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## **Working with Forgiveness in Gestalt Therapy**

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### **Abstract**

In recent years, much has been written about forgiveness as a way to overcome the intense hurt and anger from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, divorce, infidelity, and other past acts of betrayal. Although there is growing interest in forgiveness as a therapeutic issue, it is noteworthy that the Gestalt therapy literature has very few references to forgiveness and how to work with forgiveness in therapy. This article first presents some ways to conceptualize forgiveness. Forgiveness is then viewed through the lenses of Gestalt theory and Jewish spiritual practice. Finally, through the integration of Gestalt methodology and Jewish spiritual practice, some ways to work with forgiveness in Gestalt therapy are presented and discussed.

### **Introduction**

In recent years, much has been written about forgiveness as a way to overcome the intense hurt and anger from past violations and acts of betrayal (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Kersting, 2003; Richards & Bergin, 1997). However, clients who are victims of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, divorce, infidelity, and other personal tragedies are often quite conflicted about forgiveness. Do they try to forgive because it's the "right thing to do"? Is forgiveness necessary for healing to occur? Are some things unforgivable? Even if clients want to forgive, how would they do it? In some instances, clients look to their religions or spiritual traditions for guidance and find that forgiveness is often advocated with little regard for the clients' readiness, which can add additional pressure to finish one's emotional business before one is ready. Although there is growing interest in forgiveness as a therapeutic issue, it is surprising that the Gestalt therapy literature has so few references to forgiveness and how to work with forgiveness in therapy.

This article first presents some ways to conceptualize forgiveness. Forgiveness is then viewed through the lenses of Gestalt theory and Jewish spiritual practice. Finally, through the integration of Gestalt methodology and Jewish spiritual practice, some ways to work with forgiveness in therapy are presented and discussed.

### **Characteristics of Forgiveness**

There seems to be considerable confusion for clients and therapists alike about what forgiveness actually is. Luskin (2002) states that forgiveness does not mean feeling good toward the offender nor does it mean forgetting what happened. Also, forgiveness does not seem to be a very natural response. In fact, forgiveness seems to go against our natural tendency. What's the first response when someone hurts us? It's often to want to hurt them back or get even with them.

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\* I am grateful to my clients who took the risk to share with me their deepest struggles about forgiveness, and my students who participated with enthusiasm as we studied forgiveness and other spiritual practices together.

When someone hurts us, we can do one of three things. We can seek revenge and/or retribution, do nothing, or work toward letting go of our hurt. When one seeks revenge, one feels resentment till he/she “gets even” or the other “gets what’s due him.” This is based on an economy of fairness and justice such as “an eye for an eye.” On the one hand, this can temporarily help the person feel more alive, less helpless, and more powerful. On the other hand, one who adopts this stance is often stuck in his/her own bitterness with little relief in sight. As the Chinese proverb says, “A person who seeks revenge should dig two graves.” To do nothing in response to being hurt also leaves the person stuck in the pain and bitterness of the experience, often feeling helpless and powerless as well.

Forgiveness is the work of letting go of hurt and resentment and is based on an economy of love and abundance. Although this is perhaps the least natural response, it can certainly be learned and cultivated (Frankel, 2003; Schachter-Shalomi, 1999; Schimmel, 2002; Spring, 2004). Forgiveness is choice -- a choice about how one deals with the present experience of past violations and betrayals. Forgiveness also involves letting go. Webster’s dictionary defines forgiveness as, “to give up resentment” (Mish, 1998, p. 458). Forgiveness doesn’t mean you’ve grown to like the person who hurt you, are friends with the person, socialize with the person, or even have a relationship with the person. It also doesn’t mean that you’re OK with what happened. What you’re doing in forgiveness is letting go of the energy, the attachment, or resentment toward the person, or event. It’s an unhooking. You’re putting your energy elsewhere.

Forgiveness is also in one’s own self-interest. We forgive for ourselves so the resentment doesn’t build up and cause physical or emotional pain. Forgiveness actually releases the person from the bond that holds him to the hurtful person or event. In short, to forgive an act doesn’t mean to pretend it never existed. It involves letting go of one’s hurt, bitterness, and anger, which prevents the hurtful act from controlling one’s life.

Forgiveness does not necessarily mean reconciliation between the victim and offender. Forgiveness may lead to reconciliation. However, it’s possible that one may let go of her hurt and anger as well as the need to see the offender punished, and still not to want to have a relationship with that person or even have contact with him. Also, reconciliation does not necessarily mean forgiveness. One may decide to reestablish a relationship with the offender and still harbor feelings of hurt and resentment.

Finally, forgiveness is not an end state. It’s a process and it takes time. You don’t come to a place of forgiveness and that’s it. Reminders emerge that bring the hurtful incidents back to us. When that happens we have to do the forgiveness work again and again.

### **Research on Forgiveness**

There is some research that suggests that beginning to forgive, or just thinking about forgiving can lead to fewer health problems, decreased stress, lower heart rate and blood pressure, less anxiety, and more loving feelings toward oneself and others (Enright and Fitzgibbons, 2000). Other studies found that participants who held grudges, or who were angry at spouses for affairs or alcohol/drug use, or who were angry at employers, reported less hurt,

anger, hostility, stress, more optimism, and better overall health after being trained in the practices of forgiveness (Luskin, 2002).

Richards and Bergin (1997) state that forgiveness can lead to positive changes in one's sense of well-being, physical and mental health, sense of empowerment, and possible reconciliation between the victim and offender. Forgiveness has also been shown to be a component of psychological healing (Freedman & Enright, 1996; Richards & Bergin, 1997).

Forgiveness has been shown to reduce anger, irritability, anxiety, and obsessive thinking with some clients diagnosed with PTSD, depression, anxiety and substance abuse. (Enright and Fitzgibbons, 2000). Forgiveness has also been shown to be effective in couples therapy, especially when infidelity is present (Luskin, 2002; Spring, 2004).

Encouraging forgiveness is one of the most widely practiced spiritual interventions by psychotherapists (DiBlasio & Proctor, 1993; Freedman & Enright, 1996). These studies show that, "Therapists have encouraged clients to forgive (a) parents and others who have hurt, abused, or offended them; (b) themselves for their own mistakes and transgressions; (c) God" (Richards and Bergin, 1997, p. 212). What's interesting to note, here, is the almost nonexistent relationship between therapists' religious beliefs and use of forgiveness as a therapeutic intervention. Both DiBlasio (1993) and DiBlasio & Blenda (1991) found little or no relation between therapists who work with forgiveness and their own religious beliefs. In other words, many therapists are working with forgiveness without having to subscribe to or refer to particular religious traditions.

### **Forgiveness in Gestalt Therapy**

Direct references to forgiveness are practically absent in the Gestalt therapy literature. Kepner (1995) states, "Forgiveness is not a requirement for healing, although it is often intrinsic to the healing path for many survivors..." (p. 144). Forgiveness is also mentioned as a possible experiment to deal with clients' issues about God (Harris, 2000). However, if we consider forgiveness to be a kind of closure, there are many indirect references to forgiveness in the Gestalt literature. According to Polster and Polster (1973),

All experience hangs around until a person is finished with it. ...although one can tolerate considerable unfinished experience, these incompleting directions do seek completion and, when they get powerful enough, the individual is beset with preoccupation, compulsive behavior, wariness, oppressive energy and much self-defeating activity [p.36].

For clients who are victims of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, there is usually much hurt, anger, and mistrust in their relationships. Preoccupation is often rampant. The victim can obsess about the abuse and how and why it happened. The victim can further obsess about wanting to hurt the offender and wanting misery to befall him, restitution to happen, and justice to be served. In addition, the victim often experiences a variety of physical and emotional difficulties such as nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety in social situations, guilt, self-blame, shame, difficulties in their relationships, moodiness, and outburst of anger, all of which serve to distract

and terribly disable the individual. Individuals are therefore stuck in the intensity, chaos, and negativity of their abuse as major, current unfinished business that begs to be addressed.

Gestalt theory says that there is an innate tendency for us to want to finish or complete our experience, (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951). Then, when closure happens, “the preoccupation with the old incompleteness is resolved and one can move on to current possibilities” (Poster & Polster, 1973, p. 37). Therefore, with clients who have been abused, there is a tendency to want to “finish with the abuse,” to free oneself from the pain, anger, and mistrust which accompanies their abuse. Working with forgiveness can be one of the Gestalt methods that is “designed and implemented to facilitate patients’ finishing their old business, (and) finding new levels of integration” (Woldt and Stein, 1997, p. 168) since forgiveness opens the door for clients to reach some closure through the letting go of long held pain. New ways of being in relationships are then possible, which can be quite transformative.

If we accept that forgiveness is the letting go of one’s hurt, resentment or anger toward the offender, we realize that the client has to deal first with these emotions--both how they were developed and how they are maintained. Forgiveness is most likely to happen when the individual first works through whatever abuse was experienced. When abuse happens in childhood, it’s almost impossible to tell someone about it, or do something to stop it. Even when abuse happens in adolescence or adulthood, it still can be extremely difficult to tell someone or do something about it. This can result in the client feeling helpless and powerless, and stuck in a variety of negative, physical and emotional experiences.

Retroreflection and introjection are two process or contact styles (Wheeler, 1991) in Gestalt therapy that victims of abuse utilize in order to survive the abuse (Kepner, 1995). These would almost certainly be worked with in therapy before any forgiveness work would be considered.

One’s desire to strike back at, hurt, or even kill his offender, and not to being able to do so, can lead to energy that is retroflected or turned back toward the self. An individual such as this may seem “stopped” or “blocked”, overly cautious or hesitant, angry towards herself, and even prone toward self-mutilating behavior. Tammy, a 35-year old mother with two children came to therapy because she was physically abused by her husband. As she described the abuse, she sat with her hands partially folded with her right thumb digging into her left palm. When she became aware of what she was doing, she looked at her hand and noticed she had broken the skin and it was beginning to bleed. Jody, a 21 year-old college student came to therapy because she was depressed and wanted to work out some “difficulties she had at home.” She described the shame, criticism and emotional abuse that she experienced from her mother, and also revealed that she was cutting herself as well.

Both clients, obviously, are miles away from any talk about forgiveness. Their work is to become aware that they have been hurt or abused and to become aware that they are doing to themselves what they want or need to do to the person who is abusing them. Then perhaps they can experience their own feelings of hurt, anger, or rage and express these feelings (symbolically) toward the offender. Clients may need to see a form of “justice” done or restitution made, as well as a way to insure that the abuse will no longer happen (which can include the decision to leave an abusive relationship). Then, forgiveness work may be possible.

When one utilizes introjection and internalizes the feelings, attitudes, beliefs, or behavior of another without choosing them (Polster and Polster, 1973), he is left to define himself in certain, usually negative, ways. Those negative self-definitions can seem as if they fit for the person, but in actuality, they are other people's definitions of who the person is or what the person should do. Or, the person himself fills in his own definition of himself based on his experience.

Andy, a 28-year old, single man was sexually abused by a priest from age 9-12. He recalls feeling very trusting of this priest. He further recalls hearing his family discuss how trustworthy the priest was. And, he even recalls hearing the priest himself say, "You can trust me." As a result of the abuse, Andy understandably concluded, "I can't trust anyone." That became the self-definition he has lived by for the past 16 years. Andy further defined himself as, "dirty" and "unlovable" because, "No one will want to be with me when they find out that I've been sexually abused by a priest." Andy may never get to the point where he can forgive the priest, and may not ever want to consider it. It would be quite significant if he can, as a result of his therapy, begin to forgive himself.

Kepner (1995) presents a Healing Tasks Model for working with survivors of childhood abuse and other traumas. His model, grounded in Gestalt theory and illuminated by numerous clinical examples, describes the developmental phases of a client's psychotherapy and the healing tasks associated with each phase.

He raises a number of potential difficulties in working with forgiveness in therapy. He cautions therapists to be aware not to "project their own beliefs and needs--religious, scientific, or political--onto the client instead of joining in an experiential investigation..."(p. 139). Who would disagree, as this is also important in working with any issue in psychotherapy. In his experience, survivors of abuse can "finish with their healing...without forgiving their abusers" (p. 139). The fact that more empirical evidence is needed to substantiate whether or not forgiveness is an important component in healing (Richards & Bergin, 1997), supports this viewpoint.

And, there are other difficulties in working with forgiveness that can be added to the ones already mentioned. The word forgiveness itself is an emotionally loaded word for clients and therapists and, as has been previously stated, forgiveness does not have a consistent definition. It means different things to different people. Finally, therapists and clients alike need to be aware of their own religious and spiritual biases that may create internal or external pressures to consider forgiveness well in advance of the client's readiness.

Kepner seems to imply that, given these possible difficulties, why would the therapist bring up forgiveness? Let the client bring it up first. On the other hand, why not bring it up? Let the therapist keep a watchful eye on the client, where she is in the therapy process, and her readiness to *consider* forgiveness, and at least ask about the possibility to talk about forgiveness. This approach is consistent with some of the research on forgiveness in therapy (Enright and Fitzgibbons, 2000; Richards and Bergin, 1997) and in the Gestalt therapy literature as well.

Zinker (1977) states the importance of consensus between the therapist and client in negotiating experiments. “They (therapists) need clear agreement, a mini-contract, with the client to execute a particular task; at every critical stage of the work, the therapist makes it clear to the client that he can either agree to try something new or agree not to do so” (p. 131). Sometimes the client needs the therapist to introduce an issue. In terms of forgiveness in therapy, “the majority of clients still do not suggest forgiveness as an approach to anger reduction and healing. Therapists may have to take an active role here” (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000, p. 15). The therapist can suggest that forgiveness be considered. Together, the therapist and client can dialogue about it. Zinker (1977) says, “He (the client) has a choice to refuse (an experiment) and that he need only try out behaviors which feel congruent, safe, and comfortable for him” (p. 132). If this is true about doing experiments it would certainly be true about merely talking about an issue. The decision to consider forgiveness, or any issue or experiment in therapy always belongs to the client.

To explore further some ways to work with forgiveness, I turned from the Gestalt therapy literature to some of the spiritual literature, where forgiveness has been talked about for centuries. I went to my tradition - Judaism.

### **Forgiveness in Judaism**

It is important to mention here that the information on forgiveness in Judaism and its uses in therapy is designed to offer the reader but one possible tradition to draw from in working with forgiveness. One need not be Jewish, or even part of any other religion or spiritual tradition in order to utilize this material. As a matter of fact, examples are given in which clients adapt both the material presented and the language, to fit within their own frames of reference. It is also not the purpose of this paper to present what other traditions say about forgiveness and how those traditions can be utilized in therapy. Suffice it to say that there are many other traditions that deal with forgiveness and each one could probably aid in our understanding of how to work with forgiveness. That discussion is for another time.

Forgiveness is an important part of Jewish spiritual practice. During the ten days from Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, through Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, Jews all over the world do their most important spiritual work – the work of forgiveness. Yet, the work of forgiveness is considered so important that it’s unlikely one can do it in only a ten-day period. That’s why each of the three traditional, daily prayer services contains prayers for forgiveness (Scherman, 1998). And, there is a specific prayer to be said each night, at bedtime that also encourages forgiveness (Schachter-Shalomi, 2004; Scherman, 1998).

Specifically, there are three directions of forgiveness work in Judaism. The first is seeking forgiveness when you’ve hurt someone. You are to go to the person you’ve hurt, acknowledge what you’ve done, admit your wrongdoing, and make amends (apologize to the person and to God). You are then required to offer to “fix what you broke” when possible, make whatever financial, emotional, or physical restitution you can, and work to change the behavior. You are considered to have changed your behavior when you’re in the same or similar situation where the hurtful behavior occurred and you make a different response. You respond to an old situation in a new way. When the person you’ve hurt is unwilling to forgive you (which is often the case), Jewish law says that you must go to the person a second time to seek forgiveness. If

you are refused, again, you go a third time. After three serious attempts where you've done the above forgiveness work, you are released from seeking forgiveness from that person.

The second direction is granting forgiveness. If you hurt me and don't come to me to ask forgiveness, I'm stuck with it and have to get unstuck, unhooked, inside myself. The word forgiveness is such a loaded word that I don't even use it at times. I say, "I'm going to work toward freeing myself," or, "I want to let go of my hurt and anger," rather than, "I'm going to work to forgive you." But, freeing myself is not so easy. We might want to let go of our negative energy but often we're not ready or able to do so. Jewish tradition says that the victim is to work toward forgiving the offender. One source states that forgiveness is encouraged regardless of the offense (Newman, 1998). Other sources say that victims of the most violent offenses such as rape or incest are not obligated to forgive (Telushkin, 2000).

The third direction is forgiving oneself. And this is often the most difficult. Sometimes we are much harder on ourselves than we are on anybody else. In this instance we need a way to let go of our anger toward ourselves and to let ourselves "off the hook." Although the traditional sources in Judaism deal primarily with seeking and granting forgiveness, some contemporary interpretations include forgiving oneself (Schachter-Shalomi, 2004).

### **Working with Forgiveness**

In this section I will describe three Gestalt experiments to work with forgiveness. The experiments, based in Gestalt therapy (Polster & Polster, 1973; Zinker, 1979) and Jewish spiritual practice, are: 1) Confrontation of the abuser, 2) Prayers/meditations for forgiveness and 3) The practice of gratitude.

#### *1. Confrontation of the abuser*

These experiments involve the active expression of hurt, anger, resentment, or rage toward the offender (symbolically) and are usually a first step in forgiveness work. The expression of such intense feelings is necessary to create an "emotional space" for the client to be ready to consider forgiveness. Any experiment that allows the client to face the offender would fit in this category. Such experiments would include dialogue, enactment, and use of writing, art materials, or whatever fosters direct expression of the pain that surrounds the abuse. This experiment can also be used in the many instances in which the client is angry with God or blames God for what happened (Harris, 2000).

Michelle is a 38-year old art teacher who came to therapy with many symptoms of anxiety and PTSD. What emerged were memories of childhood sexual abuse by her uncle. As we discussed how to have her confront her uncle, Michelle had the idea of drawing pictures of him and then destroying the pictures. The artist in took over and she came to sessions with several almost life size, cardboard drawings of her uncle. The confrontation of the offender experiment involved a number of sessions of Michelle talking, yelling, screaming, and using scissors, to cut, poke, and stab these pictures. Neither of us mentioned forgiveness for almost a year because these experiments, and other similar ones, were the focus of her work.

## 2. Prayers/Meditations for Forgiveness

Meditation has been shown to have significant health benefits, including lower heart rate, blood pressure, stress levels, and better overall physical and mental health (Benson, 1996). Meditation can also help clients with cardiovascular and autoimmune problems, and even some cancers (Benson, 1996; Borysenko & Borysenko, 1994). What's more startling is the similar research on prayer. Dossey (1993; 1996) cites numerous studies that show the positive effects prayer has on one's physical and emotional well-being. And, Benson (1996) found no significant differences between individuals who had a regular meditation practice and individuals who had a regular prayer practice. Both practices were equally effective in helping to reduce stress.

The traditional Jewish forgiveness prayer, The Bedtime Shema, (Scherman, 1998) is to be said each evening just before going to sleep. In its original form, which follows, it was designed as a prayer to forgive others.

Master of the universe, I hereby forgive anyone who angered or antagonized me or who sinned against me--whether against my body, my property, my honor, or against anything of mine; whether he did so accidentally, willfully, carelessly, or purposely; whether through speech, deed, thought, or notion; whether in this transmigration\*\* or another transmigration--I forgive every Jew\*\*\*. May no man be punished because of me. May it be your will, HASHEM\*\*\*\*, my God and the God of my forefathers, that I may sin no more. Whatever sins I have done before You, may You blot out in Your abundant mercies, but not through suffering or bad illnesses. May the expressions of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart find favor before You, HASHEM, my Rock and my Redeemer...Hear O Israel: HASHEM is our God, HASHEM, the One and Only [p.289].

A recent adaptation of this prayer also includes a section on self-forgiveness. "Let me forgive others, let me forgive myself, but also let me change in ways that make it easy for me to avoid paths of hurtfulness to others" (Schachter-Shalomi, 2004, p. 36). Rabbi Schachter-Shalomi (1999) says that the goal of a daily forgiveness prayer is to free oneself from the burdens of hanging on to resentments so the "emotional baggage" doesn't accumulate from one day to the next.

I ask clients to look at the traditional forgiveness prayer and use it as a guideline from which to write their own prayer. Clients modify the content and language of the prayer to fit their own experience, as well as their own religious or spiritual value system.

Kathy is 42 with a 17 year-old daughter. She came to therapy after a very bitter divorce that left her feeling hurt, angry and betrayed by her ex-husband. She expressed an interest in letting go of her hurt and anger toward her ex-husband and was comfortable with the idea of working with prayer as a therapeutic experiment. We used the traditional Bedtime Shema as a starting point. She then modified the prayer structure, content, and language to make it relevant and useful. Her evening forgiveness prayer follows.

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\*\* Intended as, "This lifetime or another." (One of the few references in Judaism to reincarnation).

\*\*\* Intended as, "I forgive everyone" (who has hurt me).

\*\*\*\* Literally, "The Name" and one of the names for God.

Holy One, You who created and recreates. I desire to come before you and honestly review this day. As an act of will I forgive each person who has violated me today whether in thought, word or deed. I pray that all anger, bitterness, and resentment for present or past transgressions be dissolved and washed away onto the ocean of your great love and wisdom. I also acknowledge how imperfectly I love. I, therefore, ask forgiveness for all thoughts, words and deeds that have wounded You, others and myself. Help me to work toward forgiving (name of ex-husband). Help me to come to a place of truth in these words. Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me so that I am able to lie down in peace and sleep. May the word of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart, be acceptable to you, God my Savior.

There are other sources that provide forgiveness meditations for use in therapy and in daily life, and these can be either secular or religious (Frankel, 2003; Walsh, 1999). Space limitations prevent the inclusion of the meditations here.

### *3. The Practice of Gratitude*

Jewish tradition says that we are to “go to sleep with forgiveness and wake up with gratitude.” Even when someone has experienced the trauma of abuse, serious illness, loss of a job or a loved one, there is still much for which to be thankful. The practice of gratitude is basically very simple. It’s an ongoing way to recognize the good that’s already present in one’s life. I do not want to imply that the practice of gratitude is an avoidance of the seriousness of what clients need to work out in therapy. The problem is, however, that we can overly focus on what we don’t have in our lives and minimize or possibly be blind to what we do have. Often, even the most profoundly depressed or suicidal clients can feel grateful about something.

I’ve asked clients to make and keep a gratitude list – an accounting of things they are thankful, appreciative, or grateful for in their lives. Sometimes clients are reluctant to consider this because they are so focused on what isn’t working for them. However, I’ve found that it’s possible to work with one’s hurt, anger, and resentment while simultaneously beginning to introduce gratitude.

Whatever clients feel grateful for in their lives--their relationships, health, possessions, things in nature, are added to the gratitude list. Clients can compose the gratitude list in the therapy session or as homework. And, I ask that they start their day by spending a few minutes reading over their list. The list changes over time as items are added (rarely are items deleted). It’s no surprise to find that clients feel better as the list grows.

Tom is a 29-year old single man who came to therapy to deal with childhood sexual abuse. The gratitude list was started one month after being discharged from a 5-day hospitalization for a suicide attempt and three months after beginning therapy. He came up with one item for his gratitude list.

I am grateful I have a stable, well paying job.

(Two months later, he added the following two items)

I’m grateful I have a good work ethic.

I’m grateful I’m in relatively good health.

(Three months later he added the following two items)

I'm grateful I have a curious and inquisitive nature.  
I'm grateful for my moral upbringing from my parents.  
(Three months later he added the following three items)  
I'm grateful I don't hate myself nearly as much now.  
I'm grateful I'm not living in constant negativity.  
I'm grateful I don't feel like killing myself.

When clients such as Tom combine an evening forgiveness prayer to let go of their anger, with a gratitude list to start their day, they find can become less stuck in their hurt and pain and their days begin to be more peaceful.

## Conclusion

The growing interest in forgiveness as a therapeutic issue, the research that indicates the health benefits of forgiveness, and the limited theoretical writing about forgiveness in Gestalt therapy, all point to a need to conceptualize and to work with forgiveness within a Gestalt framework. Additional theoretical and clinical support for forgiveness work can be found in Jewish spiritual practice. Through the integration of Gestalt theory and Jewish spiritual practice, three experiments were discussed to work with forgiveness in Gestalt therapy. These included confrontation of the offender, forgiveness prayers and meditations, and the practice of gratitude. It is my hope that Gestalt therapists will consider the importance of forgiveness and will begin to work with forgiveness in Gestalt therapy.

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