

Research article

Beyond need satisfaction: Empowering and accepting messages from third parties ineffectively restore trust and consequent reconciliation

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Abstract

According to the Needs-Based Model, reconciliation requires the restoration of victims' sense of power and perpetrators' moral image, which can be achieved through the exchange of empowering and accepting messages. In two role-playing experiments, we extended the model by examining the role of message source, the other conflict party versus a neutral third party, in facilitating reconciliation. Focusing on transgressions between apartment roommates, Study 1 found that regardless of message source, empowering messages restored victims' sense of power, and accepting messages restored perpetrators' moral image. Yet, messages from the other conflict party restored victims' and perpetrators' trust in each other more effectively than messages from third parties. Multiple mediation analyses revealed that both need satisfaction (restoring victims' sense of power and perpetrators' moral image) and trust building were critical for reconciliation. Replicating these findings in a context of transgressions between workplace colleagues, Study 2 further revealed that messages from third parties restored perpetrators' moral image only in the eyes of the third party (but not in the eyes of the victim), leading to a negative indirect effect on perpetrators' reconciliation tendencies. Theoretical implications for the modification of the Needs-Based Model and practical implications for the limits of third parties' interventions to promote interpersonal reconciliation are discussed. Copyright © 2014 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Helping an about-to-be divorced couple to agree upon the division of their property is different from helping them become a loving couple again. Similar logic underlies recent scientific interest in reconciliation as a level of analysis that is separate from conflict resolution: Whereas conflict resolution involves addressing the conflicting parties' instrumental interests (e.g., agreeing on how to divide contested resources such as money or property), reconciliation involves the restoration of harmonious relations between them (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008). Although reconciliation and conflict resolution may be positively interdependent (i.e., improvement in one may facilitate improvement in the other), they nevertheless constitute separate theoretical constructs and hence distinct objects of analysis. The idea that resolution and reconciliation are different processes is particularly evident in the type of interpersonal conflicts examined in the present study, which do not involve disputes over concrete resources but rather revolve around impairment to the relationship in itself (e.g., due to disrespectful or careless behavior of one of the conflict parties).

The current research, consisting of two studies, investigated how interventions by neutral third parties can promote reconciliation compared with actions by perpetrators and victims who are directly involved in the conflict. Our research was guided by the theoretical framework of the Needs-Based Model (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008),

which argues that the key to reconciliation is restoring socio-emotional resources that are impaired among victims and perpetrators. In particular, the model suggests that victims lose power, agency, and honor (Scheff, 1994), and therefore, experience enhanced need for *empowerment*. Conversely, perpetrators, who violate the acceptable moral standards, feel the threat of being viewed as morally inferior and are anxious about being socially rejected (Exline & Baumeister, 2000). Consequently, perpetrators experience enhanced need for *acceptance*. The model further posits that the common social mechanism to promote reconciliation, namely, the apology–forgiveness cycle (Tavuchis, 1991), is effective because it provides the conflicting parties with the socio-emotional “commodity” that they need: Apology empowers victims, whereas forgiveness conveys to perpetrators that they are morally accepted.

Consistent with this framework, empirical evidence demonstrated that receiving messages from their adversary that satisfied the particular needs of victims and perpetrators promoted reconciliation (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Specifically, victims showed greater willingness to reconcile following messages of empowerment from their perpetrators, which restored their *sense of power*, whereas perpetrators exhibited greater willingness to reconcile following messages of acceptance from their victims, which restored their *moral image*. In contrast,

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messages that did not address the specific needs of victims and perpetrators, even though their content was highly positive, were less likely to promote reconciliation.

Although this line of research points to the *type of message* content that is critical for reconciliation, these messages were always exchanged between the conflicting parties; that is, the *message source* was never a third party that is not directly involved in the conflict. Theoretically, the model's logic suggests that any intervention that restores victims' sense of power and perpetrators' moral image (e.g., participating in individual therapy intended to facilitate forgiveness; Enright, Freedman, & Rique, 1998) should effectively promote reconciliation. Put differently, although the exchange of empowering and accepting messages between the conflicting parties is one way to promote reconciliation, other means that satisfy victims' and perpetrators' needs—including receiving messages from third parties—should be effective as well. Although this hypothesis is implicitly embedded in the Needs-Based Model, it has never been examined empirically. Beyond the theoretical implications, examining the potential of third-party interventions to promote reconciliation is important for practical reasons, as adversarial parties are often reluctant to convey conciliatory messages to each other because of their concern that these messages might not be reciprocated (Leunissen, De Cremer, & Reinders Folmer, 2012).

THIRD PARTIES' ABILITY TO FACILITATE RECONCILIATION

There is substantial literature on the role of third parties in addressing instrumental aspects of conflict settlement and resolution through strategies such as conciliation, mediation, arbitration, and consultation (Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994). Other literature points to third parties' potential contribution to promoting reconciliation *indirectly* by eliciting the kinds of responses from victims and perpetrators that meet each other's needs (e.g., facilitating their communication; Kolb, 1987). However, to the best of our knowledge, the question of third parties' ability to promote reconciliation *directly* has not been empirically examined. Nevertheless, Knowles (1958) claimed that an intervention by third parties can improve communication only on the factual-objective but not in the emotional-subjective level implies that third parties' ability to promote reconciliation might be fairly limited. This possibility is opposed to the logic of the Needs-Based Model in its original formulation, which implies that to the extent that interventions by third parties successfully restore victims' and perpetrators' impaired identities, their willingness to reconcile with each other should increase.

Consistent with Knowles' earlier claim, the main argument put forward in the present work is that empowering or accepting messages conveyed by third parties would be relatively ineffective in promoting reconciliation compared with identical messages conveyed by the parties who are directly involved in the conflict. The reason is that empowering or accepting messages whose source is the other conflict party do something beyond addressing victims' and perpetrators' needs—namely, they restore victims' and perpetrators' *trust* in

each other. By contrast, messages from third parties are less likely to restore victims' and perpetrators' mutual trust. Consequently, they may fail to promote reconciliation even though they address victims' and perpetrators' needs and restore their positive identities as powerful or moral-social actors.

Specifically, an empowering message conveyed by perpetrators, such as acknowledging the injustice imposed on victims, may imply an admission of owing a moral debt to the victims, an assurance that the transgression would not reoccur and even a promise for reparation (Blatz, Schumann, & Ross, 2009). These implications are critical for victims, who are particularly vigilant for the possibility that the perpetrator might repeat the transgression (Hughes, 1993; McGary, 1989). Importantly, an identical message from a third party does not carry the same implications regarding the perpetrators' good intentions and is therefore less likely to restore the victims' trust in them. Similarly, an accepting message conveyed by the victims, such as expressions of sympathy and understanding of the perpetrators' perspective, may remove the threat posed to their moral image (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008) and allow their re-admission to the relevant moral community (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003). Such a message implies that the victim does not intend to take revenge or avoid the perpetrator, two common responses by victims following transgressions (McCullough et al., 1998). Again, an identical message from a third party does not carry the same consequences for the victims' readiness to move on and restore harmonious relations, and is therefore less likely to restore the perpetrators' trust in their good intentions.

THE PRESENT RESEARCH

Two studies experimentally examined the extent to which empowering and accepting messages from either the other conflict party or a non-involved third party successfully restored victims' sense of power and perpetrators' moral image as well as their mutual trust. We additionally examined whether the restoration of positive identities and trust in the different conditions of message source translated into increased willingness to reconcile. Both studies used role-playing scenarios that have been demonstrated in previous research to induce the same psychological experiences and responses in victims and perpetrators in ways that approximate actual transgressions (see Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Study 1 focused on a transgression between apartment roommates. The main goal of Study 2 was to increase the generalizability of Study 1's conclusions by examining similar hypotheses in a different context of transgression, that is, an offense taking place between colleagues in a workplace environment and which involved a harmful action rather than a harmful omission. As explained in detail later, an additional goal of Study 2 was to distinguish between the role of moral image in the eyes of the other conflict party versus moral image in the eyes of the third party in mediating the effects of accepting messages on perpetrators' willingness to reconcile.

We hypothesized that regardless of their source, empowering and accepting messages would restore victims' sense of power and perpetrators' moral image. However, only

messages from the other conflict party (but not from a neutral third party) were hypothesized to restore trust in the other conflict party. Moreover, victims' and perpetrators' readiness to reconcile was hypothesized to be determined not only by identity restoration processes (i.e., respective changes in their sense of power and moral image) but also by the restoration of their trust in each other. Whereas messages from the other conflict party were hypothesized to positively affect reconciliation through setting in motion both identity restoration and trust building processes, messages from third parties were expected to affect reconciliation only through the path of identity restoration. Consequently, messages from the other conflict party were hypothesized to be more effective than messages from third parties in bringing about reconciliation. Importantly, although the mediating role of restoration of impaired identity dimensions (i.e., sense of power and moral image) has been identified in previous research within the Needs-Based Model's framework, the role of trust has been overlooked by this previous research—a shortcoming that the present work aimed to address.

STUDY 1

The goal of Study 1 was to examine the effects of conciliatory messages from either the other conflict party or a non-involved third party on victims' and perpetrators' willingness to reconcile with each other following a transgression and to illuminate on the mechanisms, identity restoration, and trust building, leading to these effects. Participants in Study 1 were randomly assigned to two vignettes that were identical, except that in one of them, they adopted the role of the victim, and in the other, they adopted the role of the perpetrator.

Following the assignment to roles, participants were exposed to messages from either the other conflict party or a third party. To maintain theoretical clarity and simplicity of design, we focused solely on messages previously identified as effective in addressing victims' and perpetrators' emotional needs.¹ Hence, participants assigned to the Victim condition were exposed only to empowering messages, whereas participants assigned to the Perpetrator condition were exposed only

to accepting messages from the different sources. These messages were compared with control conditions that included no message, in a 2 (Role [Victim, Perpetrator]) × 3 (Message Source [Conflict Party, Third Party, No Message]) between-participants design.

Following the experimental manipulations, we measured participants' Sense of Power, Moral Image, Trust in the other conflict party, and Willingness to Reconcile. We predicted that messages from both message sources would restore victims' and perpetrators' impaired identity dimensions (i.e., sense of power and moral image, respectively). Conversely, only messages from the other conflict party were expected to increase victims' and perpetrators' trust and willingness to reconcile. We further predicted that the positive effect of message from the other conflict party on reconciliation would be mediated through increased sense of power and trust for victims, and through improved moral image and trust for perpetrators. The effects of messages from a third party on reconciliation were predicted to be mediated through increased sense of power (for victims) and improved moral image (for perpetrators), but not through increased trust. Consequently, messages from third parties were predicted to be relatively ineffective compared with identical messages from the other conflict party.

Method

Participants

Participants were 100 female and 73 male students of Tel Aviv University (mean age = 25, $SD = 2.55$), who participated in an online study in return for participation in a raffle. Thirteen participants who either answered the manipulation check for message source incorrectly or failed the alert test (see the Results section) were excluded from the sample.² The final sample thus included 160 participants.

Procedure

Participants in a study of "personal relationships" were exposed to online materials and read short vignettes about three roommates who shared an apartment. When the water pipe in the apartment ruptured, one of the roommates called a plumber to come the next morning. Because he or she had an important exam the next morning and therefore stayed at his or her parents' place, he or she checked that the other roommate would be there the next morning to let the plumber in; the third roommate was said to be abroad. The next morning, the plumber called the roommate who was staying at his or her parents' place to say that nobody was there to let him in. The cell phone of the roommate who was supposed to let the plumber in was disconnected. Thus, the roommate who had the exam that morning had to go the apartment and let the plumber in. He or she found the other roommate sleeping in his or her room; it turned out that he or she had got no sleep the previous night because his or her boss asked him or her to take care of an emergency crisis at work. When he or she got

¹In a pilot study ($N = 156$) that had a 2 (Role [Victim, Perpetrator]) × 2 (Message Source [other Conflict Party, Third Party]) × 2 (Message Type [Empowerment, Acceptance]) design, we found that victims' willingness to reconcile following an empowering message from the perpetrator was higher than their willingness to reconcile in the three other victim cells ($p < .01$; $M = 4.11$ in the other conflict party and empowerment cell, compared with 3.03 in the other conflict party and acceptance cell, 3.45 in the third party and empowerment cell, and 3.30 in the third party and acceptance cell). Correspondingly, perpetrators' willingness to reconcile was higher following an accepting message from the victim compared with the three other perpetrator cells ($p < .001$; $M = 5.30$ in the other conflict party and acceptance cell, compared with 4.76, 3.85, and 4.38 in the other conflict party and empowerment, third party and acceptance, and third party and empowerment cells, respectively). These findings reveal that the most effective messages were conveyed by the other conflict party and included the contents previously identified by the Needs-Based Model as relevant to victims' and perpetrators' needs (i.e., empowerment and acceptance, respectively). Put differently, messages from third parties that conveyed acceptance to victims or, correspondingly, empowerment to perpetrators did not seem to be especially effective. This increased our confidence that it was appropriate to focus in Study 1 only on empowering messages for victims and accepting messages for perpetrators, especially in light of the fact that manipulating message content in Study 1 would result in 10 experimental cells.

²The general pattern of results persisted even when these participants were included in the analyses.

back home, he or she fell into a deep sleep and did not hear the plumber knocking. The other roommate then rushed to the exam but was late due to unexpected traffic jams and was not allowed to take it. In the Role manipulation, participants were asked to imagine themselves as the roommate who either missed the exam (Victim condition) or failed to let the plumber (Perpetrator condition). As a manipulation check, participants indicated how much they (i) offended the other person in the situation and (ii) were hurt by him or her.

Importantly, we used a vignette that reflected, using Gonzales, Manning, and Haugen's (1992) terms, perpetrators' "negligent" behavior, that is, an unintentional transgression. We chose to use this type of vignette because of our theoretical stance that such behaviors characterize daily interpersonal transgressions. As opposed to transgressions that fully meet the conditions of blame attribution (i.e., intentionality, foreseeability, and controllability; Shaver, 1985) such as plagiarizing a friend's paper or having sex with a friend's fiancé (vignettes used by Gonzales et al., 1992), we argue that daily interpersonal transgressions seldom reflect perpetrators' purely "evil" behavior (see Baumeister, 1996). For this reason, perpetrators often turn to excuses and justifications when accounting for their wrongdoings (Schönbach, 1990). Thus, using this type of vignette allowed us to elicit appropriate levels of identification not only among victims but also among perpetrators (see the Results section), which was less likely had we been using a vignette reflecting a transgression that fully meets the blame attribution conditions.

Following the assignment to roles of victims and perpetrators, the vignette informed participants in the Control (No-Message) condition that 1 week later neither the other conflict party nor the third roommate who had meanwhile returned from abroad said anything about the incident; the vignette ended at this point. In the other conditions, the story continued with the manipulation of Message Source: 1 week later, either the other conflict party or the third, non-involved roommate approached the protagonist and conveyed him or her a message. Participants were instructed to assume that the message reflected the honest opinion of the person who conveyed it. Victims received an empowering message, which expressed respect and appreciation for their contribution to the apartment (e.g., "I respect you and appreciate your contribution to the apartment"). Expressions of respect of one's contribution are a component of empowerment and were found in previous research to successfully restore victims' sense of power (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Perpetrators received an accepting message, which expressed liking and reassured them that they are good people (e.g., "I like you and I know that you are a good, considerate person"). Liking and reassurance of one's moral and social adequacy are components of acceptance and were previously found to restore perpetrators' moral image (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008).

Next, participants completed a questionnaire that included manipulation checks for message source and content, and the dependent variables. To assess the Message Source manipulation, participants in all conditions were asked to write down the names of the characters in the story and briefly explain their role in the story. In the two Message Source conditions, participants additionally had to indicate which character conveyed them the message. To evaluate the extent to which the

content of the messages was perceived as intended participants indicated whether the message explicitly expressed (i) appreciation of their contribution to the apartment and (ii) liking toward them.

Finally, a 9-item scale ($\alpha = .84$), ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*, measured participants' Sense of Power (e.g., "I feel influential in the apartment"); a 6-item scale ($\alpha = .74$) measured their Moral Image, reflecting the extent to which participants believed that the other roommates viewed them as moral (e.g., "my roommates perceive me as blameworthy"; reverse coded); a 6-item scale ($\alpha = .89$) measured Trust, reflecting participants' perceptions of consensus regarding ethical values and shared norms of conduct and feeling that the other conflict party holds good intentions toward them (e.g., "I have trust in the positive intentions of other conflict-party"; "we share a similar view on how to things should work from now on"); and a 10-item scale measured Willingness to Reconcile ("I am willing to make efforts to clear the atmosphere between us"). Embedded between these measures was "the instruction manipulation check" developed by Oppenheimer, Meyvis, and Davidenko (2009) to screen out inattentive participants.

The aforementioned measures of Sense of Power, Moral Image, and Willingness to Reconcile were adapted from Shnabel & Nadler, 2008. The trust measure was adapted from Nadler and Liviatan (2006) and Wenzel, Okimoto, Feather, and Platow (2010), and adjusted to the present context. Note that the Trust and Willingness to Reconcile measures related to somewhat similar contents; for example, both measures related to the possibility of positive relations in the future: Trust examined the extent to which participants expected the other conflict party's behavior to contribute to the attainment of positive relations, whereas Willingness to Reconcile examined the extent to which participants expected their own behavior to be geared toward attaining positive relations. Because of this potential overlap, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis to confirm that these measures constituted separate constructs. Following this analysis (whose results are available upon request), we excluded one item that was supposed to measure Willingness to Reconcile yet loaded on the Trust factor. Hence, the final measure of Willingness to Reconcile was calculated as the mean of the remaining nine items ($\alpha = .89$).

Results

Role Identification

The vignettes elicited a level of identification that was significantly above four (the scale's neutral midpoint) among participants assigned to be either victims, $M = 5.52$, $SD = 1.32$, $t(84) = 10.64$, $p < .001$, or perpetrators, $M = 5.11$, $SD = 1.30$, $t(74) = 7.37$, $p < .001$. Thus, participants in both roles could adopt the protagonist's perspective and imagine themselves in his or her position.

Manipulation Checks

The manipulations were generally successful. In terms of Role, participants in the Victim condition perceived

themselves as hurt by the other conflict party more than participants in the Perpetrator condition, $M_s = 6.42$ ($SD = 1.00$) versus 2.21 ($SD = 1.37$), $t(158) = 22.35$, $p < .001$. Participants in the Perpetrator condition perceived themselves as those who have hurt the other conflict party more than participants in the Victim condition, $M_s = 6.00$ ($SD = 1.32$) versus 1.29 ($SD = 0.74$), $t(158) = 28.34$, $p < .001$.

With respect to Message Source, seven participants who did not correctly identify the person who conveyed the message were excluded from the final sample. Six additional participants were excluded because of their failure in the instruction manipulation check.

With regard to message content, except for participants in the Control, No-Message condition, all victims received empowering messages, and all perpetrators received accepting messages. These messages were perceived as intended: Victims perceived the message they received as expressing more empowerment than did perpetrators, $M_s = 6.16$ ($SD = 0.97$) versus 3.25 ($SD = 1.82$), $t(111) = 10.82$, $p < .001$, whereas perpetrators perceived the message as expressing more acceptance than did victims, $M_s = 6.21$ ($SD = 0.85$) versus 4.16 ($SD = 1.63$), $t(111) = 8.18$, $p < .001$ (note that participants in the control condition did not answer these items, hence the lower degrees of freedom). An alternative approach, which used a 2 (Role [Victim, Perpetrator]) \times 2 (Source [other Conflict Party, Third Party]) \times 2 (Content [Empowerment, Acceptance]) ANOVA with repeated measures on the third independent variable revealed the expected Role \times Content interaction, $F(1,109) = 195.27$, $p < .001$, such that victims perceived the message as expressing greater empowerment than acceptance, whereas perpetrators perceived the message as expressing greater acceptance than empowerment; the Source \times Content and Source \times Content \times Role interactions were nonsignificant, $ps > .133$.

Main Analysis

Means and standard deviations are presented in Table 1.

Sense of Power

A 2 (Role [Victims, Perpetrator]) \times 3 (Message Source [Conflict Party, Third Party, Control]) ANOVA revealed a main effect for Role, $F(1,154) = 4.58$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .029$, such that unexpectedly victims' sense of power was higher than that of perpetrators (Table 1). The main effect of message source was significant, $F(2,154) = 56.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .423$, such that messages from either the other conflict party or a third party significantly increased participants' sense of power compared with the control condition ($ps < .001$). Unexpectedly, the two-way interaction was not significant, $F(2,154) = 0.44$, $p > .645$, suggesting that victims and perpetrators (even though they received accepting messages) experienced similar enhancement in their sense of power following the receipt of messages from their roommates.

Moral Image

A 2 \times 3 ANOVA revealed the expected main effect for Role, $F(1,154) = 92.84$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .376$, such that perpetrators'

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of Sense of Power, Moral Image, Trust, and Willingness to Reconcile for victims and perpetrators in the three Message Source conditions (Study 1)

Message Source:	Control	Other Conflict Party	Third Party	Total
<i>Sense of Power</i>				
Victims	3.28 _a (1.10)	4.75 _b (0.78)	4.67 _b (0.78)	4.30 (1.09)
Perpetrators	2.92 _a (0.67)	4.65 _b (0.70)	4.30 _b (0.77)	3.99 (1.02)
<i>Moral Image</i>				
Victims	4.82 _a (1.04)	5.29 _a (0.78)	4.98 _a (0.90)	5.04 (0.91)
Perpetrators	3.06 _a (0.90)	4.29 _b (0.61)	3.98 _b (0.60)	3.80 (0.87)
<i>Trust</i>				
Victims	2.90 _a (1.09)	5.04 _b (0.86)	3.31 _a (1.11)	3.76 (1.37)
Perpetrators	3.47 _a (0.96)	5.62 _b (0.58)	4.02 _a (1.02)	4.36 (1.25)
<i>Willingness to Reconcile</i>				
Victims	3.63 _a (1.04)	4.19 _b (0.83)	4.01 _{ab} (0.98)	3.96 (0.96)
Perpetrators	5.02 _a (0.83)	5.75 _b (0.45)	5.17 _a (0.72)	5.31 (0.74)

Note: $N = 160$ participants. Different subscripts indicate significant differences between conditions within each social role.

moral image was lower than that of victims (Table 1). The main effect of message source was significant, $F(2,154) = 13.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .151$. We did not interpret this effect because it was qualified by the expected two-way interaction, $F(2,154) = 3.58$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .044$. Planned comparisons revealed that perpetrators in both the other Conflict-Party and Third-Party conditions, in which they received accepting messages, showed significantly higher moral image compared with perpetrators in the Control, No-Message condition ($ps < .001$). By contrast, there was no enhancement in the moral image of victims (who received empowering messages) in either the other Conflict-Party ($p > .064$) or Third-Party ($p > .497$) conditions compared with the Control condition.

Trust

A 2 \times 3 ANOVA revealed a main effect for Role, $F(1,154) = 16.36$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .096$, such that victims' trust level was lower than that of perpetrators (Table 1). The main effect of message source was also significant, $F(2,154) = 68.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .471$. Planned comparisons revealed that, as expected, messages from the other Conflict Party significantly increased participants' trust compared with the Control condition ($p < .001$). Unexpectedly, message from the Third Party also increased participants' trust compared with the Control condition ($p < .05$). Nevertheless, the standardized mean difference between the other Conflict-Party and Control conditions (Cohen's $d = 2.304$) was more than five times larger than the difference between the third party and the control (Cohen's $d = 0.415$). Moreover, as expected, participants' trust when receiving message from the other conflict party was significantly higher than when receiving messages from a third party ($p < .001$). Means were 5.33, 3.67, and

3.19 in the other Conflict-Party, Third-Party, and Control conditions, respectively. As indicated by the nonsignificant two-way interaction, $F(2,154)=0.10, p > .902$, these effects did not vary across social roles.

Willingness to Reconcile

A 2×3 ANOVA revealed a main effect for Role, $F(1,154)=106.04, p < .001, \eta^2 = .408$, such that victims' willingness to reconcile was lower than that of perpetrators (Table 1). Of direct importance for the purposes of the present study, the main effect of message source was also significant, $F(2,154)=7.55, p < .001, \eta^2 = .089$. Planned comparisons revealed that, as expected, messages from the other Conflict Party significantly increased participants' willingness to reconcile compared with the Control condition ($p < .001$). By contrast, messages from a Third Party did not increase participants' readiness to reconcile compared with the Control condition ($p > .101$). Moreover, participants' willingness to reconcile when receiving message from the other conflict party was significantly higher than when receiving messages from a third party ($p < .05$). Means were 4.97, 4.59, and 4.32 in the other Conflict-Party, Third-Party, and Control conditions, respectively. As indicated by the nonsignificant two-way interaction, $F(2,154)=0.84, p > .434$, these effects did not vary across social roles.

Mediation Analyses

By using the *MEDIATE* macro developed by Hayes and Preacher (2013), two analyses examined the indirect effects of the two message sources on willingness to reconcile through changes in both participants' identities (i.e., sense of power and moral image) and trust in the other conflict party. The two analyses were identical except that one focused on victims and the other focused on perpetrators. To conduct the analyses, the independent variable—message source—was dummy coded such that the Control condition was the reference category, producing two vectors (i.e., independent variables). One vector, representing the contrast between the other conflict party and the control, was coded such that it received the value "1" in the other Conflict-Party condition

and "0" in the Third-Party and Control conditions. The second vector, representing the contrast between the third party and the control, received the value "1" in the Third-Party condition and "0" in the other two conditions. Sense of Power, Moral Image, and Trust were introduced as multiple simultaneous mediators, and Willingness to Reconcile was the dependent variable. Figure 1 illustrates the model that we tested for both victims and perpetrators.

The complete results of the analysis conducted for victims are presented in Table 2. It can be seen in this table that, as expected, messages from the other conflict party had significant indirect effects on victims' willingness to reconcile through both sense of power and trust (note also that in line with the Needs-Based Model's logic, the indirect effect through moral image was nonsignificant). These results indicate that, as predicted, empowering messages from the perpetrators increased victims' readiness for reconciliation through restoring *both* the impaired dimension in their identities (i.e., their sense of power) *and* their trust in the perpetrators. As for empowering messages from third parties, consistent with the logic of the Needs-Based Model, their indirect effect through victims' sense of power (but again, not through their moral image) was significant. Nevertheless, in line with our prediction, the indirect effect through trust was nonsignificant. Thus, as indicated by the planned comparison reported earlier, the overall contribution of messages by a neutral third party to reconciliation failed to reach the effectiveness of an identical message conveyed by the perpetrator.

The complete results of the analysis conducted for perpetrators are presented in Table 3. As seen in this table, messages from the other conflict party had significant indirect effects on perpetrators' willingness to reconcile through both moral image and trust. Also, consistent with the Needs-Based Model, the indirect effect through sense of power was nonsignificant. These results suggest that, in line with our predictions, accepting messages from the victims increased perpetrators' readiness for reconciliation through restoring *both* the impaired dimension in their identities (i.e., their moral image) *and* their trust in the victims. As for accepting messages from third parties, consistent with the logic of the Needs-Based Model, their indirect effect through moral image (but, again,

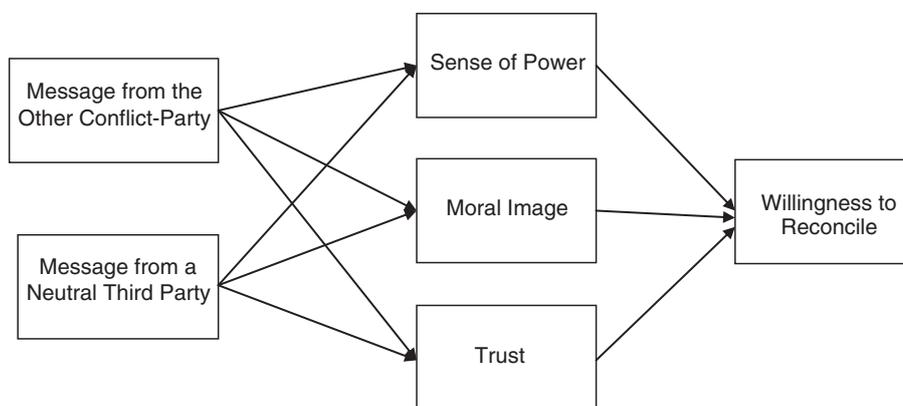


Figure 1. The Multiple Mediators Model examined for victims and perpetrators (separately) in Study 1. For victims, messages from both message sources (i.e., either the other conflict party or the third party) expressed empowerment. For perpetrators, messages from both message sources expressed acceptance

Table 2. A multiple mediation model for the indirect effect of message source on victims' willingness to reconcile through Sense of Power, Moral Image, and Trust (Study 1)

Predictor	B	SE	t	p
<i>Sense of Power</i>				
Constant	3.278	0.181	18.152	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	1.476	0.246	5.999	.000
Message from Third Party	1.392	0.237	5.867	.000
<i>Moral Image</i>				
Constant	4.819	0.184	26.154	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	0.472	0.251	1.880	.064
Message from Third Party	0.165	0.242	0.683	.497
<i>Trust</i>				
Constant	2.903	0.211	13.771	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	2.133	0.287	7.425	.000
Message from Third Party	0.403	0.277	1.456	.149
<i>Willingness to Reconcile</i>				
Constant	1.791	0.444	4.033	.000
Sense of Power	0.324	0.103	3.139	.002
Moral Image	-0.149	0.095	-1.576	.119
Trust	0.515	0.087	5.899	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	-0.945	0.255	-3.705	.000
Message from Third Party	-0.251	0.224	-1.119	.267
<i>Indirect effect through:</i>				
<i>Sense of Power</i>				
Message from Other Conflict Party	0.479	0.183	0.147	0.853
Message from Third Party	0.451	0.172	0.139	0.833
<i>Moral Image</i>				
Message from Other Conflict Party	-0.070	0.060	-0.210	0.020
Message from Third Party	-0.025	0.048	-0.126	0.064
<i>Trust</i>				
Message from Other Conflict Party	1.098	0.221	0.705	1.564
Message from Third Party	0.208	0.158	-0.096	0.541

Note: *N* = 160 participants.

The three experimental conditions were coded into two dummy variables with the Control condition as the reference group. The variables Other Conflict Party and Third Party represent the independent contrasts between each of the Message Source conditions and the Control condition.

Bootstrap samples = 1000.

LLCI, lower level of the 95% bootstrap percentile confidence interval.

ULCI, upper level of the 95% bootstrap percentile confidence interval.

not through sense of power) was significant. Nevertheless, consistent with our predictions, the indirect effect through trust did not reach significance. Thus, as indicated by the planned comparisons reported earlier, whereas an intervention initiated by the victim successfully promoted reconciliation, an identical intervention by a third party failed to do so.

Discussion

Study 1 replicated and extended previous findings on the Needs-Based Model. First, consistent with Baumeister's (1996) claim that compared with victims, perpetrators view the same transgression as less severe and are therefore readier to "move on," a main effect for Role indicated that perpetrators had higher willingness to reconcile than victims. Second, the distinction between power and morality seemed at first glance to be somewhat blurred, as evident in the findings that perpetrators in the different Message Source conditions reported an enhanced sense of power (even though these messages conveyed acceptance) and that overall victims'

Table 3. A multiple mediation model for the indirect effect of message source on perpetrators' willingness to reconcile through Sense of Power, Moral Image, and Trust (Study 1)

Predictor	B	SE	t	p
<i>Sense of Power</i>				
Constant	2.923	0.150	19.524	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	1.725	0.210	8.237	.000
Message from Third Party	1.379	0.202	6.825	.000
<i>Moral Image</i>				
Constant	3.058	0.148	20.737	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	1.234	0.206	5.978	.000
Message from Third Party	0.924	0.199	4.644	.000
<i>Trust</i>				
Constant	3.471	0.184	18.821	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	2.147	0.258	8.319	.000
Message from Third Party	0.553	0.249	2.221	.030
<i>Willingness to Reconcile</i>				
Constant	3.289	0.416	7.909	.000
Sense of Power	-0.037	0.118	-0.314	.755
Moral Image	0.224	0.112	2.008	.049
Trust	0.332	0.088	3.791	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	-0.191	0.276	-0.690	.493
Message from Third Party	-0.188	0.221	-0.851	.398
<i>Indirect effect through:</i>				
<i>Sense of Power</i>				
Message from Other Conflict Party	-0.064	0.218	-0.491	0.360
Message from Third Party	-0.051	0.175	-0.435	0.265
<i>Moral Image</i>				
Message from Other Conflict Party	0.276	0.140	0.029	0.600
Message from Third Party	0.207	0.110	0.018	0.465
<i>Trust</i>				
Message from Other Conflict Party	0.714	0.218	0.276	1.141
Message from Third Party	0.184	0.102	-0.009	0.404

Note: *N* = 160 participants.

The three experimental conditions were coded into two dummy variables with the Control condition as the reference group. The variables Other Conflict Party and Third Party represent the independent contrasts between each of the Message Source conditions and the Control condition.

Bootstrap samples = 1000.

LLCI, lower level of the 95% bootstrap percentile confidence interval.

ULCI, upper level of the 95% bootstrap percentile confidence interval.

sense of power was higher than that of perpetrators. These unexpected findings may be attributed to the unique characteristics of the transgression examined in Study 1: It is possible that oversleeping made perpetrators feel loss of control and consequently reduced their sense of power and agency. Alternatively, it is possible that as opposed to the contexts examined so far within the Needs-Based Model's framework (e.g., collegial relations in a workplace), in the context of close relations between apartment roommates, being recognized as a victim was actually empowering. This possibility is consistent with recent theorizing suggesting that one's victim status can (perhaps counter-intuitively) serve as a source of empowerment because it implied one's entitlement for reparation (Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Nadler, 2012).

In any case, despite this "spillover" (which has been occasionally found in previous studies; e.g., Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), and in line with the Needs-Based Model's logic, it was the restoration of victims' sense of power and perpetrators' moral image that contributed to reconciliation. By contrast, victims' moral image and perpetrators' sense of power did not affect reconciliation. Specifically, consistent with the model's

original formulation (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), we found that (i) an empowering message from the perpetrators increased victims' sense of power, which in turn increased their willingness to reconcile and (ii) an accepting message from the victims improved perpetrators' moral image, which in turn led to greater readiness to reconcile. By extending the model's original formulation, however, these messages were found to increase victims' and perpetrators' readiness to reconcile not only because of the restoration of their impaired identities but also because they restored their trust in each other.

As for messages from third parties, in line with the logic of the Needs-Based Model's original formulation, they had significant indirect effects on reconciliation through the restoration of victims' and perpetrators' impaired identity dimensions (i.e., sense of power and moral image, respectively). However, consistent with the present study's novel predictions, messages from third parties had a significantly smaller effect on victims' and perpetrators' trust level compared with messages from the other conflict party, and their indirect effects on reconciliation through trust were nonsignificant.

Unexpectedly, however, messages from third parties did increase victims' and perpetrators' trust level compared with the Control, No-Message condition, and had also a marginal (albeit nonsignificant) tendency to increase reconciliation. It is possible to view these effects as lacking *substantive significance*. Namely, regardless of their *statistical significance*, these results may be interpreted as suggesting that in practice, third parties are relatively ineffective in promoting reconciliation (e.g., in light of the small effect sizes compared with those obtained in the other Conflict-Party condition) (see Kelley and Preacher's [2012] discussion of effect size and substantive vs. statistical significance). Alternatively, these unexpected findings can also be interpreted as optimistically suggesting that interventions by third parties can potentially contribute, even if less than interventions by the other conflict party, to the processes of trust restoration and, ultimately, reconciliation. For example, it is possible that third parties' effectiveness would be greater among conflict parties with high dispositional trust (Evans & Revelle, 2008) or within strong, well-established relationships (in which third parties were found to amplify trust; Kramer, 1999). Future research should therefore explore potential moderators of third parties' effectiveness, with the goal of identifying conditions under which third parties *can* contribute to the restoration of trust and reconciliation.

STUDY 2

The main goal of Study 2 was to extend the generalizability of Study 1's findings. Whereas Study 1 focused on a transgression at home, different social contexts and relations prescribe different norms and expectations regarding the exchange of material and symbolic resources (Fiske, 1991) including empowerment and acceptance. For example, empowerment (e.g., acknowledging one's skills and contribution) may be more crucial at the workplace than in a non-hierarchical environment such as one's home, in which acceptance may be especially important. Similarly, Study 1 focused on a

transgression involving a careless omission on the part of the perpetrator, which may be perceived as less severe than an equally harmful transgression involving the commission of a harmful act (Cushman & Greene, 2012). It is possible thus that direct communication between victims and perpetrators is particularly necessary in transgressions involving actions, which are likely to posit a greater threat to the conflicting parties' mutual trust. If so, the relative ineffectiveness of third parties found in Study 1, which involved a harmful omission, should be even more pronounced in a transgression context that involves a harmful action. To examine these possibilities, Study 2 tested our hypotheses in the context of a harmful action taking place within collegial relations in a workplace setting.

An additional goal of Study 2 was to further explore the concept of moral image and its role in mediating the effects of accepting messages from the different sources on perpetrators' willingness to reconcile. Specifically, previous findings within the framework of the Needs-Based Model (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008) revealed that the barrier to perpetrators' readiness to reconcile was not their sense of culpability or feeling of remorse but rather their perception that the victim views them as blameworthy. These findings led to the distinction between "private" and "public" moral image³ and to the research focus on the latter construct. As mentioned earlier, studies within the Needs-Based Model's framework have so far focused solely on the victim-perpetrator dyad. We theorized, however, that once a third social actor comes into play, two different types of public moral image may emerge, namely, moral image in the eyes of the other conflict party versus moral image in the eyes of the third party. Study 2 aimed to examine whether these two "types" of moral image make a distinct contribution to the reconciliation process.

We predicted that, consistent with previous findings, moral image in the eyes of the victim, which should be improved following an accepting message from the victim, would lead to increased willingness to reconcile among perpetrators. An accepting message from a third party, however, was predicted to improve perpetrators' moral image only in the eyes of the third party (but not in the victim's eyes). Because gaining moral-social acceptance from their victims is a costly behavior for perpetrators (Leunissen et al., 2012), for example, it may require them to apologize to or compensate their victims; once perpetrators feel accepted by others in their "moral community," they may be less motivated to make efforts toward reconciliation. In other words, restoration of perpetrators' moral image in the eyes of third parties might remove their concern about social exclusion and provide them with moral licensing or credentials (Monin & Miller, 2001; Zhong, Liljenquist, & Cain, 2009) that would exempt them from the need to seek moral-social reassurance from their victims. We therefore predicted that as opposed to moral image in the eyes of the victim, moral image in the eyes of the third party would not translate into perpetrators' greater readiness to reconcile. Except for the slightly different measure of moral image and the aforementioned predictions for

³This previous research did not find evidence for a corresponding "split" between participants' private versus public sense of power. We therefore focused solely on the distinction between various "types" of moral image.

it, the experimental design, outcome variables, and general hypotheses were similar to those of Study 1.

Method

Participants

Participants were 198 female and 120 male students of two Israeli universities (mean age = 26, $SD = 4.65$) who participated in the study in exchange for course credit and participation in a raffle. Six participants were excluded from the sample because they failed to correctly identify the Message Source; seven additional participants were excluded because they failed the manipulation check detecting inattentiveness (Oppenheimer et al., 2009).² The final sample thus included 305 participants.

Procedure

Participants in a study of “personal relationships” were exposed to online materials. They read a short vignette about an employee in an advertising company who worked on a prestigious project with two other co-workers and who was absent from work for several weeks because of maternity leave (for women) or military reserve duty (for men)—common reasons for extended work absences in Israeli society. Aside from the reason for the absence, the vignettes for men and women were identical. Upon returning to work, the employee learned that a colleague whom he or she requested to temporarily fill his or her position had been promoted to the job and that he or she had been demoted. The demoted employee blamed the colleague for this demotion. The third employee who was in the same project team knew about the conflict but did not get involved in it. In the Role manipulation, participants were asked to imagine themselves as the employee who was demoted (Victim condition) or as the colleague who was promoted (Perpetrator condition). Importantly, because of our wish to use scenarios with which perpetrators would be able to identify (see also the Procedure of Study 1), we purposely chose to use a transgression in which the perpetrator’s behavior was not *entirely* intentional, foreseeable, and controllable; for example, the employees’ boss could have been perceived as holding some of the blame. To verify that we succeeded in our intention, we measured participants’ identification with their assigned roles. Despite the fact that perpetrators could sufficiently identify with their assigned role (suggesting that the perpetrator’s behavior was not perceived as entirely evil and unacceptable), in the society where the experiment took place (Israel), people often thought that “the most right thing to do” was to decline the promotion offer out of loyalty to the absent colleague. The perpetrator’s failure to do so raised moral criticism. To verify that the social roles were perceived as intended, we next administered the manipulation checks for Role, which asked participants how much they (i) offended the other person in the situation and (ii) were hurt by him or her.

Following the assignment to roles, participants in the Control, No-Message condition were directed to fill out the measures of our outcome variables. For participants assigned to the other experimental conditions, the story continued with the manipulations of Message Source: After a week, in a staff

feedback meeting, either the other conflict party or the colleague who was not involved in the conflict conveyed either empowering (in the Victim condition) or accepting (in the Perpetrator condition) messages to the protagonist. Participants were instructed to assume that the message is authentic, that is, that the person conveying the message really meant what he or she said. Specifically, participants in the Victim condition read that either the other conflict party or the third party (depending on the experimental condition) praised their professional skills, said that they were professional, highly talented persons, and mentioned several examples of incidents in which their professional skills contributed to reaching intelligent, creative solutions to the issues at hand. Participants in the Perpetrator condition read that either the other conflict party or the third party (depending on condition) praised their interpersonal skills, said that they were sympathetic, nice persons to work with, and mentioned several examples of incidents in which their interpersonal skills contributed to creating a positive atmosphere at the workplace. The manipulation of empowerment through competence and acceptance through agreeableness is consistent with the literature conceptualizing competence as a major component of empowerment (e.g., Brookings & Bolton, 2000) and associating agreeableness with the feeling of being accepted by others (Buckley, Winkel, & Leary, 2004). To evaluate whether the content of the message was perceived as intended, participants had to indicate the extent to which the message expressed that they were “nice and kind” (i.e., conveying acceptance) and “competent” (i.e., conveying empowerment). To assess the Message Source manipulation, participants were asked to indicate the name of the person who conveyed the message to them at the staff meeting.

Following the receipt of the message, a 9-item scale ($\alpha = .93$), ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *very much*, measured participants’ Sense of Power (e.g., “I feel powerful in my workplace”); a 3-item scale ($\alpha = .91$) measured their Moral Image in the eyes of the other conflict party, reflecting the extent to which participants believed that he or she viewed them as moral (e.g., “my colleague [name of other conflict party] perceives me as moral”); an additional 3-item scale ($\alpha = .90$) measured participants’ Moral Image in the eyes of the third party (“my colleague [name of third party] perceives me as moral”); a 6-item scale ($\alpha = .78$) measured their Trust (e.g., “I trust the other conflict party’s good intentions towards me”); and finally, a 10-item scale ($\alpha = .87$) measured Willingness to Reconcile (“I am willing to make efforts to clear the atmosphere between us”). As in Study 1, an exploratory factor analysis (whose results are available upon request) verified that Trust and Willingness to Reconcile loaded on separate factors. Again, one reconciliation item (the same one as in Study 1) loaded on both the trust and the reconciliation factors and was excluded from analysis. Hence, the final Willingness to Reconcile measure consisted of nine items ($\alpha = .86$).

Results

Role Identification

The vignettes effectively elicited a reasonable level of identification (i.e., significantly above four, the scale’s neutral midpoint) among participants assigned to the role of victims,

$M = 5.27$, $SD = 1.34$, $t(150) = 11.69$, $p < .001$, and perpetrators, $M = 4.79$, $SD = 1.56$, $t(153) = 6.27$, $p < .001$. Thus, participants in both roles could adopt the protagonist's perspective and imagine themselves in his or her position.

Manipulation Checks

The manipulations were generally successful. In terms of Role, which was measured immediately following the assignment to the role and prior to the Message Source, participants in the Victim condition indicated, as intended, that they were hurt by the other conflict party more than did participants in the Perpetrator condition, $M_s = 5.66$ ($SD = 1.20$) versus 2.25 ($SD = 1.40$), $t(303) = 22.85$, $p < .001$. Participants in the Perpetrator role indicated, as intended, that they offended the other conflict party more than participants in the Victim role, $M_s = 5.60$ ($SD = 1.22$) versus 1.77 ($SD = 1.15$), $t(303) = 28.20$, $p < .001$.

With respect to Message Source, as explained earlier, except for the six participants who were excluded from the sample, all other participants correctly identified the person who conveyed the message.

Finally, in terms of message content, participants in the Victim condition (who were exposed to empowering messages) indicated that the person who conveyed the message appreciated their competence more than participants in the Perpetrator condition (who were exposed to accepting messages), $M_s = 6.15$ ($SD = 0.96$) versus 3.60 ($SD = 1.51$), $t(199) = 14.34$, $p < .001$ (note that the manipulation checks for message content were not included in the Control, No-Message condition and therefore the lower degrees of freedom). Participants in the Perpetrator condition indicated that the person who conveyed the message appreciated their interpersonal skills more than participants in the Victim condition, $M_s = 5.67$ ($SD = 1.51$) versus 3.72 ($SD = 1.37$), $t(199) = 9.60$, $p < .001$. These results suggest that the contents of the messages conveyed were perceived as intended. An alternative approach, which used a repeated measures analysis (see Study 1), also revealed the expected Role \times Content interaction, $F(1,197) = 266.04$, $p < .001$.

Main Analysis

Means and standard deviations for all outcome variables are presented in Table 4.

Sense of Power

A 2 (Role [Victims, Perpetrator]) \times 3 (Message Source [Conflict Party, Third Party, Control]) ANOVA revealed the expected main effect for Role, $F(1,299) = 108.04$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .265$, such that victims' sense of power was lower than that of perpetrators (Table 4). The main effect of message source was also significant, $F(2,299) = 7.93$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .050$, yet we did not interpret this effect because it was qualified by the expected two-way interaction, $F(2,299) = 14.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .089$. Planned comparisons revealed that victims in the other Conflict-Party and Third-Party conditions, in which they received an empowering message, showed significantly a higher sense of power compared with victims in the Control, No-Message condition ($p_s < .001$). By contrast, perpetrators (who received an accepting message) did not report heightened

Table 4. Means and standard deviations of Sense of Power, Moral Image, Trust, and Willingness to Reconcile for victims and perpetrators in the three Message Source conditions (Study 2)

Message Source:	Control	Other Conflict Party	Third Party	Total
<i>Sense of Power</i>				
Victims	2.83 _a (1.10)	3.83 _b (1.30)	4.17 _b (1.07)	3.63 (1.28)
Perpetrators	5.01 _a (0.95)	4.83 _a (1.16)	4.81 _a (0.77)	4.89 (0.97)
<i>Moral Image in the eyes of other conflict party</i>				
Victims	4.18 _a (1.52)	4.35 _a (1.41)	3.98 _a (1.31)	4.16 (1.41)
Perpetrators	2.12 _a (1.17)	3.41 _b (1.58)	2.20 _a (1.17)	2.56 (1.44)
<i>Moral Image in the eyes of third party</i>				
Victims	4.82 _a (1.46)	4.70 _a (1.29)	4.82 _a (1.31)	4.78 (1.35)
Perpetrators	3.55 _a (1.43)	4.15 _a (1.43)	5.05 _b (1.18)	4.23 (1.48)
<i>Trust</i>				
Victims	3.13 _a (1.02)	4.01 _b (1.02)	3.24 _a (1.04)	3.44 (1.09)
Perpetrators	2.91 _a (0.86)	3.75 _b (0.96)	2.86 _a (1.08)	3.17 (1.04)
<i>Willingness to Reconcile</i>				
Victims	2.76 _a (0.95)	3.31 _b (1.06)	2.91 _{ab} (0.92)	2.99 (1.00)
Perpetrators	4.37 _a (0.67)	4.82 _b (0.81)	4.28 _a (0.87)	4.49 (0.81)

Note: $N = 305$ participants. Different subscripts indicate significant differences between conditions within each social role.

sense of power in either the other Conflict-Party or Third-Party conditions ($p > .305$).

Moral Image in the Eyes of Other Conflict Party

A 2 \times 3 ANOVA revealed the expected main effect for Role, $F(1,299) = 103.47$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .257$, such that perpetrators' moral image in the eyes of the other conflict party was lower than that of victims (Table 4). The main effect of message source was significant, $F(2,299) = 10.34$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .065$. We did not interpret this effect because it was qualified by the expected two-way interaction, $F(2,299) = 4.57$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .030$. Planned comparisons revealed that, as expected, victims (who received an empowering message) in both the Conflict-Party and Third-Party conditions did not perceive their moral image in the eyes of their perpetrators to be higher compared with the Control condition ($p_s > .277$). Importantly, perpetrators in the other Conflict-Party condition perceived their moral image in the eyes of their victims to be significantly higher than perpetrators in the Control, No-Message condition ($p < .001$). By contrast, perpetrators in the Third-Party condition did not perceive their moral image in the eyes of their victims to be higher than perpetrators in the control condition ($p > .769$).

Moral Image in the Eyes of Third Party

A 2 \times 3 ANOVA revealed the expected main effect for Role, $F(1,299) = 11.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .037$, such that perpetrators'

moral image in the eyes of the neutral third party was lower than that of victims (Table 4). The main effect of message source was significant, $F(2,299)=8.33$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .053$, yet it was qualified by the expected two-way interaction, $F(2,299)=7.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .051$. Planned comparisons revealed that, as expected, victims (who received an empowering message) in both the Conflict-Party and Third-Party conditions did not perceive their moral image in the eyes of the neutral third party as different compared with victims in the Control condition ($ps > .644$). More importantly, perpetrators in the Third-Party condition perceived their moral image in the eyes of the third party to be significantly higher than perpetrators in the Control, No-Message condition ($p < .001$). Unexpectedly, perpetrators in the other Conflict-Party condition also perceived their moral image in the eyes of the neutral third party to be significantly higher than perpetrators in the Control condition ($p < .05$). Nevertheless, as expected, perpetrators in the Third-Party condition perceived their moral image in the eyes of the third party to be significantly higher than perpetrators in the other Conflict-Party condition ($p < .001$).

Trust

A 2×3 ANOVA revealed a main effect for Role, $F(1,299)=6.10$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .020$, such that victims' trust level was higher than that of perpetrators (Table 4). The direction of this main effect is different from the one obtained in Study 1, perhaps because of the unique characteristics of each vignette. In particular, it is possible that in Study 1, victims were highly concerned about the possibility that the perpetrators' careless behavior would repeat itself, whereas in Study 2, victims found it to be less likely that the perpetrator would repeat the transgression either because it was based on his or her seizing a "one time" opportunity for promotion or because the victim could avoid relying on him or her again. As expected, the main effect of message source was also significant, $F(2,299)=23.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .138$. Planned comparisons revealed that messages from the other Conflict Party significantly increased participants' trust compared with the Control condition ($p < .001$). By contrast, message from the Third Party did not change participants' level of trust compared with the Control condition ($p > .813$). These effects did not vary across social roles, as indicated by the nonsignificant two-way interaction, $F(2,299)=0.17$, $p > .844$.

Willingness to Reconcile

A 2×3 ANOVA revealed a main effect for Role, $F(1,299)=216.93$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .420$, such that victims' willingness to reconcile was lower than that of perpetrators (Table 4). Of direct relevance for the purposes of the present study, the main effect of message source was also significant, $F(2,299)=9.80$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .062$. Planned comparisons revealed that, as expected, messages from the other Conflict Party significantly increased participants' willingness to reconcile compared with the Control condition ($p < .001$). By contrast, message from the Third Party did not change participants' reconciliation tendencies compared with the

Control condition ($p > .812$). These effects did not vary across social roles, as indicated by the nonsignificant two-way interaction, $F(2,299)=0.516$, $p > .597$.

Mediation Analyses

We used the *MEDIATE* macro (Hayes & Preacher, 2013) to conduct two analyses that examined the indirect effects of the two message sources on willingness to reconcile through changes in sense of power, moral image in the eyes of the other party, moral image in the eyes of the neutral third party, and trust among victims and perpetrators. The analyses generally corresponded to those reported in Study 1: The independent variables were the contrast between the other Conflict-Party and Control conditions, and between the Third-Party and Control conditions; Sense of Power, Moral Image in the eyes of the other conflict party, Moral Image in the eyes of the neutral third party, and Trust were introduced as multiple simultaneous mediators, and Willingness to Reconcile was the dependent variable.

The complete results of the analysis conducted for victims are presented in Table 5. It can be seen in this table that messages from the other conflict party had significant indirect effects on victims' willingness to reconcile through both sense of power and trust (but, consistent with the Needs-Based Model, the indirect effect through both types of moral image was nonsignificant). These results suggest that, as predicted, empowering messages from the perpetrators increased victims' readiness for reconciliation through restoring *both* the impaired dimension in their identities (i.e., their sense of power) *and* their trust in the perpetrators. As for third parties, in line with Study 1, their indirect effect through sense of power was significant, whereas their indirect effect through trust was nonsignificant. Overall, and as indicated by the planned comparisons reported earlier, third parties' contribution to reconciliation through restoration of victims' sense of power was insufficient to significantly increase victims' readiness to reconcile.

The complete results of the analysis conducted for perpetrators are presented in Table 6. As seen in this table, messages from the other conflict party had significant indirect effects on perpetrators' willingness to reconcile through both moral image in the eyes of the victim and through trust (but, consistent with the Needs-Based Model, the indirect effect through sense of power was nonsignificant). These results suggest that, as predicted, accepting messages from the victims increased perpetrators' readiness for reconciliation through restoring *both* the impaired dimension in their identities (i.e., their moral image in the victim's eyes) *and* their trust in the victims' good intentions. As for third parties, in line with our prediction, their indirect effects through trust, moral image in the victims' eyes, and sense of power were nonsignificant. Moreover, pointing to a potential drawback of third parties' involvement, the indirect effect of message from a third party through restoration of moral image in the eyes of the third party was *negative*. That is, receiving an accepting message from a third party increased perpetrators' perception that they are viewed as moral by the party who is outside the victim-perpetrator dyad, which in turn reduced their willingness to reconcile with the victim.

Table 5. A multiple mediation model for the indirect effect of message source on victims' willingness to reconcile (Study 2)

Predictor	B	SE	t	p
<i>Sense of Power</i>				
Constant	2.830	0.165	17.131	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	1.002	0.236	4.245	.000
Message from Third Party	1.342	0.227	5.907	.000
<i>Moral Image in the eyes of perpetrator</i>				
Constant	4.177	0.202	20.733	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	0.171	0.288	0.593	.554
Message from Third Party	-0.195	.277	-0.704	.483
<i>Moral Image in the eyes of third party</i>				
Constant	4.823	0.194	24.886	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	-0.128	0.277	-0.463	.644
Message from Third Party	0.001	0.267	0.004	.997
<i>Trust</i>				
Constant	3.126	0.146	21.386	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	0.885	0.209	4.236	.000
Message from Third Party	0.111	0.201	0.550	.583
<i>Willingness to Reconcile</i>				
Constant	1.346	0.321	4.197	.000
Sense of Power	0.233	0.061	3.833	.000
Moral Image in the eyes of Perpetrator	-0.138	0.065	-2.124	.035
Moral Image in the eyes of Third Party	-0.032	0.066	-0.488	.626
Trust	0.476	0.070	6.766	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	-0.087	0.174	-0.501	.617
Message from Third Party	-0.239	0.173	-1.377	.171
<i>Indirect effect through:</i>				
<i>Sense of Power</i>				
Message from Perpetrator	0.234	0.088	0.084	0.436
Message from Third Party	0.313	0.095	0.132	0.506
<i>Moral Image in the eyes of perpetrator</i>				
Message from Perpetrator	-0.024	0.050	-0.149	0.056
Message from Third Party	0.027	0.047	-0.045	0.139
<i>Moral Image in the eyes of third party</i>				
Message from Perpetrator	0.004	0.024	-0.036	0.063
Message from Third Party	0.000	0.022	-0.035	0.055
<i>Trust</i>				
Message from Perpetrator	0.421	0.125	0.205	0.695
Message from Third Party	0.053	0.095	-0.128	0.244

Note: N = 151 participants who were assigned to the Victim role. The three experimental conditions were coded into two dummy variables with the Control condition as the reference group. The variables Other Conflict Party and Third Party represent the independent contrasts between each of the Message Source conditions and the Control condition. Bootstrap samples = 1000. LLCI, lower level of the 95% bootstrap percentile confidence interval. ULCI, upper level of the 95% bootstrap percentile confidence interval.

DISCUSSION

The findings of Study 2 generally replicated the main patterns of Study 1, providing further support to our claim that beyond need satisfaction, trust restoration plays a critical role in the reconciliation process. In particular, an empowering message from the perpetrator restored victims' sense of power and trust, which translated into greater readiness to reconcile. By contrast, although an empowering message from a third party had an indirect influence on victims' willingness to reconcile through restoring their sense of power, it did not increase their level of trust and thus, overall, failed to significantly increase

Table 6. A multiple mediation model for the indirect effect of message source on perpetrators' willingness to reconcile (Study 2)

Predictor	B	SE	t	p
<i>Sense of Power</i>				
Constant	5.008	0.131	38.176	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	-0.175	0.190	-0.919	.359
Message from Third Party	-0.196	0.191	-1.027	.306
<i>Moral Image in the eyes of victim</i>				
Constant	2.121	0.178	11.949	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	1.292	0.257	5.023	.000
Message from Third Party	0.076	0.259	0.294	.769
<i>Moral Image in the eyes of third party</i>				
Constant	3.552	0.183	19.460	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	0.602	0.265	2.276	.024
Message from Third Party	1.503	0.266	5.653	.000
<i>Trust</i>				
Constant	2.909	0.131	22.292	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	0.844	0.189	4.464	.000
Message from Third Party	-0.045	0.190	-0.238	.813
<i>Willingness to Reconcile</i>				
Constant	2.607	0.336	7.762	.000
Sense of Power	0.194	0.058	3.354	.001
Moral Image—victim	0.132	0.048	2.744	.007
Moral Image—third party	-0.097	0.043	-2.242	.027
Trust	0.295	0.063	4.711	.000
Message from Other Conflict Party	0.117	0.145	0.807	.421
Message from Third Party	0.092	0.148	0.624	.534
<i>Indirect effect through:</i>				
<i>Sense of Power</i>				
Message from Victim	-0.034	0.042	-0.128	0.043
Message from Third Party	-0.038	0.037	-0.115	0.027
<i>Moral Image in the eyes of victim</i>				
Message from Victim	0.170	0.094	0.016	0.389
Message from Third Party	0.010	0.033	-0.055	0.077
<i>Moral Image in the eyes of third party</i>				
Message from Victim	-0.058	0.043	-0.162	0.003
Message from Third Party	-0.146	0.083	-0.326	0.002
<i>Trust</i>				
Message from Victim	0.249	0.090	0.094	0.448
Message from Third Party	-0.013	0.060	-0.155	0.098

Note: N = 154 participants who were assigned to the Perpetrator role. The three experimental conditions were coded into two dummy variables with the Control condition as the reference group. The variables Other Conflict Party and Third Party represent the independent contrasts between each of the Message Source conditions and the Control condition. Bootstrap samples = 1000. LLCI, lower level of the 95% bootstrap percentile confidence interval. ULCI, upper level of the 95% bootstrap percentile confidence interval.

victims' readiness to reconcile with their perpetrators. As for perpetrators, an accepting message from the victims restored their trust as well as moral image in the eyes of both the victims and the third party. That is, receiving acceptance from the victim generalized into the perception that social actors who are not involved in the conflict also have a positive view on perpetrators' morality. Restoration of trust and moral image in the victims' eyes, in turn, translated into perpetrators' greater willingness to reconcile. By contrast, an accepting message from a third party failed to restore perpetrators' trust and moral image in the eyes of the victims. Moreover, the restoration of moral image in the eyes of the neutral third party following such a message had a negative effect on perpetrators' readiness to reconcile with their victims.

These findings extended those of Study 1 in several ways. Whereas in Study 1 messages from third parties were *relatively ineffective* in building trust compared with messages from the other conflict party (but still effective compared with the control), in Study 2, they were found to be *completely ineffective*. The reason for this discrepancy may be that Study 2 involved perpetrators' intentional rather than "negligent" transgression, which constituted a more severe breach of trust and therefore made direct communication between victims and perpetrators especially critical. Moreover, Study 2 showed that messages from third parties might even have an adverse effect. Specifically, we found that beyond the "split" found in previous research between perpetrators' private and public moral image, an additional "split" may emerge between different types of public "moral images" reflecting how the perpetrator is perceived by the victim compared with how he or she is perceived by third parties outside the victim-perpetrator dyad. Examining these different "moral images" revealed that restoring perpetrators' moral image in the eyes of their victims was critical for reconciliation, whereas restoration of moral image solely in the eyes of non-involved third parties had a detrimental effect. Apparently, an accepting message from a third party provided perpetrators with moral credentials (Monin & Miller, 2001) and signaled that they should not be concerned about being potentially excluded because of their behavior. This reduced perpetrators' motivation to invest the substantial efforts required in order to make it up to the victims.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Previous research has shown that third parties can facilitate the process of *conflict resolution* (Kressel & Pruitt, 1989), for example, by encouraging a "problem-solving" orientation (Fisher & Ury, 1981) or allowing the conflict parties to make concessions without losing face (Rubin, 1980). Reconciliation, however, requires something beyond this. According to Gobodo-Madikizela (2008), reconciliation involves a "relational transformation," which can be achieved through the exchange of emotionally charged communication between victims and perpetrators. Only a direct dialogue between the involved conflict parties "may open up the possibility to reach out to the other in an attempt to repair a broken relationship" (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2008; p. 58). The present research supports Gobodo-Madikizela's observation. Using different contexts of interpersonal transgressions, two experiments found that conciliatory messages from third parties were relatively ineffective in promoting reconciliation (Study 1) and might even carry a somewhat adverse effect on perpetrators (Study 2). These findings highlight the different nature of conflict resolution compared with reconciliation processes.

Theoretically, the results of the two studies reported in the present paper suggest that the Needs-Based Model should be reformulated to reflect the *dialogical nature* (a term coined by Benziman, 2009) of the reconciliation process. Benziman, who provides a philosophical account of reconciliation and the apology-forgiveness cycle, criticizes existing psychological approaches (e.g., Enright et al., 1998; Fitzgibbons, 1998;

Scobie & Scobie, 1998) for overstressing internal factors while failing to conceptualize the apology-forgiveness cycle as a *dialogical process*. This tendency is reflected, for example, in psychologists' conceptualization of forgiveness as an internal process that may be disconnected from the relations with the perpetrator and its goal as directed at the victim (e.g., reducing his or her anger) rather than at the perpetrator.

The original formulation of the model reflected a dialogical approach in the sense that it conceptualized reconciliation as a social exchange interaction through which the conflict parties address each other's psychological needs. However, the model has focused only on the changes in *self-perceptions* that result from such exchange interactions and examined how they link to *perceptions of the relationships* reflected in attitudes toward reconciliation. It failed, however, to discuss and measure changes in the *perceptions of the other conflict party*. Yet, the findings of the present research revealed that the exchange of empowering and accepting messages between victims and perpetrators promoted reconciliation not only because it improved their self-perceptions as either powerful or moral-social actors, but also because it induced them with greater trust in each other. Put differently, beyond the satisfaction of one's emotional needs, reconciliation requires restoring one's belief that the other conflict party is trustworthy, that is, that he or she holds good intentions and really cares about one's feelings and well-being.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

At the methodological level, future research examining the role of third parties may use additional methodologies beyond role-playing scenarios. The fact that participants' responses to the vignettes used in Study 2 were previously shown to replicate the pattern of responses to actual transgressions (i.e., in terms of the emotional needs aroused among victims and perpetrators; see Shnabel & Nadler, 2008) bolsters our confidence in the validity of the findings. That is, it suggests that our use of role-playing scenarios does not limit the generalizability of our scenarios as it may seem at first glance. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the benefit of using diverse methods.

At the theoretical and practical levels, although the present study focused on neutral, non-involved third parties, future research may benefit from examining whether non-neutral third parties can contribute to the reconciliation process. Non-neutral third parties are often the only available option (Smith, 1985) and may have greater influence on the involved conflict parties. Indeed, theorizing on conflict resolution suggests that a major characteristic of third parties that has critical implications on the effectiveness of their interventions is their association with one of the conflict parties (Black & Baumgartner, 1983). For example, reactive devaluation is the reduction in the perceived attractiveness of a given settlement proposal when it is attributed to the other conflict party compared with one's ingroup (Ross, 1995). Such devaluation was found to be present when the source of the proposal was a third party associated with the other conflict party (Maoz, 2012), but not when it was associated with one's own party (Maoz, 1999). These findings reflect people's general

tendency to identify some people as their allies and others as their enemies (Volkan, 1985), implying that the characteristics of a third party as associated with one of the conflict parties should moderate victims' and perpetrators' response to his or her conciliatory message.

Nevertheless, a pilot study ($N=232$) that we conducted to examine this possibility revealed that messages from third parties who were associated with either the victims and perpetrators themselves or the other conflict party failed to contribute to reconciliation. These results, which are available upon request, strengthen our conclusion that messages from the other conflict party are most effective in bringing reconciliation about. Thus, as opposed to conciliatory messages at the intergroup level, which are typically delivered through representatives (Tavuchis, 1991), conciliatory messages following interpersonal transgressions are expected to be carried out through direct communication between the victim and the perpetrator rather than by third parties.

Finally, in line with the experimentalist approach, the present research examined the effects of *identical* messages conveyed by either the other conflict party or an uninvolved third party. It found that an empowering or accepting message from the other conflict party filled two functions simultaneously—restoration of victims' and perpetrators' positive identities and of their trust in the other conflict party—whereas the same messages from a third party served only the first function. It is possible that adding *additional contents* to the messages by third parties could have increased their effectiveness. Specifically, contents directly intended to increase trust in the other conflict party (e.g., an explicit promise that he or she will not repeat the transgression or hold grudge for it) can potentially contribute to trust restoration and consequent reconciliation, at least when the third party is perceived as reliable and credible (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Future research should explore this possibility, as understanding the dynamics involved in processes of interpersonal reconciliation can help guide effective interventions, including those of third parties, to achieve it.

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