The University of Hong Kong
Department of Psychology

Student Name: Siu Po Yi
University Number: 2009135547
Degree: Bachelor of Social Sciences
Title of Thesis: Promoting forgiveness motivations through Empathy-prompted Expressive Writing
Supervisor: Dr. Harry Hui
Year of Submission: 2012
Acknowledgement

This thesis would not be completed without the support my thesis supervisor and my family.

Firstly, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Dr. Harry Hui, at the University of Hong Kong for his intellectual support, guidance and advise throughout the development of the research. It was the first time for me to do a thesis and the learning experience under your supervision was a fruitful ones.

Secondly, I would like to thank my family for being so tolerant with me during throughout the whole period. Your emotional support and confidence with me have greatly empowered me to complete this project.

Siu Po Yi

March, 2012
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Siu Po Yi

(2009135547)

The University of Hong Kong
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Abstract

Forgiveness involves a reduction of avoidance and revenge motivations, and an increase in benevolence motivations towards a person. This study modified the standard expressive writing task which to create a new empathy-prompt expressive writing task, which was compared against the standard expressive writing and trivial topic writing on the effects of the promotion of forgiveness motivations. Results supported the prediction that participants who empathized and took the perspectives of transgressors while expressing deepest feelings and thoughts experienced reduced revenge motivation and improved benevolence motivation, empathy and perspective-taking towards transgressors, while those who wrote only about their deepest thoughts and feelings or a topic on human relationships did not. Implications of using empathy-prompt expressive writing for promoting forgiveness are discussed.
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Promoting forgiveness motivations through Empathy- prompted Expressive Writing

No one is immune to interpersonal transgressions in our lives. The impacts of interpersonal transgressions, such as being wronged, betrayed and scolded, differ according to incidents but are usually overlooked. In fact, interpersonal transgressions, if not probably dealt with, could not only cause relationship damages, such as quarrelling, fights and cold wars, but also negative physical and mental health problems. Some people choose to forgive transgressors while others do not. Forgiveness, as a positive psychological response, is associated with physical, psychological and relational benefits (Bono & McCullough, 2006) while unforgiveness, as a negative psychological response leads to psychopathology (McCullough, Root, & Cohen, 2006). In view of the potential benefits of forgiveness and the potential harm of unforgiveness, extensive studies have been conducted to understand what forgiveness is and, most importantly, explore how forgiveness can be effectively promoted. This study is going to examine how Expressive Writing (EW) serves as an intervention to promote forgiveness after an interpersonal transgression has occurred. In particular, EW that elicits empathy and perspective- taking towards the transgressors will be examined.

Forgiveness

There is yet to be a consensus on the definition of forgiveness. Some emphasize the interpersonal processes of forgiveness while others focus on the intrapersonal ones. Interpersonally, forgiveness involves both parties actively engaging in verbal and non verbal
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constructive responses (Worthington Jr & Wade, 1999), which may or may not include reconciliation (Enright, 1991). Intrapersonally, forgiveness can refer to a series of emotional and motivational changes. Emotionally, forgiveness refers to the reduction of negative affects and the increase of compassion and love for the transgressor despite the injustice incurred (Enright, 1991). Motivationally, forgiveness refers to a chain of prosocial- motivational changes that involves three dimensions: reduction in motivation to avoid transgressors, reduction in the motivation to take revenge and increased benevolence towards transgressors (McCullough, Bellah, Kilpatrick, & Johnson, 2001). The present study employs McCullough’s definition of forgiveness as EW is known for producing socio- cognitive changes that are similar to the prosocial- motivational changes involved in forgiveness.

The intrapersonal motivational transformation could be the first step to repair a damaged relationship after an interpersonal transgression. One the one hand, in the perspective of planned behavior theory, the pro-social motivational changes may serve as intentions that lead to actual forgiveness behavior. On the other hand, in the perspective of “behavioural confirmation”, as one party show less hostile but friendlier perceptions and behaviours towards the transgressor, the other party will probably respond in the same way. Therefore, intrapersonal processes can be the antecedent of interpersonal forgiveness. In view of the importance of intrapersonal motivational changes in forgiveness, the present study will focus on how Expressive Writing can facilitate these processes of forgiveness.
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Expressive Writing

EW is an emotion disclosure technique whereby individuals freely put their thoughts and feelings about traumatic or upsetting events into words to release negative emotions and return to physical and psychological well-being (Fincham, Paleari, & Regalia, 2002). According to Pennebaker & Chung (2007), the standard expressive writing paradigm requires participants to write about the deepest feelings and thoughts about an assigned topic, usually a traumatic experience, for three to five consecutive days. Each writing session lasts 15 - 30 minutes. Unlike letter writing, participants are not writing to a specific person but disclosing their deepest emotion to themselves; so no feedback is given after the writing intervention and language rules are not important during writing.

EW was first developed as a means to help traumatized people achieve better health outcomes. Pennebaker and Beall (1986) were the pioneers of providing scientific validity to the writing technique. In their first expressive writing study, Pennebaker and Beall (1986) compared the number of illness-related doctor's visits of participants in the four assigned writing groups, including a trauma-fact group, in which participants wrote only about the facts about their trauma; a trauma-emotion group, in which participants wrote only about the emotions associated with their trauma; a trauma-combo group, in which participants wrote about both the facts and emotions associated with their trauma; and a control group, in which participants wrote trivial topics unrelated to the trauma. The results of this study showed that
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only the trauma-combo group (but not any of the other three) demonstrated a decrease in illness-related doctor's visits. Other researches that followed continued to find other physical health outcomes associated with expressive writing, such as improvements in immune functioning (Pennebaker, Kiecolt-Glaser, & Glaser, 1988), reductions in upper respiratory problems (Greenberg, Wortman, & Stone, 1996) and posttraumatic stress symptoms (Campbell & Pennebaker, 2003) etc. The meta analysis of Frisina, et al.(2004) also indicated that expressive writing does not only bring health outcomes to clinical populations with physical or psychiatric disorder but also healthy undergraduate populations.

Recent research interests in EW have extended to its positive impact on people’s psychological health and cognitive functioning. For example, depression- vulnerable college students showed increased mindfulness (Moore, Brody, & Dierberger, 2009) and depression-vulnerable college students showed lower depression symptoms after writing about thoughts and feelings for three consecutive days for 20 minutes (Gortner, Rude, & Pennebaker, 2006; Koopman et al., 2005; Lepore, 1997).

Expressive Writing and Forgiveness

It has longed been agreed that forgiving does not mean forgetting. EW provides a channel for victims to express and release their thoughts and feelings about the interpersonal transgression. According to inhibition theory inhibited thoughts and feelings, which are harmful to health, can be released through EW and thus stress can be reduced, resulting in
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improvement in physical and psychological well-being.

EW and forgiveness also share the same intrapersonal process of turning negative destructive thoughts and feelings into more positive constructive ones. Successful EW has been found to have moderate level of negative emotion expression with words such as sad and angry but high levels of positive emotion expression with words such as happy and good, high level of cognitive processing with causal words such as hence and because, as well as insight words such as realize and think.

However, previous empirical researches on EW and forgiveness generally produced insignificant results of standard EW and forgiveness motivations. Although Landry and colleagues (2005) found that the experimental group participants who wrote about the deepest feelings about a specific interpersonal offense reported self-perceived changes in viewing the transgression, the experimental group and control group who wrote about trivial events unrelated to the transgression did not differ in the increase in positive affect and decreases in negative affect and rumination. Similarly, Romero (2008) did not find significant differences between participants who wrote about their thoughts and feelings or about daily events in the decreases in avoidance and increases in perspective-taking.

The possible explanation could be because the standard expressive writing paradigm is not sufficient in facilitating cognitive processes, for instance empathy, which plays a key role in forgiveness. Empathy can be affective or cognitive. The former is defined as the vicarious
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experience of another person’s emotional state characterized by compassion, tenderness and sympathy (McCullough, 2001) while the latter refers to the ability to understand and adopt the cognitive aspect of another person. Previous research repeatedly found that dispositional empathy predicts forgiveness (Paleari, Regalia, & Fincham, 2005). In fact, various theorists stressed empathy in their forgiveness model. In the four-phase forgiveness model of Enright and Fitzgibbon (2000), perspective-taking, empathy and compassion are considered to be facilitate the phases of emotional uncovering which results in forgiveness. Furthermore, in the multi-factorial model of McCullough et al. (1998), empathy mediates transgressors’ action (e.g. apology) and forgiveness. All these findings support the pivotal role of empathy in promoting forgiveness.

In a recent Expressive Writing study, Romero (2008) combined an empathy task is combined with benefit-finding task to tap participants’ empathy towards offenders. Participants in this benefit/empathy task were asked to write about the benefits both the transgressor and they could have if they forgive. After three 20-minute writing sessions scheduled one per week, only empathetic participants who found benefits in the transgression resulted in decrease in avoidance and increase in perspective-taking while those who merely wrote their deepest thoughts or daily events did not. Since the study combined empathy with a benefit-finding tasks, the unique effect of empathy cannot be examined fully. However, the study of Romero (2008) is consistent with the notion that effective forgiveness interventions
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involve empathy-related activities, such as taking the perspective of the offenders and recalling times when one needed forgiveness (McCullough, 2000; Wade & Worthington Jr, 2005).

The Present Study

In view of the link between empathy and forgiveness and its importance in promoting forgiveness, the present study will replicate the study of Romero (2008) in adding the elements of empathy into the Expressive Writing task. However, to demonstrate the effect of empathy alone, the benefit-finding elements included in the Romero (2008) study will be excluded. Instead, in the empathy-prompt writing group, participants were asked to express their deepest thoughts and feelings about a most recent interpersonal transgression and empathized or took the perspective of the transgressor. This empathy-prompt group will be compared with two other tasks: (a) standard expressive writing group in which participants will only write thoughts and feelings associated with the interpersonal transgression and (b) a control group in which participants are assigned a trivial writing task which writes about things unrelated to the interpersonal offence.

Romero (2008) found that participants who were given instruction to empathize with the offenders resulted in more forgiveness motivations, the first purpose of this study would hope to replicate the finding. The hypothesis was that participants in the empathy-prompt group will experience a decrease in avoidance and revenge motivation and an increase in the
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benevolence motivation.

To take a closer look of whether the empathy-prompt task would produce more empathy and perspective-taking than standard expressive writing task or control task, the empathy and perspective-taking scores of the three groups will be compared. The second hypothesis is that participants in the empathy-prompt group will experience an increase in empathy concern and perspective-taking towards the transgressor than standard expressive writing group or the control group.

Another purpose of the study is to examine whether the change in forgiveness will be associated with the degree of empathy and perspective-taking within the empathy-prompt expressive writing task. As mentioned, empathy has been associated with effective forgiveness intervention and positively correlated to forgiveness. People who empathize with the transgressors are able to see the transgression from the transgressors’ point of view and place the action in the context of transgressor’s imperfect humanity and other influential situational factors. Based on previous studies that empathy predicts forgiveness, it is hypothesized that higher empathy individual will experience more improvement in forgiveness motivations.

Method

Participants

To increase generalizability of the findings, participants are recruited not only universities but
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also from secondary schools. 90 participants aged 16 – 26 were recruited. All the participants were recruited personally by the author or the authors’ friends or family members.

Participants who met the following criteria were eligible: (a) able to attend two 20-minute on-site writing sessions schedule a week apart; (b) able to submit a writing through the internet 3 days after the first writing session (c) have no physical or psychological difficulty in writing; (d) have been hurt or angered by someone close to them at some point in their life (e) is Chinese of origin. They are recruited to join a study about written emotional disclosure and psychological- well-being. As compensation for the participation of this study, participants will receive a small gift at the end of the third writing session.

Measures

All of the materials and questionnaires were in Chinese to facilitate reading and understanding of the questions.

Demographics Survey. The survey asked participants about their demographic information including gender, age, education level and religion.

Transgression Description Questionnaire. Participants were asked to provide brief description of a most recent transgression committed by someone close to them that still bothered them from time to time or unresolved. They were asked to briefly describe what the transgression was and answer some questions about the transgression, including its nature, date of occurrence, perceived severity then and now, and the transgressor, including their
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perceived closeness with him/her before and after the transgressor, their perceived closeness
with them and whether they receive an apology from him/ her.

Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory-18. TRIM-18 developed
by McCullough and colleague (1998) was used to measure forgiveness. It was originally
developed as a twelve item scale consisting of the Avoidance and Revenge subscale. However,
since this study employs McCullough and colleague’s conceptualization of forgiveness as
prosocial motivational processes that include a reduction in avoidance and revenge, as well as
a restoration of benevolence, the newly developed eighteen- item TRIM consisting of three
subscales is adopted. The Avoidance subscale consists of seven items that measure the
motivation to avoid a transgressor. The higher the total score the more avoidant motivation
one has. The internal reliability of the scale was high (pretest $\alpha=.923$; post-test $\alpha=.925$). The
Revenge subscale consists of five items that measure the motivation to seek revenge. The
higher the total score, the more revenge motivations one has. The internal reliability of the
scale was satisfactory (pretest $\alpha=.841$; post-test $\alpha=.869$). The Benevolent subscale is a
recently added subscale that consists of six items that measure the motivation to show
benevolent towards the transgressor. The higher the total score, the more benevolent
motivation one would show to the transgressor. The internal reliability of the scale was
satisfactory (pretest $\alpha=.873$; post-test $\alpha=.859$). All the items were rated on a 5-point scale
ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree.
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**Perspective Taking Scale.** The Perspective-taking Scales (PTS) is a subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index developed by Davis (1996) to measure the perspective-taking aspect of empathy. It consists of 7 items to access the tendency of a person to take another's point-of-view. Some items are modified. For instance, “I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective” to “I try to understand the offenders’ better by imagining how things look from his/ her perspective” to measure participants’ perspective-taking tendency in the context of the offence instead of their dispositional trait of perspective-taking. Items are rated on a 5-point scale (1 = Doesn’t describe me very well; 5 = Describes me very well), with higher scores indicating greater perspective-taking. The reliability of the scale was acceptable (pretest $\alpha=.717$; posttest $\alpha=.817$)

**Batson’s Empathy Scale.** To assess affective empathy, the Batson’s Empathy Scale (BES) developed by Coke, Batson and McDavis (1978) was used. It consists of 8 items (sympathetic, empathetic, concerned, moved, compassionate, warm, softhearted and tender) to access a person’s affect towards a person. Items are rated on a 5-point scale (1 = Doesn’t describe me very well; 5 = Describes me very well), with higher scores indicating greater perspective-taking. The reliability of the scale was excellent (pretest $\alpha=.930$; posttest $\alpha=.931$).

**Manipulation Check Items.** Consistent with Romero (2008), three manipulation check
items were used to evaluate what participants think about their essays. It consists of three single items asking participants to indicate the extent to which their essay was personal, meaningful and revealing their emotions. Items which are rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1=not at all to 4=very much.

Since the second writing session was a home-writing task, participants were asked to rate the privacy and quietness of the room where they wrote in order to make sure the writing conditions for all three sessions were as similar as possible.

Procedure

Pre-intervention measurement and the first writing session. Participants were invited to a quiet room on their campus for the two onsite writing sessions. Upon arrival for the first writing session, participants were briefed about the procedure of the experiment and asked to sign a consent form. They also completed the demographics survey, transgression description questionnaire and baseline measurements, including TRIM-18, BES and PTS. To ensure participants would let go and write down their thoughts and feelings and maximize the effects of the Expressive Writing, confidentiality of the use of participants was stressed again before the writing session and on the writing instruction. The information would strictly be used in this study for research purposes only and their writing would not be linked with their names but be coded with participant, session and group number. After the briefing, participants were randomly assigned to one of the three writing conditions: Control, Standard Expressive
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Writing (SEW) or Empathy- prompt Expressive Writing (EEW) and left alone in the room for 20 minutes to write.

*Control Group.* Participants in the control writing condition were asked to answer a question regarding human relationships. Unlike previous conventional researches, control group did not write about their daily routines because such writing instruction deviates too much from the title of the study first told to participants and might give away clues they were the control group. Therefore, the control group of this study wrote about topics regarding human relationships. The question in the experiment was randomly chosen from the 2006 Hong Kong A-level Chinese Language and Culture (HKAL CLC) Examination Speaking Paper. Participants received the following instruction in Chinese (please refer to Appendix H for the Chinese version):

For the next 20 minutes, I want you to discuss the following question:

Will having an opposite opinion affect social harmony?

Please use evidence other than personal experience to discuss your opinion thoroughly.

You may use the language that you feel most comfortable to write. As you write, don’t hold back or worry about grammar. The most important thing is to think deeply about all the examples you have got. Please use the entire 20 minutes. If you finish before the time is over, you can think through it again and describe certain aspects of it more deeply.
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The writing will not be published. It is strictly for research purposes only and will be kept confidential in a safe place.

SEW Group. Participants in the SEW condition were asked to write their deepest thoughts and emotions of the transgression they mentioned in the transgression description survey in all the three writing sessions. Participants received the following instruction, modified from that in Pennebaker et al, (1988), in Chinese (please refer to Appendix G for the Chinese version):

In the questionnaire that you have just completed, you gave me some information about a transgression committed by someone close to you that is still bothering you or unresolved. For the next 20 minutes, I want you to write about the transgression. I am especially interested in your deepest thoughts and feelings (such as happy, sad or angry) about the transgression and the person who offended you.

You may use the language that you feel most comfortable to write. Don’t hold back or worry about spelling and grammar. The most important thing is your deepest thoughts and feelings. Please use the entire 20 minutes. If you finish before the time is over, you can think through the transgression again and describe certain aspects of it more deeply.

The writing will not be published. It is strictly for research purposes only and will be kept confidential in a safe place.

EEW Group. Participants in the empathy- prompt writing session were asked to write
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their deepest thoughts and emotions of the transgression, as well as answer some questions
which prompted them to take the perspective of transgressors. In the first writing session,
three additional questions were added to the writing instruction of SEW group and the writing
instruction is as follows (please refer to Appendix H for the Chinese version):

In the questionnaire that you have just completed, you gave me some information about
a transgression committed by someone close to you that is still bothering you or
unresolved. For the next 20 minutes, I want you to write about the transgression. I am
especially interested in your deepest thoughts and feelings (such as happy, sad or angry)
about the transgression and the person who offended you.

On top of your thoughts and feelings about the transgression, I am also interested in
knowing your view of the possible reasons that the person hurt or angered you.

Explore these issues as you write: (a) In what ways was the transgression his/her own
fault? (b) In what ways did the person intent to hurt you? (c) In what ways did the
person hurt you because of the uncontrollable factors?

You may use the language that you feel most comfortable to write. Don’t hold back or
worry about spelling and grammar. The most important thing is your deepest thoughts
and feelings. Please use the entire 20 minutes. If you finish before the time is over, you
can think through the transgression again and describe certain aspects of it more deeply.

The writing will not be published. It is strictly for research purposes only and will be
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kept confidential in a safe place.

At the end of the writing session, participants placed their writing into an envelope. Each participant then received a memo reminding them of their participant number and the date of the second writing session to be done at home. They were also asked to leave their emails on a separate sheet of paper so that they can receive writing instructions for the second writing session.

The second writing session. Three days after the first writing session, an email was sent to the participant with the instruction to complete the second writing task. Participants were instructed to assess the task hosted on www.surveymonkey.com. The second writing session was done at home to reduce the burden of travelling to the site. Instead of pen and paper, participants submitted their essays through the internet to ensure that they wrote the essay on time and within 20 minutes. The change in writing mode and venue were of ecological importance as well because people do not always write in the same place. To control possible confounds introduced by the change of writing mode and venue, participants were asked to rate the how quiet and private their room was.

Control Group. Again, participants in the control writing condition were asked to answer a question regarding human relationships, which was “Should we use conscience or law to distinguish people who are good and bad?”.

SEW Group. This group received the same instruction as in the first session.
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**EEW Group.** In this session, participants were asked to put themselves into the transgressor’s shoes and think about how they would deal with the situation in the same way or differently as the transgressor. This is an imagine-self-as-transgressor situation, adding on to the first session in the hope that participants would find out more about the causes of the transgression when looking at the incident in a different perspective.

After submitting their writings, all participants answered the manipulation check items to ensure that the writing room is as similar as the lab as possible.

**The third writing session.** The third writing session was scheduled one week from the first writing session (i.e. four days after the second writing session). Upon arrival, participants were given 20 minutes to write according to the instruction of their respective groups.

**The Control Group.** Again, participants in the control writing condition were asked to answer a question regarding human relationships, which was “Is love rational or emotional?”.

**SEW Group.** This group received the same instruction as in the first and second session.

**EEW Group.** In this session, participants were asked to think about a time when they themselves were the transgressors and committed a similar transgression to others. This is aimed to remind the participants that they could also have the capability to make mistakes and that it is easy to blame others instead of taking personal responsibility, which is an attribution error that people often make. According to fundamental attribution error (Ross,
EXPRESSIVE WRITING AND FORGIVENESS MOTIVATIONS (1977), people tend to overestimate personal factors and to underestimate situational factors in explaining others' behavior. By inducing self-awareness, it is hope that people could have a greater sense of self-awareness and be more willing to find out situation variables that may lead to the transgressor’s behaviour. In the experiment of Takaku (2001), participants who recalled themselves as the transgressor experienced more benevolent and forgiving emotions than those who did not. Therefore, based on previous findings, participants in the third writing session were asked to recall a time when they were the transgressor.

After the third writing session, participants placed the writing in an envelope and completed the TRIM-18 and PTS again, together with the manipulation check items.

Results

Preliminary Analysis

Demographic Characteristics. The age of the participants were 16 – 23 (range= 7, M=19.2, SD= 2.38). There were 38 males and 50 females. In the control group, there were 12 male and 18 female; in the SEW group, there were 14 males and 18 females; in the EEW group, there were 12 males and 18 females. 38% of the participants were of secondary level of education and 61.4% were in tertiary level of education. 70.5% of participants had no religious belief while 29.5% had.

A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was no significant differences of age across groups, F (2, 87)= .305, p=.738. A series of chi-square tests were also administered and
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found that there were no significance differences across groups in terms of gender, $\chi^2 = .778$, $p = .678$, education, $\chi^2 = 1.433$, $p = .488$ or religion, $\chi^2 = 2.135$, $p = .344$.

**Transgression Characteristics.** Participants describe different types of transgression, including being scolded (27.3%), betrayed (20.5%), wronged (17%), lied to (4.5%), isolated (6.8%), hurt emotionally (4.5%), and having quarrels with others (4.5%). Some participants (6.8%) also reported other transgressions. Most participants described transgressions that were committed by friends (60.2%). Other transgressors described included parents (19.3%), siblings (6.8%), romantic partners (4.5%) and relatives (2.3%).

The average time since the transgression happened was 19.3 months ($SD = 2.73$). The perceived severity immediately after the transgression was higher ($M = 4.5$, $SD = 1.27$) but the perceived severity at the moment was lower ($M = 2.7$, $SD = 1.28$). The perceived closeness with the transgressors before the transgression was also higher ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 1.05$) than the that after the transgression has occurred ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.47$).

Randomization was successful. There was no significant difference across groups in terms of the nature, $\chi^2 = 9.107$, $p = .909$, and transgressors, $\chi^2 = 8.251$, $p = .604$, of the described transgression. ANOVA analyses show no significance difference across groups in terms of the time since the transgression happened, $F(2, 87) = .371$, $p = .691$, perceived severity of the transgression, $F(2,87) = 1.064$, $p = .350$ and the perceived closeness with the transgressors before, $F (2,87) = 1.118$, $p = .332$, and after, $F (2,87) = 3.084$, $p = .051$. 
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Perceived Severity now (ANOVA): $F(2,87) = 9.93, p < .001$.

Dependent variables. The mean, standard deviation and correlations among the dependent variables in this study is summarized in Table 1. Significant correlations were found among the dependent variables.

One-sample ANOVA was conducted to see if there were baseline differences across groups. Results showed that there were no significance differences for baseline characteristics in terms of avoidance, $F(2,87) = 2.031, p = .137$, revenge, $F(2,87) = .917, p = .404$, benevolence, $F(2,87) = 1.861, p = .162$, affective empathy $F(2,87) = 1.237, p = .295$ and perspective-taking, $F(2,87) = 1.426, p = .246$.

Manipulation Check. Consistent with previous research and predictions, the essays of SW and EEW group were significantly more emotion revealing, personal and meaningful than the Control group. The privacy and quietness of the experimental rooms were no significant difference. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2.

Test of Hypotheses

The first and second hypotheses were that the participants in the EEW conditions would experience significant decrease in revenge and avoidance motives and increase in benevolence motives, empathy and perspective-taking while the SEW and Control group would not. To compare the change in forgiveness motivations, perspective-taking and empathy scores across groups between pre and post-intervention, four repeated measures
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mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA) with Groups (Control, SEW, EEW) as between-subjects variable and Time (Pre, Post-intervention) as the within-subjects variables were conducted. Paired sample t-tests for each group were used to follow up significant Group X Time interactions. The mean and standard deviations of dependent variables across groups from baseline and post-intervention are shown in Table 3.

**Forgiveness Motivations.** For avoidance motivation, the main effect of Time, $F(1, 87) = 42.693, p = .000$, as well as Group x Time interaction, $F(2,87) = 3.877, p = .024$, were significant. The paired sample t-test for each group showed that the avoidance motivation at post-intervention was significantly different from pre-intervention not only for the EEW group, $t(29)=4.755, p<.01$, but also the SEW group, $t(29) = 4.026, p < .01$ and the Control group, $t(29) = 2.159, p =.039$. It seems that the avoidance motivation decreases with time.

For revenge motivations, the main effect of Time, $F(1,87) = 6.017, p =.065$ was not significant. However, the Group x Time interaction was significant, $F(2,87) = 28.422, p = .019$. The paired sample t-test for each group showed that only the EEW group showed significantly lower revenge motivation at post-intervention from pre-intervention, $t(29)=3.684, p =.001$, but not the SEW or the Control group.

For benevolence motivation, the main effect of Time was not significant, $F(1,87) = 2.71, p= .103$, but the interaction effect of Group x Time, $F(2,87) = 6.914, p=.002$ was significant. Paired t-test showed that only the EEW group showed an increase in benevolent motivation,
EXPRESSIVE WRITING AND FORGIVENESS MOTIVATIONS

$t(29)=-4.045, \, p<.01$, but not the SEW or the Control group.

**Perspective-taking.** Repeated measures mixed ANOVA revealed significant main effect of Time, $F(1,87)=6.408, \, p=.013$ and Group x Time interaction, $F(2,87)=6.499, \, p=.002$. The paired sample t-test showed that the post-intervention PTS score for both the EEW, $t(29)=-3.733, \, p=.001$, and the Control group, $t(29)=-2.529, \, p=.017$ had significantly increased from pre-intervention. The main effect of Group, $F(2,87)=6.469, \, p=.002$, was also significant. Post-hoc Bonferroni test showed that the SEW group is significantly lower in perspective-taking scores than the EEW group, $p=.004$, and the Control group, $p=.015$.

**Affective Empathy.** Repeated measures mixed ANOVA revealed significant main effect of Time, $F(1,87)=4.37, \, p=.039$, and Group x Time interaction effect, $F(2,87)=6.192, \, p=.003$ but no significant main effect for Group was found. The paired sample t-tests revealed that only the EEW group showed significant improvement from pre- to post-intervention, $t(29)=-4.045, \, p<.01$.

**Empathy and Changes in Forgiveness.** Since EEW significantly promoted forgiveness motivations from pre- to post-intervention, the third hypothesis that empathy and perspective-taking are significantly associated with changes in the forgiveness measures within EEW was further tested. A median split was created for post-intervention BES and PTS scores respectively, which served as the between-subjects variable (High BES vs Low BES; High PTS vs Low PTS) in repeated measure ANOVAs with Time as the within-
EXPRESSIVE WRITING AND FORGIVENESS MOTIVATIONS

subjects variable. Means and deviations of the forgiveness motivation scores between the BES and PTS groups are presented in Table 4 and 5 respectively.

*Affective Empathy and Changes in Forgiveness.* For avoidance motivations, the main effects of Time, $F(1,28) = 23.227, p = .000$, and the main effect of BES, $F(1,28) = 5.74, p = .024$ were significant. There was no significant Time x BES interaction effect.

For revenge motivations, the main effect of Time, $F(1,28) = 14.941, p = .001$, was significant but neither the main effect of BES, $F(1,28) = .004, p = .951$, or Time x BES interactions was significant $F(1,28) = 2.386, p = .134$.

For the benevolence motivation, the main effects of Time, $F(1,28) = 10.24, p = .003$, and BES, $F(1,28)= 11.388, p= .002$, as well as the Time x BES interactions, $F(1,28) = 8.091, p= .008$ were significant. A post- hoc paired sample t- test revealed that only participants with higher empathy scores showed significantly increased in benevolence at post- intervention, $t(13) = -3.751, p = .002$, but not the low empathy group, $t(15) = .162, p = .873$.

In summary, affective empathy is associated only with changes in the benevolent motivation of forgiveness from pre to post- intervention.

*Perspective-taking and Changes in Forgiveness.* For avoidance motivations, the main effect of Time was significant, $F(1,28) = 23.33, p <.01$, but no significant main effect for PTS, $F(1,28)= 3.321, p=.079$, or Time x PTS interaction effect was found, $F(1,28) = 1.931, p = .176$. 
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For revenge motivations, the main effect of Time was significant, $F(1,28) = .593, p = .001$. However, no significant main effect for PTS, $F(1,28) = .470, p = .498$ or Time x PTS interaction effect was shown, $F(1,28) = .593, p = .448$.

For benevolence motivation, only significant main effect for Time, $F(1,28) = 6.323, p = .018$ was found. The main effect for PTS, $F(1,28) = 4.19, p = .05$ and the Time x PTS interaction effect, $F(1,28) = .011, p = .917$, were not significant.

In summary, perspective-taking did not have a significant effect on the changes in any forgiveness motivations.

Discussion

Implications

The present study examines the effects of expressive writing on intrapersonal forgiveness. An empathy-prompted expressive writing task, in which participants were prompted to freely express feelings and thoughts about a transgression while taking the perspective of the transgressor, was compared against the standard expressive writing, in which participants only wrote about their deepest thoughts and feelings about a transgression, and the control group which wrote about a trivial topic on human relationship. The major hypothesis that empathy-prompted expressive writing helps promote forgiveness was supported.

The first hypothesis was partially supported. Although all three writing groups
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experienced a decrease in avoidance score, the empathy- promoted expressive writing
promoted a decrease in revenge motivation and an increase in benevolence motivation,
whereas merely writing about thoughts and feelings or discussing a trivial topic on human
relationship did not. Consistent with previous research, merely expressing deepest thoughts
and feelings about a transgression was not sufficient enough to promote the socio- cognitive
changes require for forgiveness. Instead, when people are prompted to take the perspective of
transgressor, forgiveness can be encouraged. This is consistent with previous research that
people do not need to focus on the negative thoughts or feelings in order to gain more
forgiveness motivations. The success in the current study in improving benevolence towards
transgressor also revealed that to regain benevolence towards transgressor, people do not
necessary need to find benefits of forgiving the transgressor during writing, which is
sometimes hard to do when the transgression is still stressful to people.

Besides, the second hypothesis was also supported because only the empathy- prompted
expressive writing group experienced an increase in both empathy and perspective- taking
score from pre- test to post- test. Surprisingly, affective empathy and perspective- taking has
increased even just writing about trivial relationship topics. The empathy- prompted group
also had a higher perspective- taking scores at the post- intervention as compared to the other
two groups. Empathy- prompt expressive writing did not only improve people’s forgiveness
motivations but also their empathy towards the transgressor and perspective- taking scores.
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The third hypothesis of whether the improvement of forgiveness motivations is associated with empathy and perspective-taking scores was only partially supported. The degree of empathy was only positively related to improvements in the benevolence motivation but not avoidance and revenge motivations in the empathy-prompted writing group. The degree of perspective-taking was unrelated to the improvements in any forgiveness motivations. The small group size and hence low power may have contributed to the lack of significance but it is also possible that empathy and perspective-taking may not be associated with the change in forgiveness. People with higher or lower empathy and perspective-taking score can benefit from empathy-prompt expressive writing.

It is worth noting that although there were some major differences in methodology than previous expressive writing studies, the manipulation was successful in producing significant improvement in forgiveness motivations. For a start, instead of writing three 20-minute essays in three consecutive days, the three writing sessions were scheduled study within one week. The first and second writing sessions were three days apart while the second and third writing sessions were four days apart. In an meta-analysis, Snyder, Gordon, & Baucom (2004) that the longer the writing treatments are separated, the more powerful the intervention is. This could be one of the reasons why the current study successfully improves participants’ forgiveness motivations.

Besides, another major methodological difference was the change in writing mode and
EXPRESSIVE WRITING AND FORGIVENESS MOTIVATIONS

venue for the second writing session. Instead of having all three writing sessions in the lab using paper and pen, participants were instructed to complete the second writing session at home alone through the internet. Such a change in writing method and venue could risk introducing confounds to the study but it is more comparable to real life situations because in reality people do not always write at the same place all the time. Besides, the use of computer has been commonplace. Expressing thoughts and feelings on internet blogs or mini-blogs have been gaining popularity. In this study, participants did not report significant differences in the three writing sessions in terms of the privacy and quietness of the writing room, length and quality of the essay, showing that the change in writing mode and venue did not matter much. Empathy-prompt expressive writing can take place anywhere that is quiet and private.

In addition, the current study is the pioneer in using all Chinese samples. Previous studies showed mixed findings about whether expressive writing is more effective to Chinese or Caucasian. This study provides valuable support for the fact that expressive writing can also be effective for Chinese in promoting intrapersonal forgiveness given that the right writing task.

Limitations

The current study has several limitations, including methodological limitations.

Firstly, it did not control for the severity or recency of the transgression reported by the participants. Although the questionnaire instructed the participants to report an event that is
EXPRESSIVE WRITING AND FORGIVENESS MOTIVATIONS

more recent and most severe, a few participants reported events dated back to more than 10 years ago. Forgiveness is a process and empathy- prompt expressive writing can be more effecting in certain points of the process but not the others. People who have recently been hurt could be less patient in and capable of taking the perspective of the transgressor.

Secondly, all the measures in this study were exclusively self-report. The ratings regarding how personal, meaningful and emotion-revealing the essays were not re-confirmed by raters who are blind to the study hypothesis. Future studies could have a more reliable manipulation check with the use of raters who are blind to the study hypotheses.

Finally, meditational studies about how empathy- prompt expressive writing improves forgiveness motivations are needed to find out why empathy- prompt expressive writing but not standard expressive writing works. In particular, previous researches have often carried out analysis of the linguistic features of essays, for example, calculating the percentage of positive, negative and cognitive processing words in an essay, to examine the how different writing tasks differ in content that may contribute to treatment effects. The current study did not look at the linguistic content of essays but such analysis would be valuable for understanding not only the type of writing tasks works but also the reasons behind.
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References


EXPRESSIVE WRITING AND FORGIVENESS MOTIVATIONS


EXPRESSIVE WRITING AND FORGIVENESS MOTIVATIONS


這是一項關於寫作與人際關係的學術研究，旨在探討寫作能否影響人際關係。

整個研究需要你在這星期內的三天寫三篇文章。今天是研究的第一天，你所要做的就是
要完成下面的問卷及進行20分鐘的寫作。第二次的研究將會在三天後（        ）進
行。屆時我將會用電郵（expwriting11@gmail.com）傳送一個網址給你，你只要登入網
頁，便可完成第二篇20分鐘的寫作。而最後一次研究將會於七天後（        ）同様地點
進行。完成了篇文章及問卷以後，整個研究便完成。

在完成問卷及寫作的過程中，部分問題可能涉及閣下的私隱和價值取向。參與純屬自願
性質，所收集的資料只作研究用途，個人資料將絕對保密。是次研究並不為閣下提供個
人利益，但所搜集數據將對研究學習動機的問題提供寶貴的資料。

如你對是項研究有任何問題，請現在提出。如日後你對是項研究有任何查詢，請與研究
員Bowie Siu聯絡(98566024)。如你想知道更多有關研究參與者的權益，請聯絡香港大學
非臨床研究操守委員會 (2241-5267)。

如你明白以上內容，並願意參與是項研究，請在下方簽署。

再一次感謝你抽空參與這個研究!

姓名: ___________________________________

簽署: ___________________________________
Appendix B
Demographic and Transgression Description Questionnaire

寫作前期問卷

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<th>參加者編號:</th>
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<td>年齡:</td>
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<td>性別:</td>
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<td>宗教信仰:</td>
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<td>教育程度:</td>
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</table>

第一部份:
1. 請用 5 分鐘，回想過去一次曾經被一個熟悉的人得罪或傷害的經歷，並用不超過 5 句句子簡單描述。由於整個研究也會就此經歷進行，請小心選擇，並記住它。若有多次經歷，請選擇最嚴重，最令你困擾或最近期的那個經歷（可從此部份的第二條題目看看例子）。

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

請注意：為了方便稱呼，以上被人得罪或傷害的經歷將以「經歷甲」來代替，而得罪你的人則是「A 者」。

2. 以上經歷甲屬於以下那一類:
   □被人責罰 □被人出賣 □被人誤會 □被人欺騙 □受到不公平的對待
   □被人排斥 □與人反目 □感情創傷 □遇到身體上的傷害 □其他:__________

3. 你與 A 者的關係屬於以下那一類:
   □父母 □兄弟姊妹 □親戚 □朋友 □男/女朋友 □其他:__________

4. A 者在經歷甲發生後有道歉嗎？
   □有 □無
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5. 請按照下列指標圈出你的答案

| 你與「A 者」在「經歷甲」發生前的關係有多親密？ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1 = 非常不親密; 6 = 非常親密 |

| 你與「A 者」在「經歷甲」發生後的關係有多親密？ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1 = 非常不親密; 6 = 非常親密 |

| 你與「A 者」現在的關係有多親密？ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1 = 非常不親密; 6 = 非常親密 |

現在請就「經歷甲」繼續回答以下問題:

6. 請寫下「經歷甲」發生的日期
   □ 確實日期: ______年____月____日; 或
   □ 記不起: 大約在____年前發生

7. 請按照下列指標圈出你的答案

| 「經歷甲」在初初發生的時候, 你覺得有多嚴重? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1 = 最輕微; 6 = 最嚴重 |

| 「經歷甲」在今時今日對你來說有多嚴重？ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1 = 最輕微; 6 = 最嚴重 |
請根據你對「A者」現時的感覺，按照下列指標圈出你的答案。
1=完全不同意  2=非常不同意  3=略為不同意  4=略為同意  5=非常同意  6=完全同意

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<td>1</td>
<td>我會令他/她得到報應。</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>我會疏遠他/她。</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>雖然他/她的行為傷害了我，我仍然認為他/她有信譽。</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>我希望不幸的事會發生在他/她身上。</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>我會忽視他/她，使他/她不存在我的生活中。</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>我希望與他/她冰釋前嫌，促進我們之間的關係。</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>我不會再信任他/她。</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>不論他/她曾做過什麼，我希望我們可以和好如初。</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>我希望他/她得到應得的報應。</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>我會友善地對待他/她而感到為難。</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>我會逃避他/她。</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>縱使他/她曾傷害我，我依然希望我們可以和好如初。</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>我會向他/她取回我應該得到的。</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>我原諒他/她對我所作的事。</td>
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<td>我會與他/她斷絕關係。</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>我把我的憤怒都放下，好讓我可以把我和他/她的關係重修舊好。</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>我希望見到他/她受傷害和苦難。</td>
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<td>我會離開他/她。</td>
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請根據你對「A者」此時此刻的感覺，按照下列指標圈出你的答案。
1=完全不同意 2=非常不同意 3=略為不同意 4=略為同意 5=非常同意 6=完全同意

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<td>我覺得要從他/她的角度看事</td>
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<td>在我下決定時，我會先考慮他/她</td>
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<td>反對的意見</td>
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<td>我會從他/她的角度看事，從而更明白他/她的想法</td>
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<td>如果我認爲我的決定是正確的，我不會多花時間聽他/她的意見</td>
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<td>當那得罪我的人令我難過時，我會設身處地地從他/她的角度看事</td>
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<td>在批評他/她前，我會先想像如果我在他/她的情況下會怎樣做</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXPRESSIVE WRITING AND FORGIVENESS MOTIVATIONS

Appendix F

Control Group Writing Instruction

第一節
現在請你用 20 分鐘，回應以下問題：
唱反調會破壞社會和諧嗎？
請在文章舉個人經歷以外的客觀例子來作詳細的剖析。

第二節
現在請你用 20 分鐘，回應以下問題：
分辨善惡，應該根據良知還是法律？
請在文章舉個人經歷以外的客觀例子來作詳細的解釋。

第三節
現在請你用 20 分鐘，回應以下問題：
愛情需要理性嗎？
請在文章舉個人經歷以外的客觀例子來作詳細的解釋。
在填寫問卷時，你曾寫下一次被人得罪的經歷（經歷甲）。現在請你用 20 分鐘，多寫一些關於那經歷甲，尤其是你心底裏對於那事件及 A 者最深切的想法及情感（例如事情順利時感到快樂、獨自渡過節日而感到孤單、失去親愛而感到難過、受到不公的對待而感到氣憤等等）。

你可用你最得心應手的語言來完成此寫作練習，亦不用擔心修辭造句、錯別字或花心思修飾文章，你大可暢所欲言地寫下你最真摯及深切的想法及情感。請用盡 20 分鐘，時間一到便會有提示，你毋須為時間擔心。如你在指定時間前完成，請重新再思索整件事的來龍去脈及你的情感。

此寫作並不會被公開，只是作研究用途，並將會受到嚴格的保密，你可放鬆心情並盡情地寫。
第一節
在填寫問卷時，你曾寫下一次被人得罪的經歷（經歷甲）。現在請你用 20 分鐘，多寫一些關於那經歷甲，尤其是你心底裏對於那事件及 A 者最深切的想法及情感（例如事情順利時感到快樂、獨自渡過節日而感到孤單、失去摯友而感到難過、受到不公的對待而感到氣憤等等）。

除此之外，也請你想一想究竟 A 者為何會得罪你。你可在寫作時探究以下問題：
(1) 經歷甲有多大程度是 A 者之錯？
(2) A 者有多大程度是有意得罪你？
(3) A 者有多大機會是因爲環境或個人之外的其他因素才迫不得意得罪了你？

你可用你最得心應手的語言來完成此寫作練習，亦不用擔心修辭造句、錯別字或花心思修飾文章，你大可暢所欲言地寫出你最真摯及深切的想法及情感。請用盡 20 分鐘，時間一到便會有提示，你毋須為時間擔心。如你在指定時間前完成，請重新再思索整件事的來龍去脈及你的情感。
此寫作並不會被公開，只是作研究用途，並將會受到嚴格的保密，你可放鬆心情並盡情地寫。

第二節
在第一次寫作時，你曾寫下一次被人得罪的經歷（經歷甲）。現在請你用 20 分鐘，多寫一些關於那經歷甲，尤其是你心底裏對於那事件及得罪你的人（A 者）最深切的想法及情感（例如事情順利時感到快樂、獨自渡過節日而感到孤單、失去摯友而感到難過、受到不公的對待而感到氣憤等等）。

除此之外，也請你想一想究竟那人為何會得罪你。假如你是 A 者，易地而處，你會有相同的做法嗎？你還有其他的做法嗎？

你可用你最得心應手的語言來完成此寫作練習，亦不用擔心修辭造句、錯別字或花心思修飾文章，你大可暢所欲言地寫出你最真摯及深切的想法及情感。請用盡 20 分鐘，時間一到便會有提示，你毋須為時間擔心。如你在指定時間前完成，請重新再思索整件事的來龍去脈及你的情感。
此寫作並不會被公開，只是作研究用途，並將會受到嚴格的保密，你可放鬆心情並盡情地寫。
第三節
在之前兩次的寫作時，你曾寫下一次被人得罪的經歷（經歷甲）。現在請你用 20 分鐘，
多寫一些關於那經歷，尤其是你心底裏對於那事件及得罪你的人（A 者）最深切的想
法及情感（例如事情順利時感到快樂，獨自渡過節日而感到孤單，失去親朋而感到難
過，受到不公的對待而感到氣憤等等）。

除此之外，也請你回想過去一件你曾經得罪熟悉的人的經歷（經歷乙）。如果可以的話，
請盡量選擇一個與經歷甲類同的經歷，如果一時想不起類同的經歷，請不用擔心。請回
想過去任何一件你曾經得罪熟悉的人的經歷。經歷乙發生後，你當時怎樣解決事件？你
的當時反應及情感是甚麼？你現在對於經歷乙的情感又是甚麼？

你可用你最得心應手的語言來完成此寫作練習，亦不用擔心修辭造句、錯別字或花心思
修飾文章，你可以暢所欲言地寫下你最真摯及深切的想法及情感。請用盡 20 分鐘，時
間一到便會有提示，你毋須為時間擔心。如你在指定時間前完成，請重新再思索整件事
的來龍去脈及你的情感。

此寫作並不會被公開，只是作研究用途，並將會受到嚴格的保密，你可放鬆心情並盡情
地寫。
EXPRESSIVE WRITING AND FORGIVENESS MOTIVATIONS

Table 1

*Mean, Standard and Correlations of major dependent variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>21.5111</td>
<td>8.34407</td>
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<td>-.257*</td>
<td>-.266*</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Revenge</td>
<td>11.4444</td>
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<td>-.257*</td>
<td>-.254</td>
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<td>.503**</td>
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<td>4.</td>
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<td>7.78943</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.555**</td>
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<td>5.</td>
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<td>4.99393</td>
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</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics for participants' ratings of their writing*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th></th>
<th>SEW</th>
<th></th>
<th>EEW</th>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meaningful</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.72</td>
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Table 3

*Means and Standard Deviation of dependent variables from pre to post-intervention*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Control M</th>
<th>Control SD</th>
<th>SEW M</th>
<th>SEW SD</th>
<th>EEW M</th>
<th>EEW SD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>19.03</td>
<td>8.84</td>
<td>22.70</td>
<td>7.79</td>
<td>22.80</td>
<td>8.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>17.57</td>
<td>7.20</td>
<td>19.20</td>
<td>6.79</td>
<td>17.93</td>
<td>8.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenge</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>10.57</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>11.37</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>12.40</td>
<td>4.70</td>
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<td>Post</td>
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<td>11.03</td>
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<td>8.49</td>
<td>22.73</td>
<td>7.86</td>
<td>21.97</td>
<td>6.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>26.96</td>
<td>9.43</td>
<td>20.87</td>
<td>6.57</td>
<td>26.67</td>
<td>7.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>BES</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>8.49</td>
<td>22.73</td>
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<td>21.97</td>
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<td>Post</td>
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<td>9.43</td>
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<td>3.60</td>
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</table>
EXPRESSIVE WRITING AND FORGIVENESS MOTIVATIONS

Table 4

*EEW Group: Changes in forgiveness variables between lower and higher empathy groups*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>M (Low Empathy)</th>
<th>SD (Low Empathy)</th>
<th>M (High Empathy)</th>
<th>SD (High Empathy)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>25.19</td>
<td>8.08</td>
<td>20.07</td>
<td>7.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>21.31</td>
<td>8.44</td>
<td>14.07</td>
<td>5.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revenge</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>11.88</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>10.31</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>9.36</td>
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<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>19.56</td>
<td>6.84</td>
<td>24.71</td>
<td>6.01</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>21.06</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>33.07</td>
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Table 5

EEW Group: Changes in forgiveness variables between lower and higher perspective-taking groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Low PTS M</th>
<th>Low PTS SD</th>
<th>High PTS M</th>
<th>High PTS SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>Pre</td>
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<td>3.66</td>
<td>9.13</td>
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</table>