



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## Impact Of Resentment On Different Areas Of Life

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### Abstract

The paper presents a review of the intricate relationship between resentment and different areas of life. By synthesizing existing research, it examines how resentment often stems from perceived injustices and unfair treatment, manifesting as anger, frustration, and disappointment. The review explores how persistent resentment can lead to chronic stress and inflammation, increasing the risk of health issues such as heart disease, hypertension, and autoimmune disorders. It also considers the impact of resentment on mental health, including its connection to anxiety, depression, and sleep issues. Additionally, resentment can disrupt social relationships by causing strain and limiting support networks.

By evaluating current studies, this review identifies patterns, discrepancies, and gaps in the existing research. It highlights opportunities for future investigation to address these gaps, offering potential strategies and interventions to improve our understanding of resentment's role in health and well-being. Ultimately, this paper aims to guide future research efforts and develop interventions to enhance health outcomes related to resentment.

Keywords: resentment, frustration, anger, forgiveness

### Introduction

Resentment is a complex emotional response that can have significant implications for both mental and physical health (Frasquilho et al., 2015). Resentment is a nuanced emotional experience that can include a combination of anger, frustration, and disappointment. It often emerges when individuals feel they have been unfairly treated or wronged in various contexts, such as relationships, the workplace, or other life situations. At its heart, resentment is a response to perceived injustices or unmet expectations.

### Psychological Components:

- **Cognitive Appraisal:** Resentment often involves evaluating situations where an individual believes they have been wronged, which can lead to negative, repetitive thoughts about the situation.
- **Assignment of Blame:** Those experiencing resentment may direct blame toward specific people or circumstances, reinforcing the sense of injustice.
- **Perceived Loss:** Resentment can be tied to perceived losses, whether tangible such as financial loss, or intangible like a loss of trust or autonomy.
- **Rumination:** Individuals may persistently dwell on the perceived offense, replaying the event and reinforcing their negative emotions.

### Emotional Components:

- **Anger and Bitterness:** Resentment often includes feelings of anger and bitterness toward the perceived source of the wrong.
- **Frustration:** A sense of frustration can arise from an inability to change the situation or find resolution.
- **Envy and Jealousy:** In some cases, resentment can be coupled with envy or jealousy, especially if the other party seems to benefit from the situation.
- **Hurt and Sadness:** Resentment can evoke feelings of hurt and sadness, particularly if the perceived offense involves someone close or trusted.

Resentment often arises from situations where individuals feel they have been treated unfairly or unjustly. This emotional state can develop due to unmet expectations, perceived slights, or perceived violations of personal boundaries or values. When people experience these situations, they may assign blame to certain individuals, groups, or circumstances, reinforcing their sense of resentment. This process can deepen when individuals perceive a loss, whether it be a loss of trust, respect, or other tangible and intangible aspects.

### **Resentment and negative emotions**

Resentment is linked to other negative emotions, such as anger, bitterness, and frustration. Anger can emerge from the sense of unfair treatment or injustice, while bitterness may result from holding onto unresolved grievances. Frustration can occur when individuals feel unable to resolve the situation or obtain closure. Interdisciplinary research has shown a clear link between sleep problems and aggression (Krizan & Herlache, 2016).

Resentment can also be connected to feelings of envy and jealousy. For instance, individuals may feel envious of others they perceive as benefiting from the situation, intensifying their sense of resentment. Additionally, resentment can be associated with feelings of sadness or hurt, especially when the perceived offense involves someone close or trusted.

The interaction between resentment and other negative emotions can create a cycle of negativity, with each emotion feeding into the other and prolonging emotional distress. This ongoing emotional turmoil can have adverse effects on an individual's mental and physical health if not managed effectively.

Resentment is a harmful emotion that can manifest in a subdued form due to experiences of being devalued, stigmatized, or subjected to violence. When actively expressed, it can be a strong response to perceived unjust suffering. The sociomoral perspectives of Adam Smith, Hume, and Lévinas explore the nature of resentment, while Nietzsche and Scheler's concept of "ressentiment" extends this to include a broader sense of resentment stemming from powerlessness and unhealed experiences of brutality.

Historically, resentment is associated with feelings of frustration, contempt, outrage, and ill will. Marshall described class consciousness as being influenced by resentment and anger, which can also include elements of surprise and disgust. Resentment is tied to the notion of relative deprivation, where one feels deprived in comparison to others. To further understand resentment, it can be viewed as consisting of three secondary emotions: contempt (a combination of anger and disgust), shock (surprise and disgust), and outrage (surprise and anger). Resentment can thus be conceptualized as a complex, tertiary-level emotion made up of these three primary and secondary emotions.

### **Resentment and relationships**

Repeated rupture without repair can lead to mistrust, cognitive distortions, resentment, and emotional stunting (Misty C Richards, Justin Schreiber 2024). Rupture and repair are essential elements for fostering strong connections in relationships. When relationship conflicts happen, as they naturally will, it's important to address the situation to restore safety, emotional balance, attunement, and understanding. By actively engaging in this process and providing consistent support as a secure base, conflicts have the potential to heal. This practice begins in infancy and early childhood, setting the stage for secure attachment.

What happens when ruptures occur frequently without resolution? How does this affect self-esteem and shape the narratives children develop about themselves as they grow? Repeated conflicts without resolution can lead to mistrust, cognitive distortions, resentment, and can stunt emotional growth.

### **Resentment and Physical Health:**

Individuals with ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) who have had the disease for a shorter time and women in particular tend to report higher levels of resentment and hate. This may be due to the shock and emotional upheaval following a recent diagnosis, as well as the rapid progression of the disease. Those who are newly diagnosed may be grappling with adjustments to the physical and emotional challenges of the condition, which can amplify negative emotions. Women may experience different emotional responses to ALS than men, possibly due to variations in social expectations and coping mechanisms. The sense of injustice and the impact on identity and independence can also contribute to heightened feelings of resentment and hate. Recognizing these emotional responses can help in developing better support and targeted interventions to enhance the well-being of people with ALS.

Evidence has been produced linking both forgiveness and unforgiveness to short-term physiological variables, such as cortisol reactivity (Berry & Worthington, 2001) as well as blood pressure and skin conductance (Lawler et al., 2003; Witvliet, Ludwig, & Vander Laan, 2001). Coupled with the related literature on stress and health, this evidence makes hypotheses directly linking unforgiveness and forgiveness with health and disease variables

more plausible and ripe to be tested. "Conversion hysteria" appears when a person tries to restrain long-term and repressed emotions (Alexander, 1939), as in the case of resentment.

### **Resentment and suicidal ideation**

Resentment and dependency may play a notable role in the psychological state of individuals experiencing suicidal ideation. Resentment can manifest as feelings of anger, bitterness, and frustration, which may intensify sensations of hopelessness or helplessness in those contemplating suicide. Such emotional distress can stem from perceived injustices or unfair treatment and may worsen negative perceptions of oneself and one's circumstances. On the other hand, dependency on others for emotional or material support can impact suicidal thoughts by causing feelings of helplessness due to a lack of autonomy or control over one's situation. High reliance on others can also make individuals more sensitive to the actions or opinions of those they depend on, potentially worsening their emotional state.

When resentment and dependency occur simultaneously, it can create a complex emotional landscape, particularly if an individual feels dependent on someone they also resent. This can lead to a toxic dynamic, increasing distress and potentially contributing to suicidal thoughts. Understanding how resentment and dependency interact is essential for developing targeted interventions to improve emotional well-being and provide effective support to those at risk.

### **Resentment in older adults**

Forgiveness has emerged as a significant area of study in psychology in recent decades, as it plays a key role in personal, family, and social well-being (Costa et al., 2021; Billingsley & Losin, 2017; Worthington, 2020). Current challenges such as an aging population and the potential impacts of (un)forgiveness on individual well-being have sparked growing interest in these topics (Akhtar et al., 2017). Worthington (2020) distinguishes the decision to forgive—as the intention not to react against the offender—and emotional forgiveness—that is, an emotional transformation from resentment, hurt, sadness to forgiveness, compassion, and love.

Aging involves a mix of biological, psychological, social, and spiritual changes (Derdaele et al., 2019; Drewelies et al., 2019). Like other life stages, later life brings its own set of challenges, including retirement, loss, and health issues (Toussaint et al., 2015). Many older adults enjoy good emotional health, but some face challenges such as depression, anxiety, cognitive decline, isolation, and sleep disturbances. These challenges are becoming more prevalent (Allemand & Orlu, 2021) due to a growing older population. According to the United Nations (2019), there were 703 million older adults worldwide in 2019, and this number is expected to more than double by 2050 to over 1.5 billion. This growth is anticipated to affect all world regions. For example, in Portugal, around 22% of the population is currently over 65, with a projection of 33% by 2050. Presently, more than half of primary health care provided to this population in Portugal is related to psychological health (FFMS, 2020).

## Conclusion

The key findings suggest that resentment can contribute to chronic stress and negatively impact physical health, particularly by increasing the risk of cardiovascular issues and inflammation. On the mental health side, resentment is associated with anxiety, depression, and sleep problems. Additionally, it can create a cycle of negative emotions, influencing emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships.

The existing research shows some gaps, pointing to possible areas for further investigation. For example, more studies could explore the specific pathways through which resentment affects physical health, particularly concerning different medical conditions. There could also be a focus on how different demographic groups, such as women and people with particular illnesses like ALS, experience and cope with resentment in distinct ways.

Future research may benefit from studying interventions for managing resentment, such as cognitive-behavioural therapy or mindfulness practices, and their potential to improve health outcomes. Moreover, further examination of resentment's role in suicidal ideation, especially how it interacts with dependency and other negative emotions, could offer insight into the mental state of at-risk individuals. By addressing these gaps, future research can enhance understanding of the complex relationship between resentment and health, leading to more precise and effective support for those dealing with these issues.

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