

Interpersonal Apologies: A Psychological Perspective of Why They Might Work in Law

ALFRED ALLAN*
JAMES STRICKLAND*
MARIA M. ALLAN*

Allan, A., Strickland, J., and Allan, M.M., 2017. Interpersonal Apologies: A Psychological Perspective of Why They Might Work in Law. *Oñati Socio-legal Series* [online], 7 (3), 390-407. Available from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3003880>



Abstract

Apologies have become an accepted feature in many fields of law and there is evidence that they make a constructive contribution to the resolution of disputes. The reason for this might be that they address the *intangible* needs of parties after adverse events that law otherwise find difficult to address. Legal reformers introduced apologies into law primarily on the basis of deductive reasoning without being able to refer to a comprehensive psychological theory that explains the apology process; in part because apology was only identified as a psychological construct worthy of empirical research during the last quarter of the 20th century. Researchers' contributions since the 1980s greatly improved the knowledge base about the apology process and we reviewed the relevant literature to find a comprehensive integrated theory of apology that legal reformers and practitioners can use to understand and predict the apology process. We could not find such a theory, but we try to integrate the empirical findings regarding interpersonal apologies into a rudimentary explanation that we believe could assist them. We conclude that apologies will generally be a part of the negotiated corrective interaction between the parties and that legislation should accommodate the process without being overly prescriptive and that lawyers should therefore refrain from judging the apologies their clients offer or accept.

Paper presented at an International Institute for the Sociology of Law workshop on the Place of Apology in Law Oñati, Spain, May, 5th – 6th, 2016.

* Dr Alfred Allan has qualifications in law and psychology and is professor at Edith Cowan University where he has been teaching psychology since 1997. He is the author and co-author of several books, chapters and refereed articles in legal, psychological and psychiatric journals. School of Arts and Humanities, Edith Cowan University, 270 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup, WA6027, Australia. a.allan@ecu.edu.au

* James Strickland is a doctoral candidate at Edith Cowan University in Australia. His research is focused on the acceptance of apologies, and how victims' responses to apologies influence their behaviour, emotions, and cognitions. 270 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup, WA6027, Australia. jastrick@our.ecu.edu.au

* Dr Maria Allan has a DPhil in psychology and has been teaching psychology at Edith Cowan University since 2002. She is the co-author of chapters and refereed papers and articles on a variety of topics, with apology and forgiveness, and sexual and violent offending the most prominent. School of Arts and Humanities, Edith Cowan University, 270 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup, WA6027, Joondalup, Australia. m.allan@ecu.edu.au



Key words

Apology; empirical research; law; lawyers; mediation; mediators; civil; criminal justice

Resumen

Las disculpas se han convertido en una figura aceptada en muchas áreas del derecho, y se ha demostrado que contribuyen de forma constructiva a la resolución de disputas. La razón parece ser que hacen referencia a las necesidades intangibles de las partes después de eventos adversos que el derecho, de otro modo, tiene dificultades para abordar. Algunos reformadores jurídicos incorporaron las disculpas a la legislación principalmente en base al razonamiento deductivo, sin que fueran capaces de alegar una teoría psicológica general que explicase el proceso de disculpa; en parte, porque la disculpa sólo se identificó como constructo psicológico merecedor de una investigación empírica en el último cuarto del siglo XX. Las contribuciones de los investigadores a partir de 1980 mejoraron mucho la base del conocimiento sobre el proceso de disculpa, y nosotros hemos revisado la literatura relevante para tratar de encontrar una teoría general integrada de la disculpa que pueda ser usada por reformadores y practicantes de la ley a fin de entender y predecir el proceso de disculpa. No hemos podido encontrar dicha teoría, pero hemos procurado integrar los descubrimientos empíricos referidos a las disculpas interpersonales en una explicación rudimentaria que, creemos, puede serles de ayuda. Nuestra conclusión es que las disculpas, generalmente, serán parte de una interacción negociada correctiva entre las partes, y que la legislación debería incluir el proceso sin ser excesivamente prescriptiva y que, por consiguiente, los abogados deberían abstenerse de juzgar las disculpas que sus clientes ofrecen o aceptan.

Palabras clave

Disculpa; investigación empírica; derecho; abogados; mediación; mediadores; civil; justicia penal

Table of contents

1. Interpersonal apologies: a psychological perspective of why they might work in law	393
2. Adverse interpersonal events and people's response to them	394
2.1. Agents	394
2.2. Victims	395
3. The corrective process.....	395
3.1. Agents.....	396
3.2. Victims	397
4. Coerced apologies' role in the corrective process	399
5. Theoretical explanation.....	399
6. Conclusion	400
References.....	401

1. Interpersonal apologies: a psychological perspective of why they might work in law

The roots of formal legal apologies can be traced back to Roman defamation law and in Anglo-American law to the adoption of section 2 of the English Libel Act of 1843, which provided the defendant could in a case about libel contained in a newspaper plead that a full apology was timeously published in the newspaper (*Encyclopædia Britannica* 1911). Presiding officers most likely also took apologies into account whilst sentencing and considering contempt charges for centuries. Legal reformers, however, only started focussing on apologies more systematically during the latter part of the 20th century when they appreciated that there might be areas within law where apologies might be useful (for a discussion see, e.g., Allan 2008). They made *a priori* assumptions that apologies could be functional in law, particularly in addressing the intangible harm flowing from adverse¹ events (see, e.g., Shuman 2000, Allan 2007, 2008) even though no comprehensive and detailed psychological or linguistic theory existed that allowed them to predict the outcome of apologies in specific situations (Meier 1998). Apology was at the time an under-researched construct (Fraser 1981) and this might stem from the difficulty of researching people's automatic (see, e.g., Soon *et al.* 2013) and sometimes irrational (see, e.g., Campitelli and Gobet 2010) decision making. The few researchers working in the area therefore mostly did descriptive research focussing on people's corrective strategies and the form of apologies they use and legal reformers therefore had to accept mostly anecdotal evidence that apologies prevent legal claims, or at least encourage parties to settle (for a review see Allan and Carroll 2017).

Researchers have since the beginning of the 21st century found ways of examining the apology process and the decisions onlookers, victims and wrongdoers make about apologies in the context of law (see, e.g., Robbennolt 2000, Dhami 2015) and beyond (see, e.g., Leunissen *et al.* 2012). We reviewed the literature related to interaction between agents and victims after adverse interpersonal events (events) to see whether we could identify a comprehensive and detailed psychological theory that could assist lawyers in their practice and guide their legal reforms in respect of apologies. We could only find modest attempts to develop an apology theory (see, e.g., Wooten 2009, Slocum *et al.* 2011) but found that researchers generally used established theories or theoretical constructs to explain parties' social, interpersonal and personal experiences after events.

Researchers whose primary focus was the social level generally used Goffman's (1955, 1967) four stage corrective interchange theory that postulates that after events victims *challenge* agents, and agents *offer accounts* explaining their behaviour, and that victims *accept* and *express* gratitude for these accounts. Some also used a slightly different conceptualisation of the process proposing that after victims demanded apologies offenders apologise and that victims in return express forgiveness (see, e.g., Okimoto and Wenzel 2008). Interpersonal forgiveness where victims express forgiveness, must, however, be distinguished from self-forgiveness (where people let go of their negative cognitions and emotions, see e.g., Bauer *et al.* 1992), silent forgiveness (where victims forgive agents internally but do not tell them, see e.g., Baumeister *et al.* 1998) and reconciliation where parties re-establish a relationship of trust after the offence. Both parties generally require self-forgiveness (Zechmeister and Romero 2002, Berlinger and Wu 2005) to allow them to move on (Bauer *et al.* 1992, Cooney *et al.* 2011). Agents often also want interpersonal forgiveness and both parties could seek reconciliation. Researchers working at the interpersonal level tend to use theories such as Adams' (1965, and also see Walster *et al.* 1973) *equity theory*, Jones and Davis' (1965) *correspondent*

¹ We will use the word adverse as the behaviour involved in the event might not necessarily have violated any legal, moral, relationship or social norms. We will for this reason also use the term agent when referring to the party who caused the adverse event.

inference theory, Shnabel and Nadler's (2008) *needs-based model of reconciliation* and Weiner's (1986) *attribution theory of emotion and motivation*. Those working at a personal level use theories and theoretical constructs such as Deci and Ryan's (1985) *cognitive evaluation theory*, Festinger's (1957) *cognitive dissonance theory* and Selye's (1936) *general adaptation syndrome*.

Researchers' different theoretical approaches, however, make it difficult to incorporate their findings, especially those that appear to be conflicting (see, e.g., Wooten 2009) into a coherent theoretical framework. We believe that apology scholars and researchers should ideally *knit together* (see Kalmar and Sternberg 1988) the existing theories at all three levels by combining their most useful elements to develop an integrated and comprehensive theory, but doing this falls far outside the ambit of this paper. We do, however, try to integrate the empirical findings explaining people's social, interpersonal and personal response to events into a rudimentary explanation of how apologies might work to assist legal reformers and practitioners to understand the apology process better. We do not propose that apologies will be functional in all fields of law, but we aim to provide an explanation that accounts for adverse interpersonal events which may give rise to legal actions such as negligence, intentional torts, fraud, and breach of contract as well as crimes.

2. Adverse interpersonal events and people's response to them

People constantly behave in ways that lead to adverse tangible and intangible social, interpersonal, and personal (psychological and physiological) outcomes for themselves and others. Both parties risk losing *social face*, which Goffman (1955, 1967) defined "as the positive social value a person effectively claims" (Goffman 1955). Agents' image as moral and socially acceptable people might be impaired if people blame them for events and they might face punishment or sanctions such as social exclusion (Shnabel and Nadler 2008). Victims also experience adverse events as threats to their social status and power (Shnabel and Nadler 2008). Society's expectation that parties resolve the conflict between them could increase the tension they experience (Hodgins *et al.* 1996b). Parties could also experience a threat to their relationship (see Allan and Carroll 2017, for a more comprehensive discussion). Parties in established relationships could face the irreversible breakdown of trust between them (Kim *et al.* 2004, Kim *et al.* 2006) that could lead to the termination of their highly valued relationship. This could exacerbate the situation because the people involved will often be those who satisfy their intimacy and companionship needs (Baumeister and Leary 1995) and to whom they would generally have turned for support during crises such as those they are experiencing. Parties might at a personal level not always experience physical harm or threats, but they will always experience psychological threats (see, e.g., Freedman and Enright 1996, Riek *et al.* 2014). Agents could, for example, fear that victims might retaliate, whilst victims could fear a repetition of events.

People who feel threatened automatically experience psycho-physiological responses as part of a three stage general adaptation syndrome (Selye 1936). People initially experience an alarm (*fight or flight*) stage during which their bodies prepare them to physically deal with the perceived stressors. Those who fail to remove the stressors generally try to adapt to them and/or reduce their impact during the second stage, because if they cannot, their resistance to the stressors will gradually decrease until they collapse during stage three (for a more comprehensive discussion see Lazarus and Folkman 1984).

2.1. Agents

Agents might not always fully comprehend what exactly they did, how events occurred, the nature and ambit of events, or the seriousness of their consequences, including the harm they personally suffered. They therefore cognitively try to make

sense of events, often replaying the situation in their mind (Bauer *et al.* 1992) and might apportion blame and could suffer strong feelings of self-recrimination (Zechmeister and Romero 2002). Those who think they behaved inconsistently with their strongly held personal values might experience unpleasant cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957), especially if they feel they violated their self-concept (Aronson 1992). Some agents might be traumatised by the consequences of their behaviour and some could fear the consequences of their behaviour (e.g., social exclusion, termination of relationships, punishment and retaliation). Agents could therefore experience several strong emotions (Hodgins *et al.* 1996b) such as anxiety, guilt, shame and anger, sometimes directed towards themselves (Riek *et al.* 2014). Agents therefore generally want to do something to reduce or eliminate the threats and the unpleasant psycho-physiological feelings they experience. They can achieve this if they at a personal level forgive themselves and, at an interpersonal and social level, if they receive victims' forgiveness or reconcile with them.

2.2. Victims

People who define themselves as victims immediately start the cognitive process of trying to establish the nature, ambit, seriousness and cause of events and they continue this information collecting process until they obtain sufficient information to achieve closure. They also ruminate about events in an attempt to make sense of them (Silver *et al.* 1983). Victims initially could feel out of control, exposed and uncertain whether further events could follow or whether their current situations might deteriorate. They generally suffer a loss of their sense of security, trust of others, and self-esteem and experience a sense of injustice (Allan *et al.* 2010) and this might be increased if they also suffered or stand to suffer property damage, physical injuries and pain, and monetary harm.

Victims particularly try to identify agents' motives (Baumeister *et al.* 1990) and attribute blame, often blaming themselves at least partially. The nature of events, the seriousness of their consequences and the degree of intent victims attribute to agents influence the nature and intensity of their emotions, but they commonly experience anxiety, anger (Zechmeister and Romero 2002), depression, jealousy, sadness and in case of self-blame, guilt and shame both for events with no physical (Matthiesen and Einarsen 2001) and physical consequences. Victims might experience these emotions so intensely that they feel physical pain (Eisenberger 2012). Victims see deliberate wrongdoings as indications of agents' bad characters and they experience more intense emotions under these circumstances (Gonzales *et al.* 1992). These intense emotions and their sense of injustice serve as important motivators for the behaviour of victims (Allan *et al.* 2010), which can take several forms. Those who experience shame, especially if they blame themselves, might in extreme cases try to escape situations by attempting to kill themselves (Baumeister 1990). Victims, however, more often flee situations by consciously or unconsciously shunning those they blame and avoiding other people, including those who could provide them with the positive social interaction, relatedness and support all people need (Baumeister and Leary 1995), especially when experiencing crises. Other victims might express their anger and sense of injustice by taking revenge (Skarlicki *et al.* 2004) through, for instance, making formal complaints or litigating (Lind 1997, Allan *et al.* 2010). Victims who do not effectively resolve the threats confronting them could enter enduring states of unpleasant hyper arousal and negative emotions. Psychologists use the unfortunate term unforgiveness to describe these states and point out that people often perpetuate them by constantly ruminating about events (Baumeister *et al.* 1990).

3. The corrective process

Society's expectation that they should resolve the conflict between them (Goffman 1955, 1967) and agents' and victims' negative and unpleasant interpersonal and

personal experiences will generally motivate them to do so. People's inherent self-centredness (Maner *et al.* 2002, Zechmeister and Romero 2002), however, makes it predictable that both agents and victims will intuitively do this in a manner that serves their interests best under the circumstances.

3.1. Agents

Agents will be aware of victims and society's strongly and widely held expectation that they should account for their behaviour in ways that make them acceptable to victims and observers (see, e.g., Goffman 1955). Those traumatised by their behaviour might intuitively want to communicate about events because verbalising negative emotions can reduce their automatic nervous system activity and improve their psychological functioning (see, e.g., Pennebaker 1997). Gonzales *et al.* (1990) therefore predictably found agents generally account for their behaviour by denying responsibility (asserting innocence), making excuses (minimising responsibility), justifying their behaviour (accepting responsibility, but legitimising it), making concessions (taking responsibility without giving explanations), or apologising by admitting responsibility, showing regret and making amendments and/or undertaking to avoid a reoccurrence of events.

Agents, however, face the problem that any account they offer could mitigate or aggravate the situation (McLaughlin *et al.* 1983). Their own interests could also be conflicting and therefore accounts they, for example, give to protect their own social standings, might destroy valued relationships (Hodgins *et al.* 1996b). Agents will therefore intuitively weigh up the cost and benefit of each account strategy, taking into consideration their social, interpersonal and personal interests (Mongeau and Schulz 1997). Researchers further found that when thinking about apologising agents overestimate the negative implication of apologising in respect of matters such as what people will think of them and whether victims will abuse them (Leunissen *et al.* 2014). People, on the other hand, underestimate the positive effects that apologies could have (Leunissen *et al.* 2014). Several other variables could influence agents' decision making (for a review see, e.g., Exline *et al.* 2007) but those of specific importance for this paper include how much they value the relationship (Leunissen 2012), their disposition to trust others (Leunissen *et al.* 2012) and to apologise (Howell *et al.* 2011) and their estimation of how victims and onlookers perceive their characters (i.e., reputation based on past behaviour, Wooten 2009) and motives (Darby and Schlenker 1982, Baron 1988). They also estimate the likelihood that victims will forgive them because they could suffer notable aversive social (e.g., rejection and punishment), interpersonal (e.g., termination of valued relationships) and intrapersonal (e.g., humiliation and loss of their sense of control) consequences if victims reject their apologies (Exline *et al.* 2007). Agents' likelihood of apologising therefore increases significantly as their expectation that victims will forgive them increases (Leunissen *et al.* 2012).

Agents' actual and perceived intentionality, however, could be the most influential variable (Schlenker and Darby 1981, Reeder and Spores 1983, Bennett and Dewberry 1994, Ohbuchi and Sato 1994, Reeder *et al.* 2002, Struthers *et al.* 2008, Leunissen *et al.* 2013). Objectively unintentional agents incur little social and interpersonal cost if they accept responsibility in the form of apologising (Ohtsubo *et al.* 2012), but could incur such cost if they fail to when onlookers and victims expected them to apologise (Thomas and Millar 2008) even though they might objectively not have violated any legal or moral norms (Darley 2004). Unintentional agents might also apologise more readily than intentional agents because they feel less guilty (Leunissen *et al.* 2013) and might therefore apologise when observers and victims do not expect them to apologise (Gonzales *et al.* 1992).

Agents, however, increase their social and interpersonal risks by apologising when the intentionality of their behaviour appears ambiguous or at the high intention end of the spectrum, because people see premeditated behaviour as immoral (for a

contrary view, however, see Pettit and Knobe 2009, Malle and Guglielmo 2011). Victims therefore interpret agents' premeditated behaviour as indicative of seriously flawed and unalterable characters (Skarlicki *et al.* 2004, Struthers *et al.* 2008) and often construe their apologies as manipulative, reinforcing their impression of agents as insincere, non-dependable and unpleasant (Skarlicki *et al.* 2004, Struthers *et al.* 2008).

Agents in the ambiguous or intentional category could therefore protect their social image as morally worthy people and lessen the interpersonal consequences of their behaviour by offering dishonest, even questionable (Kim *et al.* 2006), denials of responsibility (Hodgins and Liebeskind 2003, Kim *et al.* 2004). Agents' dishonest denials might sometimes also protect their victims' social standing if onlookers accept them, such as where they deny marital infidelity (Mongeau and Schulz 1997). Intentional agents' social images and relationships will, however, be seriously damaged if their lies become apparent and they therefore tend to offer comprehensive social-effacing apologies to close or high status victims (Gonzales *et al.* 1992) in relationships they value highly (Leunissen 2012).

Agents' personal features (e.g., their culture and gender) might influence their choice of accounts, but their intrapersonal features could be more influential in determining the accounts they choose (Hodgins *et al.* 1996b, Ohtsubo *et al.* 2012). Guilt, for instance, promotes empathy and could motivate agents to undertake reparative and pro-social behaviour (Tangney and Dearing 2002) and apologise more readily (Leunissen *et al.* 2013). Shame, instead, prompts people to externalise blame, withdraw from other people and deny responsibility (Tangney *et al.* 2014).

People's other personal features, however, make it difficult to predict how they will respond as agents. Autonomy-orientated people's tendency to discount external influences and make decisions based on their needs, feelings, and integrated goals (Deci and Ryan 1990) could, for instance, lead them to refuse to apologise (Okimoto *et al.* 2013) or make them more open and honest and therefore more likely to apologise (Hodgins *et al.* 1996a, Hodgins *et al.* 1996b). Agents experiencing cognitive dissonance because they acted contrary to their values might, likewise, try to alleviate the dissonance by using denial, justifications or excuses to maintain their value integrity and self-worth (Okimoto *et al.* 2013), or they could reaffirm violated values by making concessions or apologising (Wenzel *et al.* 2012).

People's inherent psychological and biological need to remain in control (Leotti *et al.* 2010) and their tendency to form negative expectations of how others will react (see, e.g., Tenbrunsel 1998) predict that agents will resist offering apologies. Agents essentially give victims an opportunity to take control of interactions by giving them an opportunity to reject their apology. Agents might therefore refrain from offering apologies when they anticipate that victims could reject them because of their anger (Leunissen *et al.* 2012) or because they find them insincere (Skarlicki *et al.* 2004).

Gonzales *et al.* (1992) further found that agents sometimes combine several accounts as explanations for the same event. They could for example offer excuses, such as that their behaviour was beyond their control (e.g., I was drunk) or due to their incompetence, that reduce, but not totally remove, the stains on their moral worthiness. They might then apologise for their poor judgement or incompetence. Agents generally repair damaged trust more effectively by adopting such a double account strategy than by using denial (Kim *et al.* 2004).

3.2. Victims

Most victims seek accounts, but those with defensive or fragile self-esteem prefer to take revenge (Tripp and Bies 1997, Skarlicki *et al.* 2004) through mechanisms

such as lodging complaints or suing agents (Eaton *et al.* 2007). Others might disregard even apologies using their unforgiveness to protect their interests (e.g., physical integrity, Berecz 2001), or because they feel unfairly treated (Skarlicki *et al.* 2004) or to motivate them to pursue constructive goals, such as advocating for changes they believe will prevent future events (Tripp and Bies 1997, Allan *et al.* 2010). Victims, however, generally seek out and consider accounts they receive as a way of resolving the social (see, e.g., Takaku 2001), interpersonal (see, e.g., Bennett and Dewberry 1994) and personal (unpleasant and unhealthy psycho-physiological symptoms) pressures they experience. Victims particularly want apologies (Benoit and Drew 1997, Allan *et al.* 2010); they want agents to promptly acknowledge events that occurred, clarify them and recognise the consequences they had for victims, and explain how they plan to avoid similar events in future (Gallagher *et al.* 2003). They particularly want apologies when they believe agents acted intentionally (Leunissen *et al.* 2013) and their anger increases if they do not receive apologies (Ohbuchi *et al.* 1989). Victims expect apologies to incorporate one or more of several so-called apology components (see, e.g., Dhami 2017) and a robust body of empirical evidence (see, e.g., Hodgins and Liebeskind 2003, Fehr and Gelfand 2010, Slocum *et al.* 2011) shows they can be collapsed into three components that we, following Slocum *et al.* (2011), will refer to as the Affirmation, Affect and Action components.

The Affirmation component describes victims' expectation that agents should identify and explain events with a high degree of specificity, particularly those shrouded in uncertainty, and accept responsibility for them and their consequences as early as possible (Slocum *et al.* 2011). This information and acceptance of responsibility could promote forgiveness in several ways. First, it could help victims achieve closure and reduce or eliminate their search for information and stop them from ruminating about the event. Second, it could restore their social status (Ohbuchi and Sato 1994, Shnabel and Nadler 2008) and enhance their self-concept (Shnabel and Nadler 2008). Third, it could empower them by allowing them to assess the situations they find themselves in and make informed decision about issues such as their security and how to manage situations. Fourth, it could restore their sense of control over their environments because their potential ability to reject apologies might give them at least a perception of, if not actual, control over agents. Fifth, it could allow those who blamed themselves fully or partially for events to reattribute blame thereby relieving them of the feelings of guilt and shame they could experience. Finally, by gaining insights into their agents' situations, victims' ability to take agents' perspective might improve helping them overcome their natural tendency to hold agents responsible for events they think they would have foreseen (Walster 1966). Victims might especially do this when they realise they have transgressed in similar ways in the past (Takaku 2001).

These beneficial outcomes cumulatively could modify victims' responsibility attributions and reduce the negative emotions they experience towards agents (Ohbuchi *et al.* 1989) and encourage them to behave more benevolently towards agents improving the possibility of restoring their interpersonal relationships (Davis and Gold 2011).

Victims generally, however, do not find agents' unemotional abstract cognitive explanations and admissions of responsibility sufficient to reassure them of their good characters and the acceptability of their motives. They will often only change their opinion regarding agents' moral worthiness if they demonstrate emotional distress (Affect component) about what they had done to victims (Slocum *et al.* 2011).

The Action component encapsulates victims' expectation that agents should demonstrate the sincerity of their words and emotions by taking steps to restore the harm they had done, and ideally express plans to, or actually, take action that will prevent the reoccurrence of events (Slocum *et al.* 2011). This component

becomes especially important when agents intentionally betrayed the trust of victims (Desmet *et al.* 2011).

Victims further want apologies to focus on their needs (other focused) and not solely on agents' own needs (self-focused; Fehr and Gelfand 2010, Slocum *et al.* 2011, Kirchhoff *et al.* 2012, Allan *et al.* 2015). Victims, for example, ideally want agents to demonstrate the grief they experience goes beyond feeling sorry for themselves and that they also feel distressed about what they did to their victims (Slocum *et al.* 2011).

Agents do not necessarily offer the components simultaneously (Slocum *et al.* 2011, Martin 2014) and whilst each component has an autonomous effect (and independently has a greater effect than the offering of no apology), the accumulation of components has an additive effect (Robbennolt 2003, 2006). Researchers found that victims generally want comprehensive apologies containing all the above components (Robbennolt 2006, Kirchhoff *et al.* 2012, Allan *et al.* 2015) rather than partial (less than three components; but for exceptions see Robbennolt 2003, 2006) apologies, especially in the presence of aggravating circumstances (Darby and Schlenker 1982, Slocum *et al.* 2011).

Victims, however, sometimes accept self-focused single component apologies that observers consider inadequate (Risen and Gilovich 2007) and there could be several reasons for this. First, they might instinctively and unconsciously accept the imperfect apologies overtly because of social pressure to do so (Bennett and Dewberry 1994) whilst they covertly reject them. Second, their interpretation of apologies might differ from that of observers in that they take the presence of one component (Affirmation, Affect, or Action) to imply the presence of the other components (see. e.g., Bennett and Dewberry 1994, Schmitt *et al.* 2004, Dhami 2017). Finally, they might deem them good enough under the circumstances at the time to forgive and move on (Slocum *et al.* 2011). Victims who received only one component of an apology might, for example, feel sufficiently informed, empowered and socially rehabilitated that they can let go of their emotions, forgive themselves (Cooney *et al.* 2011) and adjust to the situation.

4. Coerced apologies' role in the corrective process

Agents' failure to apologise prevents the corrective process from commencing and could even escalate the conflict between parties if it increases victims' anger (Ohbuchi *et al.* 1989) and force them to use less constructive responses. Exline *et al.* (2007) further found that agents generally felt more regret when failing to apologise than for apologising because they continued feeling guilty. Agents will, however, often fail to apologise when victims most keenly want them to, such as with high intentionality events (Leunissen *et al.* 2013). We appreciate that law might be able to promote apologies by using its powers to either coerce agents to apologise, or to reward them if they do, or do both, but we believe this should only happen once researchers can demonstrate the effectiveness of such measures. We currently lack conclusive evidence about the impact of coerced apologies on the corrective process. Risen and Gilovich (2007) found no difference in how victims perceived coerced apologies compared to those offered spontaneously, but other researchers found that victims rate agents who offer coerced apologies less favourably than unprompted apologisers (Jehle *et al.* 2012) and that they could even lead to negative outcomes for agents (Saulnier and Sivasubramaniam 2015). The problem might be that victims desire sincere apologies (Allan *et al.* 2014) and see coerced apologies as insincere (Allan *et al.* 2010).

5. Theoretical explanation

Our explanation of the corrective exchange process departs from the premise that notable interpersonal adverse events lead to interrelated personal, interpersonal and social experiences for both agents and victims. The magnitude of these

experiences could differ, but parties generally find at least the personal experiences threatening and unpleasant and though some agents and victims might ignore them, both generally want to remove them. Agents' and victims' divergent perceptions of the events and their consequences (Baumeister *et al.* 1990, Stillwell and Baumeister 1997) and their differing, often conflicting, social, interpersonal and personal interests, however, make it inevitable that they will pursue different, often incompatible, goals when they try to remove the consequences of events. Both, however, generally want to achieve at least self-forgiveness that could resolve their unpleasant personal (psycho-physiological) experiences, but often also interpersonal forgiveness to resolve their negative interpersonal and social experiences (see, e.g., Takaku 2001, Cooney *et al.* 2011). Parties therefore usually want to engage in corrective interactions or dialogues (see, e.g., Bachman and Guerrero 2006) and Goffman (1955, 1967) and Okimoto and Wenzel's (2008) models suggest that agents generally initiate the process by offering accounts that explain their conduct. Agents must therefore decide whether to give accounts, and if they decide to give one, which one, or combination of accounts they will offer. Apologies will generally be most effective in achieving forgiveness and restoring trusts between the parties (Kirchhoff and Čehajić-Clancy 2014) but contrary to what the linear corrective interaction models of, for example, Goffman (1955, 1967) and Okimoto and Wenzel (2008) suggest, apologies sometimes fail (see, e.g., Eaton *et al.* 2007) and can even aggravate the situation (see, e.g., Zechmeister *et al.* 2004). We propose this happens because victims consider them and can explicitly or implicitly reject, or explicitly accept, but internally reject (fake acceptance), or internally accept, but explicitly reject (fake rejection) apologies. Agents can therefore not predict with certainty whether victims will accept their apologies and they might therefore consider the personal, social and interpersonal risk of apologising too high. Victims who receive accounts can, however, use their ability to reject them to negotiate with agents until they receive mutually acceptable or good enough apologies (Martin 2014). Victims might also accept (truly or falsely) inferior and coerced apologies that allow them to forgive themselves and this could explain their generally positive responses to apologies (see, e.g., Hodgins and Liebeskind 2003). Some agents might be also be satisfied with true or fake acceptances that allow them to forgive themselves, but fake acceptances might not bring about the interpersonal forgiveness required to resolve the interpersonal and social tensions. The subjective nature of the process further implies that the agents and victims could sometimes hold different views regarding whether they offered or received apologies, and even if they agree about this, they might disagree regarding the construction of the apologies. This does not preclude the possibility that parties might, as they often do during legal or alternative dispute resolution proceedings, agree on a set of words that both parties accept as *the apology*. The subjective nature of the process of offering, accepting and rejecting apologies make it inevitable that objective observers will often find it impossible to understand parties' behaviour (Bennett and Dewberry 1994, Risen and Gilovich 2007, Jehle *et al.* 2012).

6. Conclusion

Adverse interpersonal events leading to legal disputes such as torts, contract and crime, can differ along many dimensions such as intentionality, duration and the relationship between parties. We anticipate that apologies might, in some notable situations, such as high intentionality cases (Struthers *et al.* 2008), be of little value in resolving disputes between people. We, however, believe that law can in some situations use apologies to help address parties' intangible social, interpersonal and personal experiences of adverse events that law otherwise finds difficult to deal with effectively. Our theoretical framework suggests that apologies form part of the complex, non-linear and unpredictable correctional processes parties engage in to resolve the social, interpersonal and/or personal consequences of adverse events. The correctional processes can be so brief that they manifest as

discrete events, but they frequently take longer (Slocum *et al.* 2011). Both parties aim to achieve at least self-forgiveness that will remove the unpleasant psycho-physiological states they experience, but ideally also interpersonal forgiveness that addresses the interpersonal and social consequences. Our review of the research findings, however, leads us to conclude that the range of complex and interrelated social, interpersonal and personal variables that influence whether and how parties will engage in corrective interactions make it impossible to predict with certainty whether they will offer and accept or reject apologies.

Law reformers should therefore where relevant aim to continue developing legal frameworks that encourage and accommodate apologies as this could enable parties to address their intangible needs. They can do this by giving agents opportunities to offer apologies as accounts of their behaviour without fear of being unreasonably punished for doing so, especially if victims reject their apologies. They must also give victims the opportunity and freedom to decide whether they accept or reject the apologies they receive without putting pressure on them either way. Reformers should therefore avoid developing overly prescriptive legal provisions regarding what apologies should look like, but rather develop legislation that allows parties to develop apologies that address their unique intangible needs without losing any of their legal rights.

Lawyers must accept that their clients might give, accept and reject apologies to satisfy their intangible needs and that this could sometimes be contrary to what they see as their clients' legal interests. This raised ethical questions for lawyers that fall beyond the ambit of this paper.

We deliberately leave open the question of whether law should in appropriate situations use its coercive powers to force agents to apologise because we lack the empirical data required to give a conclusive answer. We believe that researchers should examine this question in the future.

References

- Adams, J.S., 1965. Inequity in social exchange. *In: L. Berkowitz, ed. Advances in experimental social psychology*. New York: Academic Press, 267-299.
- Allan, A., 2007. Apology in civil law: A psycholegal perspective. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 14 (1), 5-16.
- Allan, A., 2008. Functional apologies in law. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 15 (3), 369-381.
- Allan, A., *et al.*, 2014. Apology in restorative and juvenile justice. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 21 (2), 176-190.
- Allan, A., *et al.*, 2015. Apologies following an adverse medical event: The importance of focusing on the consumer's needs. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 98 (9), 1058-1062.
- Allan, A., and Carroll, R., 2017. Apologies in a legal setting: Insights from research into injured parties' experiences of apologies after an adverse event. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 24 (1), 10-32.
- Allan, A., Mckillop, D., and Carroll, R., 2010. Parties' perceptions of apologies in resolving Equal Opportunity complaints. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 17 (4), 538-550.
- Aronson, E., 1992. The return of the repressed: Dissonance theory makes a comeback. *Psychological Inquiry*, 3 (4), 303-311.
- Bachman, G.F., and Guerrero, L.K., 2006. Forgiveness, apology and communicative responses to hurtful events. *Communication Reports*, 19 (1), 45-56.

- Baron, R.A., 1988. Attributions and organizational conflict: The mediating role of apparent sincerity. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, 41 (1), 111-127.
- Bauer, L., et al., 1992. Exploring self-forgiveness. *Journal of Religion and Health* 31 (2), 149-160.
- Baumeister, R.F., 1990. Suicide as escape from self. *Psychological Review*, 97 (1), 90-113.
- Baumeister, R.F., and Leary, M.R., 1995. The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117 (3), 497-529.
- Baumeister, R.F., Exline, J.J., and Sommer, K., 1998. The victim role, grudge theory, and two dimensions of forgiveness. In: E.L. Worthington, ed. *Dimensions of forgiveness: Psychological research and theological forgiveness*. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 79-104.
- Baumeister, R.F., Stillwell, A., and Wotman, S.R., 1990. Victim and perpetrator accounts of interpersonal conflict: Autobiographical narratives about anger. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59 (5), 994-1005.
- Bennett, M., and Dewberry, C., 1994. "I've said I'm sorry, haven't I?" A study of the identity, implications and constraints that apologies create for their recipients. *Current Psychology*, 13 (1), 10-20.
- Benoit, W.L., and Drew, S., 1997. Appropriateness and effectiveness of image repair strategies. *Communication Reports*, 10 (2), 153-163.
- Berecz, J.M., 2001. All that glitters is not gold: Bad forgiveness in counseling and preaching. *Pastoral Psychology*, 49 (4), 253-275.
- Berlinger, N., and Wu, A.W., 2005. Subtracting insult from injury: Addressing cultural expectations in the disclosure of medical error. *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 31 (2) 106-108.
- Campitelli, G., and Gobet, F., 2010. Herbert Simon's decision-making approach: Investigation of cognitive processes in experts. *Review of General Psychology*, 14 (4), 354-364.
- Cooney, A., et al., 2011. The forgiveness process in primary and secondary victims of violent and sexual offences. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 63 (2), 107-118.
- Darby, B.W., and Schlenker, B.R., 1982. Children's reactions to apologies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 43 (4), 742-753.
- Darley, J.M., 2004. Citizens' sense of justice and the legal system. In: J.B. Ruscher, and E.Y. Hammer, eds. *Current directions in social psychology*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 178-183.
- Davis, J.R., and Gold, G.J., 2011. An examination of emotional empathy, attributions of stability, and the link between perceived remorse and forgiveness. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 50 (3), 392-397.
- Deci, E.L., and Ryan, R.M., 1985. *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York: Plenum.
- Deci, E.L., and Ryan, R.M., 1990. A motivational approach to self: Integration in personality. In: R. Dienstbier, ed. *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation: Perspectives on motivation*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 237-288.
- Desmet, P., Cremer, D.D., and Dijk, E.V., 2011. In money we trust? The use of financial compensations to repair trust in the aftermath of distributive harm. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 114 (2), 75-86.

- Dhami, M.K., 2015. Effects of a victim's response to an offender's apology: When the victim becomes the bad guy. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 46 (1), 110-123.
- Dhami, M., 2017. An Empirical Note on Perceptions of Partial Apologies. *Oñati Socio-legal Series* [online], 7 (3), 408-420. Available from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3029093> [Accessed 30 August 2017].
- Eaton, J., et al., 2007. When apologies fail: The moderating effect of implicit and explicit self-esteem on apology and forgiveness. *Self and Identity*, 6 (2-3), 209-222.
- Eisenberger, N.I., 2012. Broken hearts and broken bones: A neural perspective on the similarities between social and physical pain. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 21 (1), 42-47.
- Encyclopædia Britannica, 1911. *Apology* [online]. Available from: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclopædia_Britannica/Apology [Accessed 11 August 2017].
- Exline, J.J., Deshea, L., and Holeman, V.T., 2007. Is apology worth the risk? Predictors, outcomes, and ways to avoid regret. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 26 (4), 479-504.
- Fehr, R., and Gelfand, M.J., 2010. When apologies work: How matching apology components to victims' self-construals facilitates forgiveness. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 113 (1), 37-50.
- Festinger, L., 1957. *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Evanston, Ill: Row, Peterson.
- Fraser, B., 1981. On apologizing. In: F. Coulmas, ed. *Conversational routine: Explorations in standardized communication situations and prepatterned speech*. New York: Mouton.
- Freedman, S., and Enright, R.D., 1996. Forgiveness as an intervention goal with incest survivors. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 64 (5), 983-992.
- Gallagher, T.H., et al., 2003. Patients' and physicians' attitudes regarding the disclosure of medical errors. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 289 (8), 1001-1007.
- Goffman, E., 1955. On face-work: An analysis of ritual elements in social interaction. *Psychiatry: Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Processes*, 18 (3), 213-231.
- Goffman, E., 1967. *Interaction ritual: Essays on face-to-face behavior*. Hammondsworth, UK: Penguin Books.
- Gonzales, M.H., Manning, D.J., and Haugen, L.A., 1992. Explaining our sins: Factors influencing offender accounts and anticipated victim responses. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 62 (6), 958-971.
- Gonzales, M.H., et al., 1990. Pardon my gaffe: Effects of sex, status, and consequence severity on accounts. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58 (4), 610-621.
- Hodgins, H.S., and Liebeskind, E., 2003. Apology versus defence: Antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 39 (4), 297-316.
- Hodgins, H.S., Koestner, R., and Duncan, N., 1996a. On the compatibility of autonomy and relatedness. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22 (3), 227-237.

- Hodgins, H.S., Liebeskind, E., and Schwartz, W., 1996b. Getting out of hot water: Facework in social predicaments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71 (2), 300-314.
- Howell, A.J., et al., 2011. The disposition to apologize. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 51 (4), 509-514.
- Jehle, A., et al., 2012. How voluntariness of apologies affects actual and hypothetical victims' perceptions of the offender. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 152 (6), 727-745.
- Jones, E.E., and Davis, K.E., 1965. From acts to dispositions: The attribution process in person perception. In: L. Berkowitz, ed. *Advances in experimental social psychology*. New York: Academic Press, 219-266.
- Kalmar, D.A., and Sternberg, R.J., 1988. Theory knitting: An integrative approach to theory development. *Philosophical Psychology*, 1 (2), 153-170.
- Kim, P.H., et al., 2004. Removing the shadow of suspicion: The effects of apology versus denial for repairing competence - versus integrity-based trust violations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89 (1), 104-118.
- Kim, P.H., et al., 2006. When more blame is better than less: The implications of internal vs. external attributions for the repair of trust after a competence-vs. integrity-based trust violation. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 99 (1), 49-65.
- Kirchhoff, J., and Čehajić-Clancy, S., 2014. Intergroup apologies: Does it matter what they say? Experimental analyses. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 20 (4), 430-451.
- Kirchhoff, J., Wagner, U., and Strack, M., 2012. Apologies: Words of magic? The role of verbal components, anger reduction, and offence severity. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 18 (2), 109-130.
- Lazarus, R., and Folkman, S., 1984. *Stress, appraisal and coping*. New York: Springer.
- Leotti, L.A., Iyengar, S.S., and Ochsner, K.N., 2010. Born to choose: The origins and value of the need for control. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 14 (10), 457-463.
- Leunissen, J.M., 2012. *All Apologies: On the willingness of perpetrators to apologize*. Thesis (PhD) Erasmus University.
- Leunissen, J.M., De Cremer, D., and Reinders Folmer, C.P., 2012. An instrumental perspective on apologizing in bargaining: The importance of forgiveness to apologize. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 33 (1), 215-222.
- Leunissen, J.M., et al., 2013. The apology mismatch: Asymmetries between victim's need for apologies and perpetrator's willingness to apologize. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 49 (3), 315-324.
- Leunissen, J.M., et al., 2014. Forecasting errors in the averseness of apologizing. *Social Justice Research*, 27 (3), 322-339.
- Lind, E.A., 1997. Litigation and claiming in organizations: Anti-social behavior or quest for justice? In: R.A. Giacalone and J. Greenberg, eds. *Antisocial behavior in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 150-171.
- Malle, B.F., and Guglielmo, S., 2011. Are intentionality judgments fundamentally moral? In: C. Mackenzie, and R. Langdon, eds. *Emotion, imagination, and moral reasoning*. Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press, 275-293.

- Maner, J.K., *et al.*, 2002. The effects of perspective taking on motivations for helping: Still no evidence for altruism. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28 (11), 1601-1610.
- Martin, K., 2014. An exploration of people's perceptions on the acceptance of apologies. Thesis (MPsy). Edith Cowan University.
- Matthiesen, S.B., and Einarsen, S., 2001. MMPI-2 configurations among victims of bullying at work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* [online], 10 (4), 467-484. Available from: http://folk.uib.no/psspm/documents/Matthiesen_og_Einarsen-MMPI-2_and_bullying_2001.pdf [Accessed 1 August 2017].
- McLaughlin, M., Cody, M.J., and O'Hair, H.D., 1983. The management of failure events: Some contextual determinants of accounting behavior. *Human Communication Research*, 9 (3), 208-224.
- Meier, A.J., 1998. Apologies: What do we know? *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8 (2), 215-231.
- Mongeau, P.A., and Schulz, B.E., 1997. What he doesn't know won't hurt him (or me): Verbal responses and attributions following sexual infidelity. *Communication Reports*, 10 (2), 143-152.
- Ohbuchi, K., and Sato, K., 1994. Children's reaction to mitigating accounts: Apologies, excuses, and intentionality of harm. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 134 (1), 5-17.
- Ohbuchi, K., Kameda, M., and Agarie, N., 1989. Apology as aggression control: Its role in mediating appraisal of and response to harm. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56 (2), 219-227.
- Ohtsubo, Y., *et al.*, 2012. Are costly apologies universally perceived as being sincere? *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology*, 10 (4), 187-204.
- Okimoto, T.G., and Wenzel, M., 2008. The symbolic meaning of transgressions: Towards a unifying framework of justice restoration. In: K.A. Hegtvedt, and J. Clay-Warner, eds. *Justice*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 291-326.
- Okimoto, T.G., Wenzel, M., and Hedrick, K., 2013. Refusing to apologize can have psychological benefits (and we issue no mea culpa for this research finding). *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 43 (1), 22-31.
- Pennebaker, J.W., 1997. *Opening up: The healing power of expressing emotions*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Pettit, D., and Knobe, J., 2009. The pervasive impact of moral judgment. *Mind & Language*, 24 (5), 586-604.
- Reeder, G.D., *et al.*, 2002. Inferences about the morality of an aggressor: The role of perceived motive. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83 (4), 789-803.
- Reeder, G.D., and Spores, J.M., 1983. The attribution of morality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 44 (4), 736-745.
- Riek, B.M., Root Luna, L.M., and Schnabelrauch, C.A., 2014. Transgressors' guilt and shame: A longitudinal examination of forgiveness seeking. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 31 (6), 751-772.
- Risen, J.L., and Gilovich, T., 2007. Target and observer differences in the acceptance of questionable apologies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92 (3), 418-433.

- Robbennolt, J.K., 2000. Outcome severity and judgments of "responsibility": A meta-analytical review. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 30 (12), 2575-2609.
- Robbennolt, J.K., 2003. Apologies and legal settlement: An empirical examination. *Michigan Law Review*, 102 (3), 460-517.
- Robbennolt, J.K., 2006. Apologies and settlement levers *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, 3 (2) 333-373.
- Saulnier, A., and Sivasubramaniam, D., 2015. Effects of victim presence and coercion in restorative justice: An experimental paradigm. *Law and Human Behavior*, 39 (4), 378-387.
- Schlenker, B.R., and Darby, B.W., 1981. The use of apologies in social predicaments. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 44 (3), 271-278.
- Schmitt, M., et al., 2004. Effects of objective and subjective account components on forgiving. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 144 (5), 465-486.
- Selye, H., 1936. A syndrome produced by diverse nocuous agents. *Nature*, 138, 32.
- Shnabel, N., and Nadler, A., 2008. A needs-based model of reconciliation: Satisfying the differential emotional needs of victim and perpetrator as a key to promoting reconciliation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94 (1), 116-132.
- Shuman, D.W., 2000. The role of apology in tort law. *Judicature*, 83 (4), 180-189.
- Silver, R.L., Boon, C., and Stones, M.L., 1983. Searching for meaning in misfortune: Making sense of incest. *Journal of Social Issues*, 39 (2), 81-101.
- Skarlicki, D.P., Folger, R., and Gee, J., 2004. When social accounts backfire: The exacerbating effects of a polite message or an apology on reactions to an unfair outcome. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 34 (2), 322-341.
- Slocum, D., Allan, A., and Allan, M.M., 2011. An emerging theory of apology. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 63 (2), 83-92.
- Soon, C.S., et al., 2013. Predicting free choices for abstract intentions. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 110 (15), 6217-6222.
- Stillwell, A.M., and Baumeister, R.F., 1997. The construction of victim and perpetrator memories: Accuracy and distortion in role-based accounts. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23 (11), 1157-1172.
- Strickland, J., Allan, A., Allan, M.M., 2017. The Acceptance of Apologies in the Corrective Process: Implications for Research and Practice. *Oñati Socio-legal Series* [online], 7 (3), 421-436. Available from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3029542> [Accessed 30 August 2017].
- Struthers, C.W., et al., 2008. The effects of attributions of intent and apology on forgiveness: When saying sorry may not help the story. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 44 (4), 983-992.
- Takaku, S., 2001. The effects of apology and perspective taking on interpersonal forgiveness: A dissonance-attribution model of interpersonal forgiveness. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 141 (4), 494-508.
- Tangney, J.P., and Dearing, R.L., 2002. *Shame and guilt*. New York: Guilford.
- Tangney, J.P., Stuewig, J., and Martinez, A.G., 2014. Two faces of shame: The roles of shame and guilt in predicting recidivism. *Psychological Science*, 25 (3), 799-805.

- Tenbrunsel, A.E., 1998. Misrepresentation and expectations of misrepresentation in an ethical dilemma: The role of incentives and temptation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 41 (3), 330-339.
- Thomas, R.L., and Millar, M.G., 2008. The impact of failing to give an apology and the need-for-cognition on anger. *Current Psychology*, 27 (2), 126-134.
- Tripp, T.M., and Bies, R.J., 1997. What's good about revenge? The avenger's perspective. In: R.J. Lewicki, R.J. Bies, and B.H. Sheppard, eds. *Research on negotiation in organizations*. US: Elsevier Science/JAI Press, 145-160.
- Walster, E., 1966. "Second guessing" important events. *Human Relations*, 20 (3), 239-249.
- Walster, E., Berscheid, E., and Walster, G.W., 1973. New directions in equity research. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 25 (2), 151-176.
- Weiner, B., 1986. *An attributional theory of motivation and emotion*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Wenzel, M., Woodyatt, L., and Hedrick, A.K., 2012. No genuine self-forgiveness without accepting responsibility: Value reaffirmation as a key to maintaining positive self-regard. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 42 (5), 617-627.
- Wooten, D.B., 2009. Say the right thing: Apologies, reputability, and punishment. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*. 19 (2), 225-235.
- Zechmeister, J.S., and Romero, C., 2002. Victim and offender accounts of interpersonal conflict: Autobiographical accounts of forgiveness and unforgiveness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82 (4), 675-686.
- Zechmeister, J.S., et al., 2004. Don't apologise unless you mean it: A laboratory investigation of forgiveness and retaliation. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 23 (4), 532-564.