try to forgive people and think I have forgiven them but sometimes the pain still sneaks up. I need to forgive myself more.

I like the control striving for perfection brings to my life. I find meaning in doing things well and I feel like I can compromise on what needs to be perfect. However, my expectations can be too high for people, which leaves me angry with their behavior. With my own behavior I am flexible about things being perfect or not, except with certain core beliefs like trust, commitment, and personal responsibility. I have never failed myself in these, but if I did, it would be hard to forgive myself.

The idea of waking up and magically having changed does not appeal to me. I see my life as a process of learning and growing, of working towards forgiveness and love of self and others. I have learned to let go of some of my perfectionism, however, society highly values these tendencies and so I know that I will

probably always have some piece of that in me. And I can accept that and appreciate what is good and not so helpful about it.

I would not rid the perfectionism, because it is only slight and helps me to do a thorough job sometimes. And I would choose to forgive because not forgiving is painful to me. But it is hard to forgive myself sometimes, so I would want to free myself of that pain.

I don't know who I would be without the perfectionistic tendencies that I have and I do feel that they benefit me at times, so I wouldn't want to not have them. However, if I could have total forgiveness for myself and others I feel that I would live a much happier life.

I do believe my perfectionistic tendencies make me who I am and make me work hard to do the best I can at everything. I would choose to forgive because I think it would make me a better, happier person to not have hard feelings against anyone.

Perfectionism is part of my personality- without it, I would not be "me". I think forgiveness should be part of everyone's life. It frees a person from the past and opens them to future possibilities.

I find myself to be perfectionistic about cleanliness, tidiness, and orderliness. I don't think I would give up my striving to keep things neat or clean. I would love to be able to forgive myself for ways that I have acted in the past, things that I have done that I am not proud of, and mistakes that I have made in my relationships with others.

My perfectionism can sometimes drive myself and others crazy. I would prefer to not carry any burden of not forgiving if I could do so.

The perfectionistic tendencies help contribute to who I am as a person. Forgiveness removes a "heavy" feeling and provides relief.

Perfectionism has become a hindrance to my healthy development and wellness. I wish I could accept my inadequacies and not be bothered by them, but I haven't been able to figure out how. It can be very painful.

I feel like my strive to be perfect and my lack of forgiveness for myself and others causes me great internal pain.

My perfectionistic tendencies cause me to be callous and cruel to myself at times. I would like to no longer do this.

My perfectionistic tendencies are a burden and often leave me feeling inadequate and upset at myself. So being rid of these tendencies would be very freeing I think. If I could forgive myself, others, and situations I think it would be very liberating and a weight would be lifted. I would be able to function better overall and enjoy life more fully. That is why I answered as I did. Thanks - very interesting study.

I don't know any other way of being aside from being a perfectionist, so I would be uncomfortable without being that way. I always strive to be more forgiving, so if I could wake up and be that way, I would.

I feel my perfectionism has helped me to attain what I have in my life, especially my continued education. While I am a perfectionist, I do understand that I cannot reach the goal of being perfect and I'm ok with falling short. I also strive to forgive others if I'm wronged. I do sometimes have trouble doing this.

While being a perfectionist adds excess stress to my life I don't know any other way of being and do not want to lack accomplishments in my life. I would choose to forgive because it would reduce my stress and make me a happier person.

I associate my perfectionism with self-criticism/self-consciousness and holding grudges longer than might be appropriate, so if it were as easy as "choosing" to be rid of it and forgive myself/others, I would see great benefit in doing so.

I realize that striving for true perfectionism will drive a person crazy and I would rather spend the time enjoying life than trying to make every detail "perfect". Life is just too short to obsess.

I believe the hint of my perfectionism that is seen in school/work pushes me to strive. I'm also a P on the Meyers Briggs...so, I think the perfectionism is balanced out. I also think that having more perfectionism attributes in my 20's helped me to get where I am now...and luckily, now I see hints of my perfectionism, but I'm not really controlled by it (whereas I was in my 20's). RE: Q-22, There is so much learning about yourself and others through the process of forgiving...I would not want that taken away!

Perfectionistic tendencies help me strive to work harder and be better - I believe I would fall behind if I did not have a drive to finish well. For the second question, I believe that the ability to forgive is very important and necessary in life - a constant harboring of anger, resentment, etc. is, in my opinion, a poor way to live.

I have achieved a lot in my life because I do not settle for mediocrity. Striving for excellence has led me to where I am. I agree with forgiveness and think it is something to always strive towards.

I think my perfectionism has driven me to succeed in my career. I feel like I have forgiven myself and others for most things, but would welcome the opportunity to wake up totally free of all anger.

I think perfectionism has gotten me this far with my life, which I don't regret. Yet it is time for me to let it go and live a life with more freedom, for others and myself. Hatred is painful; it hurts both parties

I think perfectionism has gotten me this far with my life, which I don't regret. Yet it is time for me to let it go and live a life with more freedom, for others and myself. Hatred is painful; I'd rather be free of it.

I find that perfectionism breeds shame and anxiety in my life, and keeps me out of the present moment. When I am focusing on perfection, I am not mindful or present, and I find that to be very detrimental to my life and my work. Perfectionism also keeps me from connecting with others in more authentic ways.

I would not be rid of perfectionistic tendencies because it helps me not be complacent in what I do; ever striving to be and do better. Forgiveness is key to growth and learning that life has a flow and it is a process. Relational conscientiousness compels me to forgive so that I can live.

I feel frustrated when I cannot meet my expectations and often find that my expectations were unnecessary for achievement. I also think creating expectations of myself leads me to create expectations

of others. Setting conditions in relationships seems to lead to me to judge. When this happens I find it important to forgive and accept. My ability to forgive is dependent on my disappointment. It would be nice if the grief process could happen in one night's sleep.

I believe my perfectionism is adaptive and it has never caused distress. It is part of who I am- my identity. Although there are times when forgiveness feels impossible and not doing so protects me from further hurt, I would rather be able to forgive.

My perfectionism has encouraged me to reach the level of success I have. However, I'd like to not be so self-critical.

My perfectionism is beneficial to me, as it helps me to accomplish things professionally at a high level. However, it also causes problems in my life because other people are often annoyed by it and it prevents me from being "free and easy" as I would ideally like to be in a lot of situations.

It hurts to beat myself up about what I cannot change. When I forgive myself, it feels like a fresh start.

The negativity that I tend to hold onto stays in my mind, and I keep worrying about something I did in the past that I can't change, or something in my future that I can't control. I have received help for my perfectionistic tendencies and they have improved over the years. I am less forgiving of myself than when I was younger.

The anxiety from perfectionism can be counterproductive. Expecting perfectionism from others can lead to resentment, which requires forgiveness and acceptance.

I feel my perfectionistic attitude has helped me achieve the things in life I have accomplished- and I wouldn't trade that in- as for forgiving myself in situations, I wish I could do that as I feel in certain instances, my inability to do so causes me more harm than good

I am often frustrated and paralyzed in in-action due to my perfectionism and fears of failure in my own eyes. I would like to feel less anxiety and be happier with myself and my life.

There would be a lot less to stress and worry about if I weren't so perfectionistic. I feel I could relax and enjoy the present much more effectively!

I don't see perfectionism as something positive. Being human and making mistakes is an important part of a full life. I wish I was a little less comfortable with this idea though...There are several things in my life I have yet to truly forgive myself/others for, but I'm working on it in order to carry less anger in my life.

My perfectionism has been a big part of my success; however, I have also seen it have a negative impact on some relationships. I tend to rely on myself too much, so I don't always let others in, or give myself the break I deserve.

I think striving for perfection can be a good thing when striving to do your best but that it can be detrimental as well. There are times where I cannot let things go or beat myself up for scoring lower than I expected or "should have". My life has a lot of "supposed to" and "should" in it. Perfectionism brings stress and I can do without that stress and pressure. I think forgiveness is important and that it is hardest

to forgive oneself. To have that released and be free of the bond of not being good enough would be fabulous.

I always feel I could do better, so if given the chance for a do-over - of course I'd take it. What perfectionist wouldn't?

I believe in striving for perfection when attaining goals or completing tasks, my sight becomes so focused or narrowed that I lose the opportunity of experiencing the wonder or the joy the journey was offering. To be rid of the narrowed focus would take the pressure off and leave my heart open to the greater benefits of the task at hand. In waking up to thoughts of being forgiven or granting forgiveness brings thoughts of peace and discovering new potentials... what a wonderful, powerful feeling!

Forgiveness is important both to self and others. Being able to recognize our own deficiencies and faults make us all more humble.

Perfectionism leads to procrastination and less achievement. I think I've already forgiven others, but that wasn't an option so I chose yes.

There are things about my personality that are inflexible and intense because of my perfectionism. This causes me problems getting along with others and accepting things I cannot change. I am trying to let go, but it is so damn hard. Almost beyond me...

I don't see my tendencies toward perfectionism to influence my ability/capacity for forgiveness of myself or others. They are separate aspects of my personality. I would not give up my perfectionism because it is a core part of my personality and I am not sure in what ways it may influence many aspects of who I am, and I like who I am.

I would not respect myself if I did not give things my best shot. Forgiveness is a relief and release from a burden.

I regard myself as striving to continuously improve, which goes towards perfectionism occasionally. The "forgive" questions doesn't make any sense to me, but I don't harbor many grudges for long.

Being less perfectionistic would allow me to be more flexible in all situations. Forgiveness releases me from any strong holds.

Perfectionism helps me be the best that I can be. Forgiveness would help me achieve so much more in life and I would not be so hard on myself.

Sometimes perfectionism is a punishment.

An ongoing problem for me is release; letting go of many things in my life. Answering yes would go a long ways toward achieving a sense of release.

There are times and jobs when perfection is a quality, and I try to fulfill that quality. This is very infrequent. As to the second question, everyone is subject to human faults. If you can forgive yourself, you can forgive others their humanness. If you can't forgive yourself, then you live with all the ghosts of failure, and that would be intolerable.

Attempting to live up to expectations of perfection only creates frustration and rarely leads to a better outcome. Forgiveness is a complex topic - essentially, I believe that there is nothing that truly requires forgiveness since all experiences are our teachers and ultimately benefit us.

Perfectionism inhibits my ability to have compassion for myself and others and compassion is very important to me as a spiritual practice and a way of life.

I am harder on myself than I am on others. I think my perfectionistic tendencies keep me on my toes. However, I would enjoy not fretting so much about what I do.

I like doing things well--gives a feeling of satisfaction. Forgiveness allows for acceptance and good relationships.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Brooke was born in Tampa, Florida, to a father who is a pilot and a mother who is a school psychologist. She received her Bachelor's of Science, Summa Cum Laude, in Psychology from The University of Florida in 2003. Brooke then joined The University of Florida's APA-approved Counseling Psychology doctoral program, where she received her Master's of Science degree, and also met her husband.

Brooke completed her pre-doctoral internship at Cumberland Hospital for Children and Adolescents in New Kent, Virginia, an inpatient facility where she provided psychological assessments, group, individual, and family therapy for those with chronic illness. She also received advanced training in sand tray therapy. Brooke enjoys working with young adults on self-exploration, development, and achievement in both personal and academic domains. She has many outside interests, including movies, dance, plants, and animals. She is an avid cat lover.