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Critical Thinking and Integration Paper: Apologies “The Art of Saying I’m Sorry”

The article I chose was taken from the Journal of Psychology & Christianity. The article entails the ideas of forgiveness and apology making with detailed steps on how a therapist would assist a client going through the process of forgiving and apologizing. Therapists use their knowledge and clinical practice in order to find the right solutions to help the client in specific situations. The author Kelvin F. Mutter summarizes his findings and focuses on dealing with those who participate in family counseling and support services.

The purpose of this article is to inform us as readers and researchers on how therapists normally handle clients who are undergoing the process of forgiveness and it also helps us to understand the ideas of confession, which appeal to therapists. This article also connects the ideas of forgiveness-seeking with professional clinical practice and the specific steps and models that are created to guide individuals through the process of forgiveness. It also helps us to see the direct relationship between cognitive and emotional thinking with apology making. Once again the researchers focused on those who participate in family counseling services which included perpetrators of family violence.

Before I get into the article and the analysis, what is forgiveness-seeking and apology making? Forgiveness-seeking derives from the word forgive which means to “deliberately

release feelings of resentment toward a person or group of people that has done something wrong to you.” On the other hand apology making derives from the sole word apology which means “to express a feeling of regret or guilt for committing a wrongful act.” Both of these words have a huge connection to each other, in most situations an apology is required first before forgiveness can take place. According to Matthew 6:14-15 it states, “for if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” From a biblical standpoint, I strongly believe that you do not need an apology from someone in order to forgive them, we should forgive them whether an apology was given or not because of our hearts and our relationship with Jesus Christ.

The basis of this article stands upon the ideas of Bandura who identified the two variables of change which include “efficacy expectancy” and “outcome expectancy”. Outcome expectancy is the idea that a specific behavior will result in a positive outcome, while efficacy outcome is when an individual has the confidence that he/she can attain that outcome based upon their actions. However, some issues that were raised from Bandura’s ideas was that “not all change is of the same magnitude”(Baker,2003) There are instances where change just requires a shift in behavior while some change requires self-evaluation and new self-conceptions. To continue on, Clinebell(1966) identifies five stages of forgiveness-seeking which include confrontation, confession, forgiveness, restitution and reconciliation. For example, for someone in the case of a domestic violence situation the victim obviously feels entrapped and enclosed in that relationship because of what is being done physically,emotionally and mentally to them. Overtime, a very small percent of those domestic violence perpetrators realize the damage and pain they have

caused the other individual. The first thing that the perpetrator would do is to confront or address the situation, then they will confess that they were wrong and violence was not the answer, then they will try to make up for what they have done in the past and lastly they will reconcile and become a better individual to their significant other.

This article also gives great illustrations that I believe are very helpful in order for someone to understand what the Grounded Theory Model is and how it helps implement a plan of forgiveness-seeking. It gives the processes and the components in order to help follow through with the plan of forgiveness-seeking. The model has three columns that describe an injured/broken relationship, the mediating acts performed by the individual who is hurt and the other people around them, and then the collaborative relationship in the end when both parties have reached a compromise to fix the situation. I feel that this model is very helpful as it gives a precise description to an individual going through that situation as well as giving the therapist an easier way to read the victim's thoughts and actions. The author also lists and explains the prominent components that come within the process of forgiveness-seeking. In the first step of confrontation, it usually comes with a feeling of denial. When the victim is usually confronting the perpetrator, the perpetrator will always deny that he/she has done something wrong to the other individual. The next phase of feelings that come after denial is anxiety and shame. The perpetrator begins to feel ashamed of their previous actions and they usually do not want to reminisce the things that they know that they have done. The next step is guilt, the perpetrator will often feel bad for the things they've done and will slowly feel remorse and regret. Then lastly, comes repentance and confession. The victim will then receive some type of closure from the perpetrator after they have confessed for their wrong doing. This is where forgiveness takes

place and both parties are able to reach an agreement on how to move forward and to recover from the past.

In this specific article, Mutter does think about the world in his findings. He includes real situation processes and components and their outcomes. Mutter more so focused on families and couples who require therapy and family counseling sessions based on their relationship issues and connections. So he took the time to connect with clients who went through some form of relationship/familial problems which includes but is not limited to domestic violence within couples, physical/sexual abuse, poor family oriented homes etc. The author's perspective is justified and he was able to use a lot of resources and information to back up his findings as well as his hypothesis and opinion. Mutter also uses credible sources which includes the models, the step-by-step plans and the references in order to give accurate information on how forgiveness-seeking comes about and how it can be carried out to completion with the appropriate actions. We can enter Mutter's perspective by following the steps he has given when handling someone who has been through a hurtful situation and wants to get on the road of recovery by forgiving their victimizer.

Overtime, many therapists have been using the Grounded Theory Model and it is very ethical when trying to get both the victim and the perpetrator to come to a compromise. It is a very effective plan to help get many people on a better path and it is also a good way to inform others on how to handle the individual if they're ever in a situation like that. I agree with this method 100 percent and it is a great way to make the forgiveness-seeking process easier and more efficient for both parties. Forgiveness-seeking is a complex process according to Mutter however this model is what most clients request to help keep them on track and to help them feel

as comfortable as possible with this process of change. Lastly, this model also gives the clients hope and inspires them to keep on pushing until they get to the point where they would like to be in life with their relationships and their families. I strongly believe every therapist should use this model with their clients and clients should recommend this model to others to help ensure the best results and to help everyone feel safe and secure in their forgiveness-seeking journey.