

- Title

Max. 200 characters (including spaces)

I should have listened to you, you should have been respectful: Thinking counterfactually after interpersonal conflict increases feeling of guilt.

- Abstract *Max. 1500 characters (including spaces)*

Interpersonal conflicts are common in daily life and can negatively impact relationships. Thus, understanding psychological processes promoting reconciliation is important. Feeling guilty has been identified as a key predictor of such reparative intentions. Yet, individuals engaged in conflict generally minimize their own responsibility, which reduces their felt guilt, and instead focus on the other party's actions. Moreover, counterfactual thoughts—mental simulations of alternative past actions and resulting outcomes—are known to influence people's emotions. We propose that prompting individuals to reflect counterfactually on their own contribution to the conflict and its escalation may counter this tendency. Accordingly, in a study involving participants ($N = 256$) imaging a conflict with a colleague to which both parties' contributed we examined how thought type (counterfactual vs. factual) and focus (self vs. other) shape feelings of guilt. As expected, participants focusing on their own actions reported more guilt than those focusing on the other. Unexpectedly, this effect was moderated by thought type, such that counterfactual (vs. factual) thinking increased guilt among participants reflecting on the other person, but not on themselves.

- Details about the contexts where data were collected *Max. 500 characters (including spaces)*

Participants were adult from the United States taking part online. Most were (self-)employed (51%), but samples also included students, retired, and unemployed participants. The age range was large (18-63 years, mean age 38 years). There were as much women as men (50%-50%). Relative homogeneity of samples ensured compatibility across studies using different measures for the constructs investigated.

- Short abstract *Max. 300 characters (including spaces)*

We examined how thoughts' focus and thought's type shape guilt in interpersonal conflict. Counterfactual (vs. factual) thinking about what the other party, not oneself, could have done differently heightens guilt, an emotion known to foster prosocial intentions.

- Selection of 3 to 5 keywords

From the list: affect, emotion(s), forgiveness

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