CHAPTER – II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introducing Strength Building Program (SBP) of Gratitude and Forgiveness illustrates positive psychology’s increasing focus as how to foster happiness among youth. This program seems particularly invaluable for youth, who are at a critical development stage and making key choices about their future. Among different character strengths, gratitude and forgiveness emerge as two important strengths in interpersonal situations (Bono & McCullough, 2006). A central connection between these two constructs is human relationship where individuals experience both help and harm. Gratitude relates to willingness to forgive (DeShea, 2003), which is associated with the absence of psychopathological traits (Maltby et al., 2008), and is integral to positive functioning (Maltby, Day, & Barber, 2005).

The following studies reveal the nature of relationship of independent variables of the present study namely gratitude and forgiveness and these research evidences points to the fact that these strengths together as a ‘package’ can lead to an added improvement in happiness among youth over time.

According to Newman (2002) existing research based on forgiveness and gratitude, suggested forgiveness and gratitude as positive psychological constructs that are relevant for psychological, physical, and relational well-being. Relationships can be a cause of great happiness and of great distress in individual’s lives. Gratitude help clients to savor the benefits that they receive from others, thereby extending the emotional benefits that people receive from their positive social interactions with others. On the other side of the social coin, forgiveness help to minimize the negative consequences of interpersonal harm for people’s health, well-being, and social relationships. Creative approaches to cognitive psychotherapy that include the judicious use of gratitude and forgiveness help give “an extra nudge” to the adaptive changes that cognitive therapists seek to instill in their clients.
Chan (2010) addressed the perennial problem of teacher burnout of Hong Kong suggesting that intervention efforts could be more productively shifted from coping with symptoms or components of burnout to promoting or enhancing the antithesis of burnout. Components of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced sense of personal accomplishment) are diametrically opposites of the good life (the pleasant life, the engaged life, and the meaningful life), which is led or lived by people who build and cultivate positive character strengths. Preliminary data was gathered in developing ‘gratitude interventions’ using the ‘count-your-blessings’ format with ‘Naikan self-reflection’ questions for meditation and this approach has been extended to the development of forgiveness interventions using a modified ‘count-your-misfortunes’ format with corresponding ‘Naikan-like self-reflection’ questions. Forgiveness helped minimize the negative consequences of interpersonal harm for teachers’ health, well-being, and social relationships, whereas gratitude helped teachers to savor the benefits that are received from others, thereby enhancing the emotional benefits from their positive interactions with others. Connection of well-being with forgiveness and gratitude further suggested that strength-based interventions based on forgiveness and gratitude are effective and could be integrated into the positive approaches to combating burnout.

Wnuk, Marcinkowski & Kalisz (2010) carried out a study with the main aim to examine whether gratitude is related to forgiveness. An additional aim was to verify if gratitude, forgiveness and hope are positively correlated with satisfaction in life. The sample consisted of 75 students of public health and physiotherapy graduate courses at the university of Bydgoszcz. Tools used were Trangression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Scale- TRIM-12, Gratitude Questionnaire- Q-6, Herth Hope Index- HHI, Satisfaction with Life Scale- SWLS. The hypothesis claiming the dependence between gratitude and forgiveness, expressed by avoiding the wrongdoer and motivation for abandoning revenge was partially confirmed. Findings indicated that the students, who are characterized by a high level of gratitude, are at the same time highly motivated not to take revenge. Being grateful is not connected with the motivation to avoid the person who caused pain, harm and suffering. The results indicated a negative relationship between gratitude and motivate to revenge as well as
positive relationship between gratitude and hope were found. Hope was also positively related with life satisfaction.

Hill & Allemand (2011) carried out a study on a large sample of Swiss adults (N=962) to examine the role of gratitude and forgivingness on well-being in adulthood (assessed as positive affect, negative affect, optimism, pessimism, and satisfaction with life. The results pointed to three primary findings. First, grateful and forgiving adults report greater well-being in adulthood and these effects are not moderated by age, gender, or marital status. Second, both traits uniquely predict well-being when controlling for each other, suggesting the importance of studying multiple moral personality variables. Third, these two traits largely remained significant predictors of well-being when controlling for the Big Five traits.

Breen, Kashdan, Lenser & Fincham (2011) carried out a study where gratitude and forgiveness were examined in the same sample using self and confidant reports to better understand how these strengths converge and diverge with personality factors, emotional vulnerabilities and positive psychological processes. Confidant data demonstrated that strengths were observable by others and related to observer perceptions well being. Character strengths were positively related with agreeableness (r=0.32 to 0.58), extraversion (r=0.17 to 0.22), conscientiousness (r=0.27 to 0.39), and negatively correlated with neuroticism(r=0.27 to 0.59). Openness to experience to only positively correlated with forgiveness of self (r=0.17). Also, character strengths were negatively correlated with emotional vulnerabilities including anger (r=-0.29 to -0.61), loneliness (r= -0.28 to -0.51) and depressive symptoms(r=-0.31 to -0.53). Strengths were positively correlated with acceptance (r=0.25 to 0.58), self compassion (r=0.35 to 0.68) and perspective taking (r=0.25 to 0.44) but developed unique correlations with aspects of empathy.

Scheidle (2011) conducted a study on seventy participants from Christian churches in Buffalo, New York and Southern New Jersey. Their ages ranged from 60-89 (M= 71.71, SD = 6.8). Tools used in this study included Gratitude Questionnaire - 6, Gratitude, Resentment, and Appreciation Test, Heartland Forgiveness Scale, Philadelphia Geriatric Center Morale Scale, RAND 36-Item Short Form Health
Survey, Satisfaction with Life Scale, Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, and Religious Commitment Inventory-10. Multiple linear regression analyses was conducted to test the hypotheses that forgiveness and gratitude could predict aspects of subjective well-being. Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were calculated to ascertain the degree to which there were significant associations between the predictor and dependent variables. Results revealed that Christian older adults' forgiving disposition, grateful disposition, and trait gratitude jointly predicted most aspects of subjective well-being. Grateful disposition was found to be the most significant predictor of positive affect, explaining 11% of the variance of the Christian older adults' experiences of positive emotions. Trait gratitude was found to be a significant predictor of morale, accounting for 12% of the variance of participants' levels of morale. Forgiving disposition was found to be a significantly unique predictor of emotional well-being and negative affect, accounting for 9% of the unique variance in emotional well-being and 14% of the unique variance in negative affect experienced by Christian older adults.

Szcześniak & Soares (2011) carried out a study which aimed to examine whether and how life satisfaction is related to propensity to forgive one's transgressor. The main aim of the study was to verify the extend to which people that are happy and satisfied with their lives are disposed to forgive. Additionally, it also explored the relationship between life satisfaction and optimism and gratitude. The study was carried out among Italian citizens, it involved 338 persons between 16 and 83 years of age ($M=32.11; SD=14.53$). The sample included 228 women (67.5%) and 109 men (32.2%). Following research tools were used: Satisfaction With Life Scale, Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory, Gratitude Questionnaire, and Learned Optimism Test. In light of Karremans’ and Bono’s results it was assumed that persons low in forgiving and high in avoiding the offender or motivated to seek revenge would be less likely to report their satisfactory subjective well-being. Simultaneously it was hypothesized that happy people, who evaluate favourably the overall quality of their life, would be also more optimistic and grateful. In order to measure the degree of linear relationship between the variables taken into consideration, Pearson correlation formula was used. Results revealed that among the
study participants satisfaction with life was positively correlated with the conviction about a permanent and ubiquitous nature of positive events ($r = 0.19$, $p < .01$), hope ($r = 0.25$, $p < .01$), and gratitude ($r = 0.49$, $p < .01$). The study also observed a negative correlation between satisfaction with life, the motivation for revenge ($r = -0.15$, $p < .05$) and avoidance motivation ($r = -0.19$, $p < .01$) and the perception of a permanent and ubiquitous nature of adverse events ($r = -0.09$).

The present chapter attempts to explore the inter-relationships among variables of the present study by tracing earlier theoretical and empirical studies conducted in respective field. Thus, the present research endeavors to unfold, “Strength of Gratitude and Forgiveness and its effect on Happiness”, thereby facilitating the formulation of hypotheses.

A detailed probe into the vast amount of research in the area of gratitude, forgiveness and happiness revealed that the available research can be broadly categorized into two major sections which are discussed separately in the ensuing chapter i.e.

- Gratitude and Happiness
- Forgiveness and Happiness

2.1 Gratitude and Happiness

Gratitude has been well established as a universal human attribute. Its presence is felt and expressed in different ways by virtually all peoples, of all cultures, worldwide. Besides contributing to the maintenance of reciprocal social exchanges and interpersonal bonds, gratitude also adds to individuals' feelings of well-being and to their quality of life (Bono & McCullough, 2006). Existing research suggests that gratitude is a typically pleasant experience that is linked to contentment, happiness and hope. A study of over 12000 subjects revealed that the character strength of gratitude was amongst the most robust predictors of life satisfaction (Peterson, Ruch, Beerman, Park & Seligman, 2007).
Subjective well-being takes a broad view of happiness. It is defined as and comprise of life satisfaction, presence of positive affect and a relative absence of negative affect. Together the three components are often referred to as happiness. Happiness stems from subjective well-being, which stems from satisfaction with life, further stemming from the feelings of positive affect which ultimately impinge on an individual’s emotional, social and physical and mental health. Therefore, the terms life-satisfaction, well-being and happiness are used interchangeably to describe one’s perceived satisfaction with life. The following review substantiates the relationship in context to all above related constructs of happiness and gratitude.

A brief account of studies citing the role of gratitude in context to all above related constructs of happiness is mentioned below and this section incorporates both correlational as well as experimental and intervention studies.

2.1.1 Correlational studies

In a series of studies, McCullough et al. (2002) obtained positive associations between gratitude as an affective trait (i.e., a personality-based proneness to experience grateful emotion) and measures of positive emotionality, vitality, happiness, satisfaction with life, hope, and optimism. For example, tools used were Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ–6) was correlated at \( r=0.53 \) with Satisfaction with Life Scale. It was also found that the disposition to experience gratitude was negatively related to symptoms of depression and anxiety.

In an early, large-scale study Park, Peterson, and Seligman (2004) showed that almost all of the 24 character strengths specified by Peterson and Seligman (2004) correlated with global life satisfaction. The strengths of love, gratitude, hope, curiosity, zest, and perspective/wisdom emerged as most robustly linked to life satisfaction (correlations in the .35 to .60 range), followed by strengths such as persistence, self-regulation, spirituality, forgiveness, social intelligence, humor, leadership, bravery, citizenship, integrity, and kindness(correlations in the .20 to .30 range). The character strengths that exhibited the lowest, albeit still significant, associations with life satisfaction were fairness, prudence, love of learning, judgment, appreciation of beauty, creativity, and modesty/humility (in the .05 to .20 range)
Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson (2005) conducted a meta-analysis to see the effect of gratitude on happiness. It was found in a diverse set of populations including adults on internet, college students and in clinical populations that a significant, consistent and sizeable effect of gratitude on happiness is seen. Grateful adolescents appear to be happy adolescents, and the effects of gratitude interventions with adolescents mirror those with adults. The effect was confirmed in both experimental and correlation studies.

Polak & McCullough (2006) conducted an empirical research on the relationships among materialism, gratitude, and well-being. The sample consisted of 148 undergraduate participants (97 women; 51 men). Materialistic strivings are considered a cause of unhappiness. Gratitude, on the other hand both in its manifestations as a chronic affective trait and as a more temporary emotional experience may be a cause of happiness. Gratitude as an affective trait was measured with the GQ-6 (McCullough et al., 2002). Materialism was measured with the financial success subscale of the Revised Aspiration Index (Kasser and Ryan, 1993) and the Materialistic Desires Scale (Kasser, 2004), GQ-6 was negatively correlated with both the Materialistic Desires Scale r (N=148) = 0.24, p<0.01 and the financial success scale, r (N=148) = 0.19, p<0.05. The measure of current grateful emotion was correlated r (N=148) = 0.16, and 0.041 (not significant), respectively, with the Materialistic Desires Scale and the financial success measure of materialistic strivings. On the basis of correlational data of gratitude and materialism, it was proposed that gratitude may have the potential to reduce materialistic strivings and consequently increase happiness. Similarly more recently, Froh, Emmons, Card, Bono, & Wilson in (2011) founded gratitude to be positively related with absorption in activities, social integration (or the motivation to connect and contribute to one’s society/community), and negatively related with envy and materialism among late adolescents.

Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park & Seligman (2007) carried out the study on a sample of US adults (N=12,439) who completed online surveys in English measuring character strengths, orientations to happiness (engagement, pleasure, and meaning), and life satisfaction, and a sample of Swiss adults (N=445) completed paper-and-
pencil versions of the same surveys in German. In both samples, the character strengths most highly linked to life satisfaction included love, hope, curiosity, and zest. Gratitude was among the most robust predictors of life satisfaction in the US sample, whereas perseverance was among the most robust predictors in the Swiss sample. In both samples, the strengths of character most associated with life satisfaction were associated with orientations to pleasure, to engagement, and to meaning, implying that the most fulfilling character strengths are those that make possible a full life.

Toussaint & Friedman (2008) conducted a study on forgiveness and gratitude as positive psychological characteristics that are connected to well-being. The study was undertaken on a population of psychotherapy outpatients and examined the extent to which affect and beliefs mediated these relationships. Participants were 72 outpatients who completed a battery of assessments as part of a standard intake protocol. Results showed that forgiveness and gratitude were both positively and strongly associated with well-being and largely, though not completely, mediated by affect and belief. Also, forgiveness and gratitude have an important place in the positive psychologists’ repertoire of well-being enhancing techniques and exercises in general, and also with a clinical psychotherapy population.

Froh, Yurkewicz & Kashdan (2009) carried out a study among 154 middle school students aged (11-13 years). Gratitude was examined to identify benefits from its experience and expression. Students completed measures of subjective well-being, social support, prosocial behavior, and physical symptoms. Results revealed positive associations between gratitude and positive affect, global and domain specific life satisfaction, optimism, social support, and prosocial behavior; most relations remained even after controlling for positive affect. Gratitude demonstrated a negative relation with physical symptoms, but not with negative affect. Gratitude demonstrated strong relations with the following positive affects: proud, hopeful, inspired, forgiving, and excited.

Scheidle (2011) conducted a study on seventy participants from Christian churches in Buffalo, New York and Southern New Jersey. Their ages ranged from 60-
89 (M = 71.71, SD = 6.8). Tools used in this study included Gratitude Questionnaire - 6, Gratitude, Resentment, and Appreciation Test, Heartland Forgiveness Scale, Philadelphia Geriatric Center Morale Scale, RAND 36-Item Short Form Health Survey, Satisfaction with Life Scale, Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, and Religious Commitment Inventory-I0. Multiple linear regression analyses was conducted to test the hypotheses that forgiveness and gratitude could predict aspects of subjective well-being. Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were calculated to ascertain the degree to which there were significant associations between the predictor and dependent variables. Results revealed that Christian older adults' forgiving disposition, grateful disposition, and trait gratitude jointly predicted most aspects of subjective well-being. Grateful disposition was found to be the most significant predictor of positive affect, explaining 11% of the variance of the Christian older adults' experiences of positive emotions. Trait gratitude was found to be a significant predictor of morale, accounting for 12% of the variance of participants' levels of morale. Forgiving disposition was found to be a significantly unique predictor of emotional well-being and negative affect, accounting for 9% of the unique variance in emotional well-being and 14% of the unique variance in negative affect experienced by Christian older adults.

Croxford (2011) carried out a study on 812 adolescents (aged 14-18 years) in Gauteng which investigated the prevalence of gratitude and the relationship between gratitude and subjective well-being. A quantitative non-experimental design was employed and data was collected through self report questionnaires. Results indicated that adolescents experienced relatively higher levels of gratitude. Female participants reported a higher prevalence of state and trait gratitude than male participants. The only statistically significant difference in the prevalence of gratitude among individuals from various population groups was in levels of state gratitude, with Indian adolescents reporting higher scores than White adolescents. Both trait and state gratitude were related to subjective well being, although the relationship between trait gratitude and subjective well being was stronger than the relationship between state gratitude and subjective well being.
Hasemeyer (2013) conducted a study utilising a correlational research design to explore the relationships between gratitude and adolescents’ psychological, social, and academic well-being in a diverse sample of 499 high school students. Results of multiple regression analyses that controlled for potential effects of student demographic features on outcomes showed that higher levels of gratitude predicted more life satisfaction ($\beta=.63, sr^2=.40$), less internalizing symptoms ($\beta=-.44, sr^2=.19$), more social support from parents ($\beta=.50, sr^2=.25$), teachers ($\beta=.28, sr^2=.08$), and peers ($\beta=.34, sr^2=.12$), higher grades ($\beta=.12, sr^2=.014$), and better academic self-perceptions ($\beta=.30, sr^2=.09$). These relationships were generally the same for boys and girls, with the exception that the inverse link between gratitude and internalizing symptoms of psychopathology was stronger for girls than for boys. Social support from parents partially mediated the relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction, fully mediated the relationship between gratitude and internalizing symptoms for boys, and partially mediated the relationship between gratitude and internalizing symptoms for girls. Teacher support partially mediated the relationship between gratitude and students’ academic self-perceptions. These mediator effects provide support for Frederickson’s (2001) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions in that gratitude builds and strengthens student’s supportive social network, which in turn leads to better psychological, academic functioning and also their happiness.

Layous & Lyumomirsky (January, 2014) carried out a study keeping in consideration the theoretical and applied implications of the introduction of a benefit-appraisal intervention to promote gratitude among youth by Froh et al 2010. The study of its sort is an important step in increasing gratitude in children and stimulating thinking about the developmental processes associated with gratitude, as well as its long-term downstream consequences. Firstly, the developmental competencies that children need to master before they can benefit from this intervention were listed and the target curriculum was successful among 8- to 11-year-olds, but it was predicted that it would be less effective in children of younger ages. As children’s theory of mind and capacity to understand emotions and take another’s perspective develop, so too will their ability to feel and express heartfelt gratitude and, in turn, their capacity
to benefit from gratitude inductions. Second, implications of instilling a habit of gratitude in youth were emphasized specifically because gratitude is associated with greater well-being and stronger social relationships. It further predicted that fostering gratitude in youth could give rise to numerous positive long-term consequences.

2.1.2 Experimental and Intervention studies:

The most convincing evidence that gratitude can improve youth well-being and happiness comes from intervention studies (Froh, et al, 2010) and the efficacy of gratitude interventions has been studied in clinical samples (Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005), student populations (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006), and general adult populations (Seligman, Steen, & Peterson, 2005).

VandeCreek, Janus, Pennebaker and Binau (2002) carried out a study in which participants were asked to pray and write letters to God and found that both prayer and the letters increased insight and positive emotion, more so than simple written descriptions, where a single letter to God had the most impact. The authors explained that the act of praying or explaining to another (in this case in a letter to God) was more conducive to personal insight and greater positive emotional formulations about life events. In other words, writing a letter to God was found to improve participant’s positive feelings about life events.

Watkins et al (2003) conducted a laboratory study on 200 participants to support the proposition that gratitude improves subjective well-being. They were instructed to engage in one of three experimental conditions: (a) thinking about someone to whom they felt grateful; (b) writing about someone to whom they felt grateful; or (c) writing a letter to someone to whom they felt grateful. All three of these experimental conditions led to greater short-term increases in positive affect and greater short-term reductions in negative affect than did a control condition (i.e., writing about the layout of one’s living room). The results showed that participants who engaged in the gratitude exercise showed increase in their experiences of positive emotion such as happiness immediately after the exercise, and this effect was strongest for the participants who were asked to think about a person for whom they were grateful.
Emmons & McCullough (2003a) conducted a study on college students (undergraduates) to see the effect of gratitude on well-being. Students were randomly placed into one of three conditions, (gratitude, hassles, or events), each of which lasted for nine weeks. Participants were given weekly packets in which they were to write down different things depending on their condition. In the gratitude condition, students were asked to write down several experiences for which they were grateful. In the hassles condition, students wrote down annoyances they experienced in the previous week. Finally, in the events condition, students wrote down a number of events that affected them in the past week. No instruction was given about what types of events to include, and responses ranged from “learned CPR” to “cleaned out my shoe closet”. The events condition acted as a neutral control condition to which the other two were compared. Students also completed a series of measures assessing physical symptoms and overall well-being. Results revealed that students in the grateful condition reported significantly greater life satisfaction, greater optimism for the upcoming week, fewer physical symptoms, and, perhaps most surprisingly, exercised significantly more than students in either the events condition or the hassles condition.

Emmons & McCullough (2003b) in a subsequent study with (N= 157; 52 in gratitude condition, 49 in hassles condition, 56 in downward social comparison condition ) replaced the weekly exercises from the previous study with daily diaries that were used for two weeks. This study kept the gratitude and hassles conditions, but replaced the events condition with instructions to write about ways in which the students were better off than other people (downward social comparison). This study found a significant difference in levels of positive affect between participants in the gratitude condition and participants in the hassles condition. Based on these two studies, the causal link between gratitude and well-being is clearly present.

Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson (2005) did a study on 411 participants. Five happiness exercises and one placebo control exercise were given to them. Each exercise was delivered via internet and could be completed within one week. Two of these exercises focused on building gratitude, two focused on increasing awareness of what is most positive about oneself, and one focused on identifying strengths of
character. Out of these conditions, it was found that the biggest short-term effects came from a “gratitude visit” where participants wrote and delivered a letter of gratitude to someone in their life. This condition showed a rise in happiness scores by 10 percent and a significant fall in depression scores, results which lasted up to one month after the visit. Out of the six conditions, the longest lasting effects were caused by the act of writing “gratitude journals” where participants were asked to write down three things they were grateful for every day. Analysis of variance was applied to the study and scores of the participants were compared across time span of one week, one month and two month. These participants’ happiness scores also increased and continued to increase each time they were tested periodically after the experiment. In fact, the greatest benefits were usually found to occur around six months after treatment began. This exercise was so successful that although participants were only asked to continue the journal for a week, many participants continued to keep the journal long after the study was over. Similar results have been found from studies conducted by Emmons and McCullough (2003) and Lyubomirsky et al (2005b).

Seligman et al (2005) in his study examined the effects of a single gratitude-enhancing event: ‘the letter of gratitude’ and asked participants to visit their website to write a letter to a person that they felt they had never properly thanked for a past kindness. These people were then asked to deliver this letter in person to their benefactor. These people experienced a substantial increase in happiness compared to people who wrote about their early memories. Furthermore, the increase was significant through one month post-intervention.

Lyubomirsky et al (2005b) conducted a study in which they asked participants in the experimental condition to contemplate on self-guided exercises like “counting their blessings/ things for which they are grateful” over the course of six weeks. Participants in the control condition completed only assessments of their happiness levels. In addition to the experimental and control condition, participants were asked either to complete the tasks once a week or three times a week. Results indicated that participants who completed the tasks only once a week showed less increase in levels
of well-being compared to the control group, but participants who completed the tasks three times a week showed more increase in happiness.

Sheldon & Lyubomirsky (2006a) conducted a 4-week experimental study (N=67) on college students and examined the motivational predictors and positive emotion outcomes of regularly practicing two mental exercises: ‘counting one’s blessings’ (gratitude) and visualizing best possible selves (BPS). In both conditions, students were required to set time aside each day for four weeks. They were asked to visualize and write about their blessings or their best possible selves. In a third control condition, students were required to merely think about the details of their day for the period of the study. Undergraduates performed one of the three exercises during Session I and were asked to continue performing it at home until Session II (in 2 weeks) and again until Session III (in a further 2 weeks). The results indicated that students in both treatment conditions experienced greater positive affect than the control group and that continuing to perform such exercises predicted stronger positive mood in follow up sessions. Consistent practice of gratitude over time has been described as one of the few mechanisms for enhancing and sustaining happiness over time. Also, a recent meta-analysis of the benefits of positive interventions revealed that such positive activities typically show a moderate effect size (mean $r = 0.30$), suggesting that performing them leads to robust improvements in well being.

Dickerhoof, et al (2007) designed an experiment in which students could participate in one of two exercises—one that purportedly would boost happiness or another that consisted of “cognitive exercises.” To equalize the expectations of participants, the students were informed that participation in either group was likely to increase their overall sense of well being. The “happiness” paradigm required participants to either write about their best possible future selves (optimism exercise) or write letters of gratitude (gratitude exercise). In contrast, in the control paradigm, participants were required to write about the events of the past week. The gratitude exercise group demonstrated increase in happiness.

Steger, Kashdan, and Oishi (2008) conducted a study using the daily diary method in which it was found that engaging in eudaimonic behaviors (e.g., expressing
gratitude, volunteering one’s time, persevering at a valued goal even in the face of obstacles) was associated with significantly higher subjective well-being than engaging in hedonic behaviors (e.g., getting drunk, having sex with someone one doesn’t love, obtaining material goods). The more participants reported engaging in eudaimonic behaviors, the higher was their life satisfaction, positive affect, and meaning in life. No such relationship was observed for hedonic behaviors. Remarkably, daily eudaimonic (but not daily hedonic) behaviors predicted higher life satisfaction and higher meaning in life the following day, illustrating their causal role in promoting well-being.

Froh, Sefick & Emmons (2008) conducted a study which aimed at replicating Emmons & McCullough (2003) “counting blessings” intervention study with an early adolescent population. Following their methodology, Froh et al conducted a study on 211 students (11-14 years) and examined the effects of grateful outlook on subjective well-being and other outcomes of positive psychological functioning. Using quasi-experimental design, eleven classes were randomly assigned to (gratitude, hassles or control conditions) for two weeks and then examined the effect of the intervention at both an immediate post-test and three week follow-up. Four classes each received the gratitude or hassles condition (8 classes total) and 3 classes served as no-treatment controls. Those in the gratitude condition were asked to “count up to five things you are grateful for.” Students in the hassles group were asked to focus on irritants. Controls simply completed the measures. After 2 weeks of counting blessings, the gratitude condition was associated with enhanced self-reported gratitude, optimism, life satisfaction, and decreased negative affect. At the 3-week follow-up, students instructed to count their blessings showed more gratitude toward people who had helped them, which in turn predicted more gratitude in general. These results suggested that counting blessings in adolescence may be related to appreciating specific gifts (e.g., gratitude for receiving aid) via priming them to acknowledge the specific instances of kindness in daily life. The most significant finding was the robust relationship between gratitude and satisfaction with school experience at both the immediate 2-week post-test and 3-week follow-up. Whether young, old, or coping with physical illness, saying, thank you is beyond manners. Froh et al (2009)
examined the effects of expressed gratitude in students ranging from third to twelfth grade. Their findings indicated that the students with the lowest levels of positive affect received substantial benefits from expressing gratitude when compared to a neutral control condition.

Froh, Kashdan, Ozimkowski, & Miller (2009a) partially replicated Seligman et al.’s (2005) “gratitude visit” study using a youth population. Froh et al in their intervention study took children and adolescents from a parochial school as sample and randomly assigned them to a gratitude intervention or a control condition. Participants in the gratitude condition were asked to write a letter to a benefactor whom they have never properly thanked, to read the letter to him/her in person, and to then share their experience with others in the same condition. On the other hand, participants in the control condition were asked to record and think about daily events. Findings indicated that youth low in positive affect in the gratitude condition reported greater gratitude and positive affect at post-treatment and greater positive affect at the 2-month follow-up than youth in the control condition. This study suggested that there may be specific individuals—namely, those low in positive affect—who may benefit more.

Toepfer (2009) carried out an experimental study on 85 students (72 females, 13 males) of Mid Western University from six classes to explore the influence of gratitude driven writing on well being. Tools used were: Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6), Satisfaction with Life Scale and Subjective Happiness Scale. Three classes were comprised of the experimental group, which engaged in the letter writing campaign (expressing gratitude with a non-trivial content for 8 weeks) and three randomly selected classes participated as the control group who did not engage in the writing. The student’s in the experimental group wrote letter every two weeks with the simple ground rule that it had to be positively expressive and should contain a high level of appreciation. Two way repeated measures of analysis of variance was used. Results revealed that expressing one’s feelings and thoughts of gratitude positively impacted subject’s sense of happiness and gratitude. Additionally, these results suggest that a trait-based quality such as gratitude can be improved trough practice.
Monrgaine & Anselmo (2009) conducted a study at York University, Toronto on 200 moderately depressed people. He divided participants into two groups. Over the course of seven days, one group listened daily to music designed to boost mood, and the other completed an online gratitude exercise in which every night they were asked to *list five things that they were grateful for*. At five different points (start of study, end of study week, and one, three and six months post study) the researcher measured the participant’s depression symptoms and happiness level. It was found that both groups were less depressed six months post study, but the individuals in the gratitude group reported on greater boost in overall *happiness*.

Proctor, Linley & Maltby (2009) investigated the characteristics of adolescents reporting very high levels of life satisfaction. Participants (N = 410) were divided into three life satisfaction groups: very high (top 10%), average (middle 25%), and very low (lowest 10%). Results revealed that very happy youths had significantly higher mean scores on all included school, interpersonal, and intrapersonal variables, and significantly lower mean scores on depression, negative affect, and social stress than youths with average and very low levels of life satisfaction. Life meaning, *gratitude*, self-esteem, and positive affect were found to have a significantly more positive influence on global life satisfaction for the very unhappy than the very happy. Findings suggest that very unhappy youths would benefit most from focused interventions aimed at boosting those variables having the most influence on their level of *life satisfaction*.

Boehm & Lyubomirsky (2009) carried out a study which focussed on the distinctive ways that happy and unhappy individuals construe themselves and others, respond to social comparisons, make decisions, and self-reflect. It was suggested that despite several barriers to increased well-being, less happy people can strive successfully to be happier by learning a variety of effortful strategies and practicing them with determination and commitment. The experimental intervention on how to increase and maintain happiness is provided by The Sustainable Happiness Model (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005b). According to this model, three factors contribute to an individual’s chronic happiness level – the set point, life circumstances, and intentional activities, or effortful acts that are naturally variable.
and episodic. Such activities, which include committing acts of kindness, ‘expressing gratitude’ (or counting one’s blessings’) or optimism, and savoring joyful life events, represent the most promising route to sustaining enhanced happiness.

Froh, et al (2010) carried out an intervention study employing a novel technique of strengthening children’s schematic help appraisals. Classrooms of children (8–11 years) were randomly assigned to a school-based gratitude curriculum or an attention-control curriculum. School psychology interns taught participants in the gratitude condition about the social–cognitive determinants of gratitude via structured lesson plans. Lessons adhered to the following outline: the introduction (session 1), understanding benefactors’ intentions when being a beneficiary (session 2), understanding the cost experienced by benefactors when giving a benefit (session 3), understanding the benefits of receiving a gift bestowed by a benefactor (session 4), and the review/summary, which incorporates all components of the previous sessions (session 5). Using the methods of classroom discussions, acting out different role-plays, and writing down personal stories in a “gratitude journal,” the intern emphasized the connection between positive things happening to them and the actions of a benefactor. Across five sessions, the intern explained that whenever others are nice to us, they may be doing so on purpose (illustrating intention), using their resources (illustrating cost), and helping us (illustrating benefit). Students in the attention-control condition were also provided with structured lesson plans that followed an outline but focused on neutral topics, such as events of the day. Similar to the gratitude condition, the attention-control condition lessons included classroom discussions, writing assignments, and role-playing activities. Importantly, the general structure of the attention-control sessions closely mirrored those of the gratitude condition in terms of task assignment but not in terms of content. A daily intervention produced the effects immediately (2 days later) and showed that children who behaviorally expressed more gratitude (i.e., wrote 80% more thank you cards), their teachers even found them to be happier, compared to those in the control condition. A weekly intervention obtained such effects in the longterm (up to 5 months later).

Valentino (2010) carried out a study on 106 college students of Kent State University and taught them “an attitude of gratitude” learning exercise which is as:
Before you begin the first day rate your happiness on a scale of 1 to 10. Then they were asked to do the learning exercise for each day for one week, such as make a list of two to three things you are grateful for today, everyday during a quite time read your list aloud and you can even add something else to be grateful for. At the end of the week students again rated themselves on the happiness scale. After comparing the two ratings it was seen that the happiness level of participants increased by the end of the week.

Lyubomirsky & Dickherhoof (2010) through a study found that positive emotions act as a mechanism by which positive activities promote well being. Participants who practiced gratitude or optimism became happier over time and this effect was mediated by their ability to derive positive emotions from their daily experiences and to find those experiences satisfying. The finding suggest that happiness strategies (eg: expressing gratitude to family members) leads people to derive joy and satisfaction from their daily experiences (eg: enjoying spending time with family), and that these strategies are likely to foster happiness. Thus, the ability of positive activities to successfully increase and sustain positive emotions is an important factor in determining and sustaining later well being.

Proctor, Tsukayama, Wood, Maltby, Fox Eades, & Linley (2011) examined the impact of Strengths Gym, a character strengths-based positive psychological intervention program, on adolescent life satisfaction. Tools used in the study were: The Students Life Satisfaction Scale, The Positive and Negative Affects Schedule and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The aim of the program was to encourage students to build their strengths, learn new strengths and to recognize strengths in others. The activities for students are called Strengths Builders and Strengths Challenges. Activities such as ‘counting blessings’, ‘writing three good things that went well for each day’, ‘counting one’s own acts of kindness’ and ‘cultivating gratitude through daily gratitude diaries’ were included in the study. Using a quasi-experimental treatment-control condition design, the study compared student outcomes for life satisfaction, positive and negative affect, and self-esteem for 319 adolescent students aged 12-14 (M = 12.98); 218 adolescent students who participated in character strengths-based exercises in the school curriculum, and 101 adolescent students who
did not participate in character strengths-based exercises in the school curriculum. Results revealed that adolescents who participated in character strengths-based exercises experienced significantly increased life satisfaction compared to adolescents who did not participate in character strengths-based exercises. Overall, results provide encouraging preliminary support for the application of character strengths-based exercises in the school curriculum as a means of increasing life satisfaction and well-being among youths.

Lyubomirsky, Dickerhoof, Boehm & Sheldon (2011) carried out another intervention study and tested the moderating effect of motivation by allowing participants to choose between one of two experiments. Those who opted to enroll in an experiment described as being designed to boost happiness comprised the “motivated” group, and those who opted into an experiment described as involving “cognitive exercises” served as the “non-motivated group”. All students were then assigned to express gratitude (by writing gratitude letters), to express optimism (by writing in a journal about the future accomplishment of their life goals and dreams; or to complete a comparison control activity once a week over 8 weeks. Participants who were apparently motivated to become happier, regardless of the intervention activity, had higher levels of well-being at the end of the study compared with participants who were not so motivated. In addition, the highest well-being benefits of our intervention were accrued to those students who had a high degree of “fit” with their assigned activity (i.e., those individuals who found the activity enjoyable and natural to perform), who exerted more effort in the activity during the 8-week intervention period, and who continued to practice the activity after the intervention period was finished. Finally, the findings revealed that gratitude and optimism interventions led people to have more positive thoughts and experiences, which, in turn, increased happiness. These findings highlights the importance of four variables that moderate the effectiveness of practicing particular activities – namely, motivation to become happier, fit with the happiness-enhancing activity, effort in completing the activity, and continued practice of the activity – as well as the significance of one mediator (positive thoughts and events).
Rash, Matsuba & Prkachin (2011) carried out a study, where participants were engaged in a four-week program where *gratitude contemplation* was encouraged by having participants think about people, or moments that they were grateful for and to sustain the feelings of gratitude for five minutes. It was found that participants who completed the contemplation activity had increased levels of *satisfaction with life* and self-esteem as compared to the participants who were asked to think about a memorable life event.

Proyer, Ruch, and Buschor (2012) used an experimental approach to tackle the question of whether all strengths are created equal with respect to fostering subjective well-being. The researchers trained a group of adults with the strengths most correlated with *happiness* (curiosity, gratitude, hope, zest, and also humor). This group was compared to a group that trained with strengths that typically yield low correlations with happiness (appreciation of beauty and excellence, creativity, kindness, love of learning, and perspective) and a wait-list control group. When life satisfaction scores before and after the treatments were contrasted, only the group trained with the strengths most correlated with happiness improved significantly in comparison to the control group. At the same time, when asked for subjective ratings of experienced changes due to the program (e.g., perceived cheerfulness, happiness, positive mood) participants in both intervention groups indicated gains above that of a wait-listed control group. These experimental findings reinforce earlier observations that although virtues in general appear to contribute to happiness, some virtues are more promising in that regard in comparison to other virtues (*gratitude*).

A recent study by Layous, Lee, Choi & Lyubomirsky (2013) examined the role of culture–activity fit by testing two positive activities across two cultures. Participants (14 to 15 year old) from the United States (*n* = 250) and South Korea (*n* = 270) were randomly assigned to express gratitude, perform kind acts, or engage in a neutral activity for the first half of a 6-week positive activity intervention. Multilevel growth modeling analyses revealed that the effect of practicing gratitude or kindness was moderated by culture. U.S. participants increased in *well-being* from both activities, $\gamma_{11} = 0.19, SE = 0.06, t(511) = 3.04, p = .0006; \gamma_{12} = 0.11, SE = 0.06, t(511) = 1.73, p = .03$ (compared with the control group), but South Korean participants
benefited significantly less from practicing gratitude than did U.S. participants, $\gamma_{13} = -0.24$, $SE = 0.07$, $t(511) = -3.36$, $p = .002$. South Korean participants, however, showed similar increases in well being as did U.S. participants when performing kind acts, $\gamma_{14} = -0.06$, $SE = 0.07$, $t(511) = -0.82$, ns. Finally, although greater self-reported effort yielded significantly larger increases in well being for U.S. participants, the effect of effort was not as strong for South Korean participants. It is posited that, due to their dialectical philosophical tradition, South Koreans might have been more prone to feel mixed emotions (e.g., indebtedness and gratitude) while engaging in the gratitude letter activity than did U.S. participants.

### 2.2 Forgiveness and Happiness

Many of the world’s religions have articulated the concept of forgiveness for millennia (McCullough & Worthington, 1994; Rye et al, 2001). Forgiveness has been the subject of increased interest as a therapeutic intervention, evidenced in past by the number of self help books on this subject (Enright, 2001; Luskin, 2006; Spring, 2004). However ‘forgiveness’ is considered a human strength and an important factor that influences human development. Recently, many counselors are also frequently involved in conversations with their clients regarding forgiveness – be it to forgive or to seek forgiveness (Blocher & Wade, 2010). Intervention research demonstrates the benefits of incorporating forgiveness into psychological treatment. Several theoretical models have guided intervention studies, including Enright et al’s process model (Enright & Coyle, 1998), Worthington’s 2001 REACH model, Stanford’s nine steps to forgiveness and others (Gordon, Baucom & Snyder, 2000; Rye et al, 2005).

Subjective well-being takes a broad view of happiness. Subjective well-being is defined as life satisfaction, the presence of positive affect and a relative absence of negative affect. Together the three components are often referred to as happiness. Happiness stems from subjective well-being, which stems from satisfaction with life, further stemming from the feelings of positive affect which ultimately impinge on an individual’s emotional, social and physical and mental health. Therefore, the terms life-satisfaction, well-being and happiness are used interchangeably to describe one’s
perceived satisfaction with life. The following review substantiates the relationship in context to all above related constructs of happiness and forgiveness.

A brief account of studies citing the role of forgiveness in context to all above related constructs of happiness is mentioned below and this section incorporates both correlational as well as experimental and intervention studies.

2.2.1 Correlational studies

Maltby, Day & Barber (2005) carried out a study which aimed at examining the relationship between forgiveness and happiness using a two-dimensional model of happiness (hedonic and eudaimonic happiness). 224 United Kingdom students (116 males and 128 females) aged from 18 to 56 were administered the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI) The Depression–Happiness Scale and the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire- Short-form. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient showed a significant positive correlation between forgiveness and both measures of happiness (0.34** and 0.60** respectively, p < 0.01). A standardized multiple regression was used to explore which dimensions of forgiveness shared unique variance with each dimensions of happiness. The findings suggest that forgiveness accounts for statistically significant variance, in both hedonic and eudaimonic happiness (R= 0.37 and R= 0.39 respectively). In terms of shorter-term hedonic happiness, the findings suggest it is important not to engage in negative cognitions about the transgression. In terms of maintaining eudaimonic happiness, engaging in positive behaviours and feelings may lead to longer-term happiness.

Thompson, Snyder, Hoffman, Michael, Rasmussen, Billings, Heinze, Neufeld, Shorey, Roberts & Roberts (2005) analyzed six studies regarding forgiveness and developed The Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS), a self-report measure of dispositional forgiveness (with subscales to assess forgiveness of self, others, and situations). Forgiveness was found to correlate positively with cognitive flexibility, positive affect, and distraction; it correlated negatively with rumination, vengeance, and hostility. Forgiveness predicted four components of psychological well-being (anger, anxiety, depression, and satisfaction with life); forgiveness of situations accounted for unique variance in these components of psychological well-being.
Forgiveness and hostility demonstrated equivalent, inverse associations with relationship duration, and forgiveness accounted for unique variance in relationship satisfaction, even when controlling for trust. Forgiveness level correlated positively with decreased negativity in statements written about transgressions in the present versus the past tense.

Kelley & Waldron (2005) conducted a study that identified several ways of making reparative action which results in positive relational change for an individual. They concluded that explicitly acknowledging the harm that was caused and seeking forgiveness helps the process of forgiving. They reported that explicitly seeking forgiveness can result in repair of relationships that have been severely damaged. Another finding was that, in some cases, the act of explicitly seeking forgiveness not only repairs the relationship, it may also strengthen it and leads to happiness and joy.

Bono, McCullough & Root (2006) carried out two studies and investigated the associations between interpersonal forgiveness and psychological well-being. Participants of study one were 115 students (M age = 19.76, SD = 2.61) from undergraduate psychology courses at Southern Methodist University. Participants were identified who had experienced a serious interpersonal transgression within the past 7 days through in-class solicitations (and a screening instrument). The study utilized cross-sectional and prospective multilevel analyses which demonstrated that increases in forgiveness (measured as fluctuations in individuals’ avoidance, revenge, and benevolence motivations toward their transgressors) were related to within-persons increases in psychological well-being (measured as more satisfaction with life, more positive mood, less negative mood, and fewer physical symptoms). Results indicated that forgiveness was more strongly linked to well-being for people who reported being closer and more committed to their partners before the transgression and for people who reported that their partners apologized and made amends for the transgression. Also, the second study was carried on 165 students in undergraduate psychology courses (112 women) at the University of Miami. Again, all participants had experienced a transgression within the past 7 days (M = 4.37 days, SD = 1.85; M age = 19.61, SD = 3.82) at the time of enrollment. The results of the second study largely replicated the findings from Study 1.
Reductions in avoidance and revenge motivations on any given day were related to greater wellbeing on the next day for the average person; and that increases in benevolence, on the other hand, were more strongly related to greater well-being on the next day the more a person perceived his or her transgressor to have apologized or made amends. Evidence for the reverse causal model, that increases in well-being were related to increases in forgiveness, was also found. However, changes in feelings of closeness toward the partner appeared to account for the associations of forgiveness with well-being, but not vice versa.

Toussaint & Friedman (2008) conducted a study on forgiveness and gratitude as positive psychological characteristics that are connected to well-being. The study was undertaken on a population of psychotherapy outpatients and examined the extent to which affect and beliefs mediated these relationships. Participants were 72 outpatients who completed a battery of assessments as part of a standard intake protocol. Results showed that forgiveness and gratitude were both positively and strongly associated with well-being and largely, though not completely, mediated by affect and belief. Also, forgiveness and gratitude have an important place in the positive psychologists’ repertoire of well-being enhancing techniques and exercises in general, and also with a clinical psychotherapy population.

Fehr, Gelfand & Nag (2010) meta-analyzed results from 175 studies and 26,006 participants to examine the correlates of interpersonal forgiveness (i.e. forgiveness of a single offender by a single victim). A tripartite forgiveness typology was proposed, encompassing victims’ (a) cognitions (b) affect, and (c) constraints following offense, with each consisting of situational and dispositional components. Hypotheses were tested with respect to 22 distinct constructs as correlates of forgiveness. Sample and study characteristics including gender, age, time and methodology was also evaluated as main effects and moderators. The results highlighted the multifaceted nature of forgiveness. Variables with particularly notable effects include intent (r = 0.49), state empathy (r = 0.51), apology (r = 0.42), and state anger (r = 0.41). Situational constructs were shown to account for greater variance in forgiveness than victim dispositions, although within-category differences are considerable. Sample and study characteristics yielded negligible effects on
forgiveness. The effect of gender was non significant ($r = 0.01$) and the effect of age was negligible ($r = 0.06$). Scenario methodologies led to enhanced effects for cognitions, recall methodologies led to enhanced effects for affect.

Malone, Meyer, Tarlton, Wasielewski, Reuben, West, & Mitchell (2011) conducted a non-experimental, correlational ex-post facto quantitative research design examining the relationship between forgiveness, stress, and social support. The design utilized a survey approach, via the Internet. *Forgiveness* was assessed by measuring revenge motivations and avoidance motivations. Revenge and avoidance motivations have been recognized as two established indicators for forgiveness (Orth, Berking, Walker, Meier, & Znoj, 2008) following an interpersonal transgression; namely, an offense committed against someone where forgiveness may be required. Interpersonal transgressions generally result in negative feelings that precipitate emotional distress (Orcutt, 2006). In the present study it was theorized that the decision to forgive would reduce the amount of negative feelings and, will increase the amount of *positive feelings* thereby, reducing the stress response. Three instruments were utilized. The Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory (TRIM); Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS) utilizing only the stress subscale, and Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS). A total of 804 adults participated in the study, 303 men (37.6%), 499 women (62.4%), and 2 individuals who did not report their gender. Participant age ranged from 18-78 ($M = 35.62; SD = 13.60$). Convenience, snowball, and quota sampling methods were utilized to gather a sample.

Baharudin, Amat, Jailani & Sumari (2011) carried out a theoretical research on the construct of *forgiveness*, however, making a trend toward the study of *positive well-being* in the mental health field. Forgiveness is considered a human strength and an important factor that influences human development. Based on previous research, in general, both lay person and therapists consider forgiveness to be beneficial and therapeutic and through this research they looked at the conceptualization of forgiveness, models of forgiveness and factors that affects forgiving. It was revealed that the strength of forgiveness i.e. what forgiveness is, why and when to apply in order to provide effective counselling to the clients. Also, inclusion of forgiveness as
a tool in counselling intervention can be of utmost importance especially in the context of Malaysia.

Cardak (2013) conducted a study that aimed to examine the relationships between humility and forgivingness. The participants were 346 university students. The Heartland Forgiveness Scale and Humility Scale were used as measures. Humility has four dimensions; openness, self-forgetfulness, modest self-assessment, focus on others. The relationships between forgiveness and humility were investigated using correlation analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) with AMOS. The results indicated that, humility and its dimension were positively related to forgiveness and was predicted positively by dimensions of humility. This study also offered enhanced emotional and cognitive areas of humility and forgiveness and in turn decreased perceived stress, state anxiety and an increased psychological well-being.

Amini, Doodman, Boostani, Edalati & Abbasi (2013) conducted research to study the relation between stress and emotions (rational, emotional, detachment, advancement) with forgiveness and psychological well being in Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz students. Sample included 352 students who were selected through stratified random sampling. The mean and standard deviation of participant’s age were 21.46 and 3.08 years respectively. 74.7 percent of students were studying for bachelor’s degree, 18.8 percent were studying for master’s degree and 6.5 percent were studying for Ph.D degree. Tools used in this study were Coping Styles Questionnaire (CSQ), Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS), Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS), and Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS) (positive and negative emotions). Results from regression analysis suggested that coping and emotional styles variable had a great role in predicting forgiveness and psychological well being. Wilk’s Lambda value came to be 0.384 (F(12, 688)=2.27, p = 0.001); results from canonical analysis indicated that the linear combination of forgiveness and psychological well being factors is predictable by the linear combination of coping (rational and emotional) and emotions (positive emotions and negative emotions) factors.
2.2.2 Experimental and Intervention studies

Presenting below are research evidences pointing towards change in one’s lives after being part of training programs or intervention plans:

Darby & Schlenker (1982) conducted a study on very young children and who were presented with two stories where a character had done something wrong and apologized and those who had not. It was found that even at three years of age, children preferred those stories where the character had apologized. As children got older they began to take into account the seriousness of the offense, the person’s motives and responsibility for the action and the level of sorrow that was conveyed in the apology. Also, children preferred elaborate apologies as compared to simpler ones, even in situations where an elaborate apology was not indicated by the minor offense. The findings indicate that when used correctly, an apology could be an effective means of reparative action.

Hebl & Enright (1993) carried out first of experimental studies and tested the efficacy of forgiveness intervention. Sample included (N= 24) elderly women with (Mean age= 74.5) who felt hurt by a particular interpersonal experience. They were randomly assigned to either an eight week forgiveness intervention group or a discussion based control group. There were 8 sessions in the forgiveness intervention group and each session comprised of 60 minutes. Women in the forgiveness group scored higher on measures of forgiveness and willingness to forgive, although anxiety and depression scores improved in both the groups. When data from all participants were analyzed, higher levels of forgiveness was associated with higher levels of self esteem and lower levels of anxiety and depression at post-test.

Worthington, Sandage & Berry (2000) summarized in a meta-analysis the effects of 12 different forgiveness group interventions. It was found that the interventions were, on average, effective in improving participants forgiveness scores by 43% of a standard deviation (Cohen’s d= .43) over the control group. Among the eight intervention studies that involved six hours or more of client contact, group members forgiveness scores were 76% of a standard deviation higher than the scores of control group members (Cohen’s d= .76). In contrast, the four intervention studies
that involved less than six hours of client contact were substantially less efficacious (Cohen’s d = .24). Participation in short term intervention (particularly those involving at least six hours of client contact) appears to be moderately effective in helping people to forgive specific individuals who have harmed them.

Sandage, Worthington, Hight & Berry (2000) carried out a study that was based on a three-stage model to seek forgiveness and which ultimately is necessary for one’s health and happiness. The model explained the thoughts and actions of individuals who are seeking forgiveness. The first part, cognitive social perspective taking, is when the person is able to feel empathy for the other person and understand the hurt he or she has caused. The second part, adaptive guilt, is the negative feeling the transgressor has regarding the hurt that was caused. These feelings may be necessary to motivate people to seek forgiveness of others and maintain relationships that are necessary for happiness. The third part, behaviours of reparative action, allows for the reduction or removal of the hurt that was caused and also lessens feelings of guilt.

Witvliet et al (2001) carried out a study and examined the effects of forgiveness on those who received it. A within-subjects psychophysiology study was done on college students (N = 40; 20 females, 20 males) who reflected on and imagined a particular transgression they had committed against someone. Part of this study compared imagery of (a) receiving an unforgiving response from one’s victim, with imagery of (b) receiving forgiveness and (c) experiencing reconciliation. It was found that forgiveness and reconciliation imagery each prompted improvements in basic emotions (e.g., sadness, anger) and moral emotions (e.g., guilt, shame, gratitude, hope), with reductions in negative emotions and increases in positive emotions.

McCullough & Witvliet (2002) carried out a study on 78 college students using randomized block design with repeated measures. The three conditions given to the participants were empathy forgiveness seminar, self enhancement forgiveness seminar, and wait-list control. Assessment was conducted pre seminar; post seminar and a six week follow up. Group interventions were delivered. Seminar consisted of six, one hour sessions conducted during one weekend composing of 12 to 15
participants. The results indicated that self enhancement forgiveness seminar increased forgiveness to quite an extent but the empathy forgiveness seminar boosted forgiveness and increased their happiness level also.

Karremans, Van Lange, Ouwerkerk & Kluwer (2003) carried out a study which consisted of a series of three experimental studies that examined the effects of forgiveness on life satisfaction, state measures of positive and negative affect, and state self-esteem. Their main hypothesis was that forgiveness and psychological adjustment should be related much more strongly in relationships in which the individual is strongly committed compared to relationships with low commitment. The results of all three studies clearly supported this hypothesis. In Study 1, participants had to recall a conflict with another person that they had forgiven vs. not forgiven. The results showed that when commitment was strong, forgiveness affected life satisfaction, positive affect, and state self-esteem. In Study 2, participants had to think of an existing relationship, and forgiveness was manipulated by instructing the participants to imagine that they had forgiven vs. not forgiven. The results showed that when commitment was strong, the forgiveness manipulation had significant effects on all dependent variables. Therefore, in Study 3, participants completed what they thought was an implicit measure of forgiveness and were given false feedback regarding whether it showed high or low forgiveness. By this manipulation, the true forgiveness level of the participants could also be manipulated. The results showed that, when relationship commitment was strong, forgiveness had significant effects on positive affect, negative affect, and state self-esteem, but not life satisfaction. The results of Study 3 provide evidence for effects of forgiveness on psychological adjustment, at least for its immediate effects on well being and positive affect.

Baskin and Enright (2004) reviewed the effectiveness of nine empirical studies of forgiveness interventions with a total sample size of 330 participants. They gave a process model of forgiveness that was applied to forgiveness interventions with individuals and groups of college students. Nine steps towards forgiveness were explained to students and after a period of six weeks of practice of forgiveness steps, it was found that students taking such intervention steps not only increased in forgiving others but also developed self forgiveness which paved the way towards
peace and happiness. Further it was also found that the existing interventions could be grouped into three primary categories: (1) decision-based interventions (interventions that focused primarily on making the decision to forgive), (2) process-based individual interventions (interventions that involved an affective/empathic component), and (3) process-based group interventions. Interventions that emphasized the process of forgiveness tended to be more effective than cognitive, decision-based interventions. Within the process-based studies, three were group based with an average effect size ($d$) of 0.59 ($N=120$) for emotional health outcomes, and two were individually based with an average effect size of 1.42 ($N=22$) for emotional health outcomes. And among the process-based interventions reviewed, the one-on-one interventions were more effective than the group-based interventions.

Wade, Worthington, and Meyer (2005) meta-analysis incorporated 65 group intervention conditions from 27 studies. They contrasted forgiveness interventions (i.e. theoretically grounded forgiveness interventions and forgiveness-oriented comparison interventions), alternate treatment conditions (e.g., support groups, leadership interventions), and no-treatment conditions (e.g., wait-list control groups). An effect size (ES) was computed for each condition by estimating the amount of pre-post gain in forgiveness that participants experienced on average, expressed as standard change units. The theoretically grounded forgiveness interventions were the most effective in increasing forgiveness ($ES = 0.56$), but were not statistically superior to forgiveness-oriented comparison interventions ($ES = 0.43$). Alternative treatments ($ES = 0.26$) were significantly less effective than theoretically grounded treatments, but not less effective than forgiveness-oriented comparison interventions. Additionally, any intervention was more effective than a no-treatment control group ($ES = 0.10$). It was also found that empathizing with the offender, committing to forgive, and the use of strategies like relaxation and anger management were significantly related to reduce psychological symptoms. The study supported the hypothesis that forgiveness reduces suffering.

Berry, Worthington, O’Connor, Parrott & Wade (2005) used psycho-educational intervention known as ‘REACH’ which is an empathy focused intervention to promote forgiveness in college students who have experienced hurts
because according to them empathy is important for building and maintaining forgiveness. Early studies of Worthington’s model (comprising only three steps [REA] recall the hurt, empathize with the one who hurt them, offer an altruistic gift for forgiveness,) showed small gains in forgiveness after brief (1-2 hour) interventions. Furthermore, psychophysiological data indicate that adopting the REA steps after an offense leads to lower physiological stress responses and greater perceived control than does holding a grudge. Studies that tested the full REACH model i.e. (recall the hurt, empathize with the one who hurt them, offer an altruistic gift for forgiveness, make a commitment to forgive and hold on to the forgiveness) in 6-8 hour psycho-educational interventions produced “moderate to strong effects for helping participants overcome their unforgiveness across time. The outcome of the psycho-educational intervention resulted in increased level of forgiveness, which led to feelings of happiness and joy.

Wade, Bailey & Shaffer (2005) carried out a study on 59 clients to examine whether clients need explicit forgiveness interventions and if such interventions could be therapeutic and make a difference to their lives. These clients were from here university counseling centers in the East (n = 20), South (n = 17), and Midwest (n = 22) regions of US. Participants ranged in the age group from 18 to 57 years (M = 23.5, S.D = 7.3). The answers from these clients were mostly affirmative i.e. after they receive these interventions, it is helpful. They experienced a hurt and wanted to forgive and also wanted to talk about it in therapy. The most important finding of this study was that those who talked explicitly about forgiveness reported more overall improvement in their presenting symptoms, (such as depression, anxiety or school related problems that were of central concern to the present sample).findings also revealed that addition of promoting strengths rather than only addressing weaknesses in therapy may be a key for helping people not only with specific hurts but also with general symptom reduction.

Luskin (2006) carried out a series of research studies from his Stanford Forgiveness Projects that investigated the effectiveness of a group psycho-education forgiveness methodology. The intervention uses a combination of narrative therapy (telling and reclaiming one’s stories), guided imagery to create conditions where
forgiveness of an offender is more likely. 55 college students were randomly assigned to either an immediate treatment condition or to the waitlist control for treatment control condition. Students were recruited who had an unresolved interpersonal hurt with someone in their life. The treatment condition consisted of one; 50 minute session intervention per week for 6 week period and a subsequent 2 month follow up period. Findings revealed that treatment group showed significant reduced hurt, anger complimented in significant increases in compassion, forgiveness and happiness. Follow up months of the intervention period showed stable gains.

McCullough, Root, & Cohen (2006) carried out a study that examined the effects of writing about the benefits of an interpersonal transgression on forgiveness. Participants (N= 304 undergraduates; 213 women, 91 men; M age = 19.31 years, SD = 2.81, range =18–45; 156 White non-Hispanic, 72 Hispanic, 44 Black/African American, 32 from “other” ethnic group) were randomly assigned to one of three 20-min writing tasks in which they wrote about either (a) traumatic features of the most recent interpersonal transgression they had suffered, (b) personal benefits resulting from the transgression, or (c) a control topic that was unrelated to the transgression. Measures used were TRIM-18, Transgression Severity Rating Scale, Communal strength and Linguistic Inquiry and word count scale. Results indicated that participants in the benefit-finding condition became more forgiving toward their transgressors (gains ranging from 0.33 to 0.58 SD units) than did those in the other 2 conditions, who did not differ from each other. In part, the benefit-finding condition appeared to facilitate forgiveness by encouraging participants to engage in cognitive processing as they wrote their essays. People who wrote about the benefits of transgressions they have encountered become less avoidant, more benevolent, and less vengeful toward their transgressors as a result. Further, findings suggest that benefit finding may be a unique and useful addition to efforts to help people forgive interpersonal transgressions through structured interventions.

Lundahl, Taylor, Stevenson & Roberts (2008) carried out a study to investigate the impact of forgiveness interventions designed to help individuals who have suffered because of betrayals, offenses, or victimization. Forgiveness is believed to be a mechanism through which individuals can experience increases in hope and
positive emotions and relief from negative emotions, cognitions, and behaviors. Fourteen published reports of process-based forgiveness interventions that included a comparison group are meta-analyzed. Results found that samples that received forgiveness interventions forgave more (effect size = .82) and enjoyed increased positive affect (effect size = .81) and self-esteem (effect size = .60) and less negative affect (effect size = .54). Such gains were largely maintained at follow-up periods. Individually delivered programs are superior to group delivery.

Browne, Mitchell & Worthington (2009) conducted a study on people who have undergone forgiveness therapy as a counseling intervention. The study is a basic interpretative qualitative study which begins to deepen the insight into the forgiveness experience by presenting and interpreting the data obtained by interviewing 11 individuals over the age of 40 who have undergone counseling to try to resolve a personal conflict. The findings revealed that for each individual the forgiveness process was a difficult, complicated, non-linear journey. Although the actual experience was unique to each individual, all participants were motivated in some way to let go of unforgiveness and find freedom from the stress caused by the transgression, and all participants experienced an energy exchange as they tried to navigate a path fraught with obstacles to forgiveness. Participants reported struggling, for example, with anger, rumination, and, in some cases, adverse health responses while employing a variety of means of coping as they meandered at their own pace toward forgiveness. Forgiveness as a therapeutic intervention seemed to aid in the forgiveness process for some people who were eventually able to shed their distress and experience forgiveness, while others had not yet been able to move on from a state of unforgiveness. Also, several individuals reported that going through the forgiveness process relieved them of various physical ailments.

Sin & Lyubomirsky (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of 51 independent positive psychology intervention (PPI) studies which demonstrated a significant increase in well-being (49 studies; \( r = .29 \); Cohen’s \( d = \) medium). The interventions that were included in the meta-analysis focused on cultivating positive feelings, behaviours or cognitions, as opposed to interventions that addressed pathology or deficiencies. The results demonstrated that it is possible to enhance well-being via
PPIs. Number of moderators of intervention effectiveness was also identified including intervention duration, intervention format, participant age, and participant depression status. The duration of the interventions varied from 1-week to over 12 weeks, with greater well-being effects for longer interventions. This effect is possibly due to participants having more time to practice the interventions and therefore process and integrate them into their life, creating lasting changes in cognition and/or behaviour (i.e., creating new habits). This idea is supported by several other studies that found the more effort put into practicing an intervention, the greater the improvement in well-being (Lyubomirsky, Dickerhoof, Boehm, & Sheldon, 2008; Seligman et al., 2005). A second moderator of effectiveness identified by Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009) is the intervention format; they found face-to-face individual delivery was most effective, followed by group delivery, and then self-administered interventions.

Sandage & Worthington (2011) carried out a study on undergraduate student volunteers (N = 97). They were randomly assigned to one of two six-hour forgiveness psychoeducational seminars or to a wait-list control group. Based on attachment theory, forgiveness was conceptualized in relation to the care-giving behavioral system (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2010). Both the Empathy Forgiveness Seminar and the Self-enhancement Forgiveness Seminar facilitated forgiveness to a greater degree than the wait-list control group at post-test and six-week follow-up. Empathy mediated changes in participants' forgiveness scores regardless of seminar condition. Shame-proneness was negatively related to post-test forgiveness scores and guilt-proneness was positively related to forgiveness at post-test and follow-up.

Recently, Wade, Hoyt, Kidwell, & Worthington (2014) conducted a meta-analysis which aimed to help people forgive others and to examine moderators of treatment effects. Studies reported quantitative data on forgiveness of a specific hurt following treatment by a professional with an intervention designed explicitly to promote forgiveness. Random effects meta-analyses were conducted using k = 53 posttreatment effect sizes (N = 2,323) and k = 41 follow-up effect sizes (N = 1,716) from a total of 54 published and unpublished research reports. Results revealed that participants receiving explicit forgiveness treatments reported significantly greater
forgiveness than participants not receiving treatment ($\Delta_+ = 0.56 \ [0.43, 0.68]$) and participants, receiving alternative treatments ($\Delta_+ = 0.45 \ [0.21, 0.69]$). Also, forgiveness treatments resulted in greater changes in depression, anxiety, and hope than no-treatment conditions. Moderators of treatment efficacy included treatment dosage, offense severity, treatment model, and treatment modality. Multimoderator analyses indicated that treatment dosage (i.e., longer interventions) and modality (individual > group) uniquely predicted change in forgiveness compared with no-treatment controls. Compared with alternative treatment conditions, both modality (individual > group) and offense severity were marginally predictive (ps < .10) of treatment effects. Findings concluded that using theoretically grounded forgiveness interventions is a sound choice for helping clients to deal with past offenses and helping them achieve resolution in the form of forgiveness.

Gassin, Enright & Knutson (in press) conducted a study focusing on the use of forgiveness in curriculum intervention as a tool in educational settings in order to reduce violence and hostility. They incorporated a variation of Enright’s forgiveness intervention in a forgiveness curriculum presented to elementary school children in Milwaukee. It was found that adding forgiveness to their curriculum taught them alternative non-retaliatory responses to anger. Similar work has also been carried out in Belfast, Ireland, among school children from both sides of the intractable violence of their community, again with promising results of reduced unforgiveness and the accompanying retaliatory motivations and increased forgiveness.