

Relationship Repair Strategies for the Military Professional

The Impact of Cultural Differences on Expectations and Applications

Lauren Mackenzie, PhD, and Kristin Post

Abstract: Decades of scholarship and various academic disciplines have underscored the importance of effective intercultural collaboration for the military professional. Although the skills devoted to relationship building have remained a prominent component of the professional military education and training toolkit, far less attention has been paid to the process of *mending* relationships, or relationship repair strategies, and the political or diplomatic cost to the Services should they fail. This article addresses cultural variation in relationship repair by reviewing the academic literature and analyzing themes surrounding effective restorative actions in military contexts, particularly advise and assist missions. The article concludes with considerations for training and education applications.

Keywords: relationship repair, culture, military training and education, apology, self-construal

Though not nearly as concrete as the budgetary costs of making war and peace as discussed previously, the relevance of relationship repair research is as timely as ever for the military professional. As many who have spent more than a decade immersed in the counterinsurgency environment are well aware, relationship *building* has remained a prominent component of the mil-

Lauren Mackenzie is professor of military cross-cultural competence and Kristin Post is a contracted researcher in the Translational Research Group at Marine Corps University's Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning. The views expressed here are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Marine Corps, the Department of Defense, any governmental agency, or Davis Defense Group.

MCU Journal vol. 10, no. 1

Spring 2019

www.usmceu.edu/mcupress

<https://doi.org/10.21140/mcu.j.2019100107>

itary training and education toolkit. With the exception of very few scholars, however, far less attention has been paid to the process of *mending* relationships or, as referred to here, relationship repair strategies.¹ Such strategies include, but are not limited to, offers of compensation, accounts, denials, apologies, and demonstrations of concern.² Although the average person has likely employed these strategies in an attempt to recover from negative interactions in both personal and professional contexts, the role that cultural differences can play on how such strategies are constructed and interpreted may not be as familiar.

This article addresses the impact of culture on relationship repair strategies and is organized into three sections—each with an eye toward both academic scholarship and military application. First, the authors introduce examples from the field provided by Marines who have participated in qualitative research projects conducted by Marine Corps University’s Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL), Translational Research Group. The next section reviews the relationship repair literature with a specific focus on self-construal (how people define or make meaning of themselves) as a key consideration for military professionals. Regardless of rank or military occupational specialty, communicating with individuals from diverse backgrounds with different worldviews is inevitable in today’s military. It has been well documented across multiple decades of scholarship and various academic disciplines that such interactions are prone to misunderstanding—very often as a result of a culturally informed *expectation violation* of some kind.³ The article thus concludes by arguing that as a frequently needed (yet largely overlooked) consideration for effective communication, the impact of cultural variation on relationship repair strategies should be included in military training and education.

So we were always ready for putting fires out. And that was really quick—with the team, if someone messed up, the next guy would go repair it as best they can. [When I offended someone,] they said go apologize so I had to go apologize, and I had to throw the mercy of myself toward him, like “I’m so sorry” and that fixed that. And he understood that Marines just act differently.

~ Marine Corps gunnery sergeant⁴

Culture, Communication, and Relationship Repair in Advise and Assist Missions

The literature on relationship repair is frequently drawn from laboratory experiments with undergraduate students or is otherwise derived from environments that are starkly different from the military experience. For this article, the authors draw from interviews with infantry Marines who were partnered

with foreign military counterparts as part of their mission.⁵ Any given military partnership is different, of course, and may be impacted by a number of variables, such as the availability of financial and educational resources in the host nation, host nation level of exposure to Western culture, and the length of the deployment, among others. However, the daily routine is often similar, and certain Marines may interact with their partners on a daily, if not hourly, basis. This frequency of interaction, along with the Marine Corps' imperative to accomplish the mission, raises the stakes for relationship maintenance over time.

These missions, especially those that were completely immersive, where the Marines "live with the guys, and sleep next to them, and patrol with them" can be challenging.⁶ Invariably, Marines will be experiencing a new environment, where sensory information, such as smells, sounds, and sights are different. Furthermore, cultural norms in the host nation may include differing attitudes toward personal space, work and leisure, or decision-making authority. Cross-cultural research suggests that communicators cannot necessarily rely on their usual mental schemas when constructing or interpreting a response in a culturally complex environment. For example, use of space and touch that is intended to communicate connection can be interpreted as romantic, or eye movement that is intended to communicate uncertainty can be interpreted as deceptive.⁷ These are contextual and environmental factors—and, at times, incongruities—that can impact a Marines' ability to build or maintain positive relationships.⁸

Cultural complexities are evident in the following interaction that a Marine corporal described after returning from a deployment to a Middle Eastern country that involved training the national military forces.⁹ According to the corporal, one day a Marine was standing at the periphery of a classroom, observing a fellow Marine instructor. While the class was in progress, some of the trainees got up to approach the Marine who was observing. The corporal recounts what happened,

and he just turned his back. Just like, "yeah, no." Just looked away. They took it as a big insult saying "hey [the Marines] don't want to be here, they don't want to train us." Even though there was a Marine [conducting the] training, they just saw that Marine that wasn't [responsive].¹⁰

Though the corporal considered this a "minor incident," the Marines took active steps to recover, such as talking to the partner military officers and explaining that it was important for the trainees to pay attention during the lesson and ask questions afterward. When addressing this incident with the foreign officers first, the Marines were leveraging a status hierarchy that is common to militaries, but is uncommon in the civilian world, and thus rarely addressed in

academic literature. The corporal and their fellow Marines instinctively repaired the relationship in this instance, and it is argued that if a bank of examples such as this were to be created and included in existing training and education modules, military personnel will be better prepared for handling encounters of a similar nature.

While the former example indicates what Marines did after rapport was lost, the next example portrays how a Marine sergeant avoids conflict in the first place, by creating a variety of behavioral explanations to understand why a Saudi Arabian lieutenant appeared resistant to advice on the training range.¹¹ When the sergeant saw the junior Saudi officer making an error, they wanted to assist. The Marine was aware that the cultural context demanded different communication norms, so they did not address the error using the same direct way of speaking they would have with a junior Marine. In other words, they tried to explain the technique without saying, “You’re doing this wrong.” The Marine was working with a non-Arab interpreter from Sudan who spoke Arabic. As the interpreter translated, the Marine sensed the Saudi officer was ignoring them. Even though their frustration was mounting, the sergeant formed a few mental guesses as to why the interaction was not going well.

In their military, you’re either a sergeant, or you’re a lieutenant, or you’re nobody. I was a sergeant, so I was trying to help him out, but I didn’t know if it was an enlisted/officer thing or the race thing with the Sudanese [interpreter], so I kind of just said my piece, said what I had to say. And I really, really wanted to try and drive the point home because he wasn’t listening, but I had to back off and let it go. If he wants to get his soldiers killed, then that’s on him. That was hard.¹²

The sergeant demonstrates an awareness of how status differences may have been at play but also the ultimate cost should that difference be ignored. He identified that the rank difference between them and the Saudi officer may have been a source of trouble, and considered how ethnic pride and hearing professional advice from a foreign-born interpreter may have contributed to the officer’s discontent. It is impossible to know the actual reason for the communication breakdown, but the end result was that the sergeant regulated their own behavior to prevent further trouble.

Edward Hall, the founder of the field of intercultural communication, describes how overcoming deeply embedded cultural norms and values can be almost insurmountable. He writes, “For him to have understood me would have meant re-organizing [*sic*] his thinking . . . giving up his intellectual ballast, and few people are willing to risk such a radical move.”¹³ The sergeant understood that the Saudi officer was possibly too rigid in his thinking to accept the

Marine's advice, so they backed off from their own desired end state rather than create additional friction and increase the risk or cost associated with the failed interaction. In this example, the Marine demonstrates perspective taking, an important cross-cultural skill. It should be noted that an individual's ability to practice perspective taking, or the "ability to see things from another point of view," is informed by their self-construal, or how a person defines oneself—typically through the lens of an independent or relational identity, which in turn can impact how certain repair strategies are interpreted.¹⁴ The sergeant's understanding of identity factors, such as the Saudi officer's military and social status, is a first step. Later in this article, the role of self-construal in the relationship repair process will be introduced as an added step servicemembers should consider when preparing for and engaging in culturally complex interactions.

Relationship Repair Literature

Broadly speaking, the research suggests that effective restorative actions can predict prosocial outcomes, such as forgiveness.¹⁵ For military personnel invested in maintaining or restoring professional relationships, it is important to consider how such research findings can be put into practice. By no means does this article intend to dismiss the complexity of human behavior and relationships, however, and the authors recognize that a variety of factors can impact the effectiveness of relationship repair strategies, such as the timing and severity of the violation, length of the relationship, and the perceived intention.¹⁶ The study of relationship repair has occurred at both the individual and organizational levels with a focus on levels of relational closeness and the multifaceted construct of "trust."¹⁷ For example, researchers have examined how BP executives attempted to repair relationships between the organization and its members after the 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.¹⁸ A model devoted to the stages of relationship repair proposed by Kimberly McCarthy focuses on the environmental factors, characteristics of the relationship, sincerity of appeal, elapsed time, and reconciliation tactics that, taken together, integrate the processes of trust repair, relationship repair, and forgiveness.¹⁹

There is general agreement among researchers that the likelihood of repair increases if a violation is perceived as outside of one's control.²⁰ Take, for example, the divergent perceptions of how time is used and perceived across military cultures. While American Marines may see time as controlled, planned, and productive, many of the interviewees the authors spoke with found that their Middle Eastern counterparts viewed time much less rigidly, often perceiving schedules as suggestions.²¹ Marines who train foreign forces are challenged when their foreign partner is less willing to engage in training for the length of time that the Marines have scheduled. A corporal explains that "we had to do

our job, but we had to consider how they were organized for their beliefs and behavior patterns. Like prayer time. Training starts after that. Also, they would take breaks whenever. If they were tired, they would take a break.”²² Although attitudes toward time often lead to friction, it may reduce frustration for Marines in such situations if they can temporarily suspend their own expectations surrounding time to think about the factors out of their counterparts’ control (e.g., family or religious obligations, lack of reliable transportation, etc.) that could be contributing to their behavior.

In addition, research by Ryan Fehr and Michael J. Gelfand emphasizes that restorative actions are most effective when the violator articulates an awareness of the negative consequences or costs as a result of the transgression.²³ This is highlighted by a Marine sergeant who was on a deployment, instructing a land navigation class to host nation forces, when they realized that some of the students were cheating. The sergeant explained, “I was a little frustrated, it wasn’t their first lie.” The sergeant and the rest of the Marines were bothered by what seemed like laziness. However, they asked the interpreter about it, and found out that “they had been doing the same things for 18 months. That’s the same as if we had done SOI [School of Infantry] for 1.5 years. Boredom set in.”²⁴ After the Marine takes the time to suspend judgment and practice some perspective taking in this scenario, they came to the realization that they might have misinterpreted the behavior. They are then able to restore the potential damage of that incorrect assumption by articulating a potential negative consequence of being asked to do the same thing repeatedly (boredom) and form a more complete understanding of why some of the host forces had cheated.

Of the various restorative tactics (e.g., showing concern, compensation, expression of regret, etc.), apologies have received by far the most attention by researchers. Fehr and Gelfand have noted that “as a method of conflict resolution, apologies have perhaps never been as popular as they are today.”²⁵ Nevertheless, scholars continue to grapple with such questions as: What does an apology really mean? Is it an admission of guilt, regret, or responsibility? Who and what is an apology for? Does the apology positively or negatively impact the overall cost of the incident?

Apologies have been examined across contexts and academic disciplines.²⁶ A relatively small pool of scholars has focused particularly on cross-cultural differences in apologies, such as cultural differences in the function and meaning of apologies between the United States and Japan, while others have called for “apology diplomacy.”²⁷ Hong Ren and Barbara Gray have examined the impact of culture on the effectiveness of relationship repair, and offer a model of effective relationship restoration that addresses the challenge of overcoming the “one size fits all” approach offered in previous studies.²⁸

For the purposes of this article, the authors focus on one aspect of cultural

difference they argue can help military professionals develop a “broader repertoire of responses that match the types of relationship violations and the culturally appropriate restoration behaviors of their various subordinates.”²⁹ Emphasis is placed on the impact of self-construal on relationship repair; specifically, Fehr and Gelfand’s study examining the connection between self-perception and apologies, and their finding that transgressors are most successful when their apology message is aligned with the listener’s self-construal.³⁰ There are two main reasons the authors of this article emphasize self-construal: first, it is a consideration that is observable and actionable for the military professional; second, it is an attempt to extend beyond Geert Hofstede’s well-known cultural dimensions (drawn from his work with IBM employees), such as individualism-collectivism and high-low power distance, which are present in Marine training and education materials.³¹ The authors want to augment the number of options from which military personnel choose when recovering from a negative interaction. Before introducing ways in which this applies to military training and education, a brief summary of the scholarship devoted to self-construal is presented.

Self-Construal

The importance of knowing your audience is nothing new but becomes especially important in an intercultural interaction where the speaker must focus not only on what they want to say but also on the array of cultural variables that can impact what the listener is understanding. In other words, the communication process runs more smoothly when communicators have an awareness of the factors that can impede the alignment of the intention of a message with its interpretation.³² One such factor is self-construal. The role of self-construal becomes decidedly more pronounced during the relationship repair process, when culturally variant worldviews have the potential to impact how messages are interpreted.

Self-construal was first introduced by Hazel R. Markus and Shinobu Kitayama and, as stated in a more recent literature review by Susan E. Cross, Erin E. Hardin, and Berna Gercek-Swing, is typically defined as how the individual views oneself in relation to others.³³ The impact of self-construal on intercultural communication has been noted in studies conducted worldwide and is most often described at the relational, collective, and interdependent levels.³⁴ For example, when a person who identifies as having a *relational* self-construal asks themselves, “Who am I?,” the answer is more likely to revolve around their primary relationships (e.g., daughter, boyfriend, sister, brother, etc.). When a person who identifies as having an *independent* self-construal asks themselves, “Who am I?,” the answer is more likely to reflect individual achievements (e.g., nurse,

graduate student, football player, etc.) and internal disposition (e.g., smart, outgoing, etc.). When a person who identifies as having a *collective* self-construal asks themselves, “Who am I?,” the answer is more likely to center on group categorizations (e.g., U.S. Marine, sorority member, etc.).

In the Fehr and Gelfand article mentioned above, the authors argue that efforts to repair a relationship are more likely to succeed when the violator attempts to align the apology with the victim’s self-construal. They examined independent, relational, and collective self-construals and drew from the self-verification theory that suggests individuals act more favorably toward messages that verify their own self-conceptualization.³⁵ They presented three messaging tactics: acknowledging violated rules/norms (shifting emphasis away from the one-on-one offense and placing the violation within the larger context from which such rules/norms derive) if the listener identifies as having a collective self-construal; displaying empathy (demonstrating an understanding of the victim’s perspective) if the listener identifies as having a relational self-construal; and offering compensation (making an effort to restore equity) if the listener identifies as having an independent self-construal.

In the Marine corporal’s “he just turned his back” example referenced earlier, the restorative action they described aligned with collective self-construal. When the Marines took restorative actions, they did not focus on the rude body language by the individual Marine, but rather on the larger context of polite classroom behavior. However, military personnel should exercise caution before applying these relational concepts as if they are discrete and operate independently of one another. In actual cross-cultural environments, many of these concepts overlap and exist concurrently. In some ways, the academic tendency to match a restorative action with a self-construal type oversimplifies the murkiness and complexity of actual interactions, further negatively impacting the incident. In the training example referenced above, the Marine sergeant identified more than one reason that their counterpart ignored them. The exercise of identifying which *one* was most salient was futile. The tactic instead was to modify their behavior, since it was the only factor over which they had control. Likewise, if a Marine is mentally preparing for a repair strategy of some kind in a future interaction, the self-construal typology is not useful in prescribing a single restorative action. Rather, its utility lies in reminding Marines that there are different types of self-construal impacting how messages are constructed and interpreted.

The next example from the field portrays how a unit engaged multiple restorative actions simultaneously. A Marine gunnery sergeant recalls yelling at a lower-ranking foreign military counterpart who responded “no” to an order.³⁶ The gunnery sergeant admits “that word broke me,” so they lost their temper

and “stormed out.” The gunnery sergeant understood immediately that their actions might have far-reaching implications, due to the nature of social networks in a culture where *wasta*, or social capital, is important.³⁷ They explain further, Who does that guy know? Does he have the type of *wasta* that could [speaker cuts himself off, continues] . . . he might know a senator, or someone who’s [high] up in command, and I just created an international incident that could possibly harm diplomacy [between the two countries]. So that was really big that we tried to fix it.³⁸

The gunnery sergeant and their unit employed strategies to accommodate different types of victim self-construal. First, the gunnery sergeant immediately told their captain what had happened. The captain then left with an interpreter to find the foreign serviceperson and offered an explanation and an apology. The next day, the gunnery sergeant followed up with a personal apology as well.

Interestingly, in this interview, the gunnery sergeant’s description of what the captain might have said aligns with the three types of self-construal in relation to the Marines’ culture: collective (“[my gunny] was told to do something by [their] colonel”), relational (“they are under pressure from me”), and individual (“they are so sorry for what they did”). From the gunnery sergeant’s perspective, the relationship with the foreign partner was restored. This multi-pronged approach may have contributed to relationship repair. That said, it is less important to determine which *one* of these strategies was the best for this situation. Rather, having a variety of strategies available is likely to increase success when attempting to repair a relationship.

Military Training and Education Applications

As an inevitable aspect of a “people business” such as the U.S. Marine Corps, relationship repair strategies must be addressed in military training or education on a wide scale. Yet, when it comes to including yet another topic in military curricula, the content cannot have academic merit alone; it must also be operationally relevant. The authors, who work within CAOCL, have identified the theme of relationship repair in their post-deployment research interviews, indicating that there is a link between the success (or failure) of Marine operations and some of the findings from the academic literature. When Marines discuss relationship repair, they do not use the academic vocabulary, but rather they describe errors they made, what they and their fellow Marines did to fix the issue, and what impact the incident had on their relationships, most frequently with military counterparts. Since Marines are already employing effective restorative

actions, the process now incorporates these vignettes—with supplemental notes describing how such actions align with findings from the scholarly literature to help Marines better understand why they did or did not work—into CAOCL’s training and education efforts.

It should be noted that this kind of content is applicable across a diverse set of organizations and course content. Instruction devoted to relationship repair is beneficial across the range of military operations and is not limited to the obvious culturally related missions of security cooperation, humanitarian assistance, intelligence activities, civil-military operations, and special operations. For example, relationship repair content can be integrated into military training or education curriculum topics devoted to:

- leadership;
- key leader engagements;
- embassy and individual augmentee duty;
- working with interpreters; and
- planning and operating in joint, interagency, and multinational environments.

Furthermore, relationship repair strategies and applications can be integrated into discussions devoted to metacognition, critical thinking, and decision making. For restorative actions to be effective, the servicemember must be able to analyze among the possible range of options and decide which are the most likely to produce the desired outcome.

Priming students with an overview of relationship repair strategies (e.g., types, variables that impact effectiveness, and cultural differences surrounding expectations of appropriateness) can enhance practical applications and exercises involving role players, regardless of cultural context. As of this writing, CAOCL has begun to develop resources to fill the instructional gap and is carrying out four instructional lines of effort: (1) faculty development brownbag sessions; (2) the incorporation of a module devoted to relationship repair into several of its culture-specific training classes (e.g., in a brief on Iran, “trouble recovery” is now introduced alongside a discussion about the importance of *wasta* and building relationships); (3) the 2018 publication of the *Culture General Guidebook for Military Professionals*, designed for both the military professional and curriculum developers; and (4) Red Teaming and Culture, Conflict & Creativity graduate-level residence courses at the Marine Corps Command & Staff College, which include a component on culturally variant relationship repair strategies.³⁹ These resources are designed to expand the educational tool kit servicemembers can use to manage difficult interactions.

Conclusion

Like many professionals working in diverse teams, servicemembers will almost certainly need to recover from a misstep at one time or another and minimize the political or diplomatic cost of the situation on themselves or the Service. Although the quotations throughout this article come from enlisted Marines, the need for awareness surrounding cultural variation in repair strategies applies regardless of rank or branch of Service. There are well-publicized accounts of attempted restorative actions by senior military leaders during the past decade (e.g., General John R. Allen's apology to the people of Afghanistan) that illustrate this reality.⁴⁰

This article presents an overview of the research devoted to relationship repair and identified several strategies that Marines, often intuitively, have put into practice. Some types of repair strategies are fairly well-known, such as the apology. However, a cultural consideration such as self-construal and its role in relationship repair may not be as familiar. If military training and education curricula were to address relationship repair, it may increase students' awareness that more than one choice is available (and perhaps useful) in a given situation, and a broadening effect may be achieved.⁴¹

The good news is that many military advisors, including those described in this article, are already employing relationship repair strategies and preparing others to do the same. A Marine Corps gunnery sergeant acknowledges:

If I had five Marines and I had to prepare them to go over and do the job I do, I'd roleplay constantly on different scenarios. From not wanting to train-getting upset-you offended me-how do you fix it, and what would you do . . . because we had a problem [when] we offended one of them once.⁴²

The current article adds to this Marine's point by arguing that, although many servicemembers may understand the value of relationship repair, they may not have considered how its effectiveness is impacted by cultural differences or the overall cost of those interactions on the operation. Taking the time to provide military personnel with a wider variety of options for managing culturally complex interactions can lead to an increased communication resourcefulness capability—a quality inherent to effective leadership.

Notes

1. Rebecca Damari et al., "Navigating Face-threatening Terrain: Questioning Strategies in Cross-cultural Military Training Scenarios" (paper presented at the 6th International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics and the Allied Conferences, Washington, DC, 2015), 1–8.
2. Roy J. Lewicki and Chad Brinsfield, "Trust Repair," *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 4, no. 1 (March 2017): 287–313; Peter H. Kim et al., "The Repair of Trust: A Dynamic Bilateral Perspective and Multilevel Con-

- ceptualization,” *Academy of Management Review* 34, no. 3 (2009): 401–22, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2009.40631887>; and Janne van Doorn et al., “An Exploration of Third Parties’ Preference for Compensation over Punishment: Six Experimental Demonstrations,” *Theory and Decision* 85, nos. 3–4 (2018): 333–51, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11238-018-9665-9>.
3. See, for example, Michele Gelfand et al., “Cross-Cultural Industrial Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior: A Hundred Year Journey,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 102, no. 3 (2017): 514–29, <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000186>; and Stella Ting-Toomey and John G. Oetzel, *Managing Intercultural Conflict Effectively* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing, 2001).
 4. Interview conducted with a Marine gunnery sergeant (#084), 21 September 2016, as part of CAOCL’s Longitudinal Assessment Project, under USMC IRB Protocol USMC.2016.0005, hereafter gunnery sergeant interview. All statements made by Marines are those of the individual speaker and do not represent the views of the Marine Corps or any other governmental agency.
 5. The research team typically conducts opportunistic interviews with small units in a training environment where the highest ranking officer in the vicinity is a lieutenant. Thus, enlisted Marines make up the majority of the population with prior deployment experience, and therefore the majority of the quotations used in this article.
 6. Interview conducted with a Marine captain (#012), 23 February 2017, as part of CAOCL’s Longitudinal Assessment Project, under USMC IRB Protocol USMC.2016.0005.
 7. Paul J. Taylor et al., “Cross-Cultural Deception Detection,” in *Detecting Deception: Current Challenges and Cognitive Approaches*, ed. Par Anders Granhag et al. (Oxford, UK: Wiley, 2014), 175–200.
 8. Kimberly McCarthy, “An Integrated Model of Relationship Repair: Reintroducing the Roles of Forgiveness and Trust,” *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict* 21, no. 1 (November 2017): 1–11.
 9. Interview conducted with a Marine corporal (#001), 15 February 2017, as part of CAOCL’s Longitudinal Assessment Project, under USMC IRB Protocol USMC.2016.0005, hereafter Marine corporal interview.
 10. Marine corporal interview.
 11. Interview conducted with a Marine sergeant, 30 May 2013, during a Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCLL) Collection with 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, hereafter Marine sergeant interview.
 12. Marine sergeant interview.
 13. Edward T. Hall, *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983).
 14. Kerry Fosher et al., *Culture General Guidebook for Military Professionals* (Quantico, VA: CAOCL, 2017).
 15. Lewicki and Brinsfield, “Trust Repair”
 16. For a more detailed discussion, see Kyi Phyu Nyein, “Cultural Values and the Effectiveness of Trust Repair Strategies in Collaborative Relationships” (master’s thesis, Florida Institute of Technology, 2017).
 17. Sonja Rispens et al., “Not So Bad After All: How Relational Closeness Buffers the Association between Relationship Conflict and Helpful and Deviant Group Behaviors,” *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research* 4, no. 4 (October 2011): 277–96, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1750-4716.2011.00083.x>; and Jessica L. Wildman et al., “Trust in Swift Starting Action Teams: Critical Considerations,” in *Trust in Military Teams*, ed. Neville A. Stanton (London, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 71–88.
 18. Jennifer Louise Petriglieri, “Co-creating Relationship Repair: Pathways to Reconstructing Destabilized Organizational Identification,” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (September 2015): 518–57, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839215579234>.
 19. McCarthy, “An Integrated Model of Relationship Repair,” 1–11.
 20. See the discussion of the role of causal attribution in relationship repair in Edward C. Tomlinson and Roger C. Mayer, “The Role of Causal Attribution Dimensions in

- Trust Repair,” *Academy of Management Review* 34, no. 1 (2009): 85–104, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2009.35713291>.
21. For an overview of the impact of U.S. military cultures on counterinsurgency practice, see chapter 2 in Jeannie Johnson, *The Marines, Counterinsurgency and Strategic Culture: Lessons Learned and Lost in America's Wars* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2018.)
 22. Interview conducted with a Marine corporal (#056), 29 September 2016, as part of CAOCL's Longitudinal Assessment Project, under USMC IRB Protocol USMC.2016.0005.
 23. Ryan Fehr and Michael J. Gelfand, “When Apologies Work: How Matching Apology Components to Victims' Self-Construals Facilitates Forgiveness,” *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 113, no. 1 (2010): 37–50, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2010.04.002>.
 24. Interview conducted with a Marine sergeant (#032), 1 October 2016, as part of CAOCL's Longitudinal Assessment Project, under USMC IRB Protocol USMC.2016.0005.
 25. Fehr and Gelfand, “When Apologies Work,” 45.
 26. Jennifer Lind, *Sorry States: Apologies in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Benjamin Ho and Elaine Liu, “Does Sorry Work?: The Impact of Apology Laws on Medical Malpractice,” *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* 43, no. 2 (October 2011): 141–67, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11166-011-9126-0>; Hee Sun Park and Xiaowen Guan, “Cross-Cultural Comparison of Verbal and Nonverbal Strategies of Apologizing,” *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* 2, no. 1 (2009): 66–87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17513050802603471>; and Sean Tucker et al., “Apologies and Transformational Leadership,” *Journal of Business Ethics*, no. 63 (January 2006): 195–207, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-005-3571-0>.
 27. William T. Maddux et al., “Cultural Differences in the Function and Meaning of Apologies,” *International Negotiation* 16, no. 3 (2011): 405–25, <https://doi.org/10.1163/157180611X592932>; and Peter Hays Gries and Kaiping Peng, “Culture Clash?: Apologies East and West,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 11, no. 30 (2002): 173–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/106705601200912000>.
 28. Ren Hong and Barbara Gray, “Repairing Relationship Conflict: How Violation Types and Culture Influence the Effectiveness of Restoration Rituals,” *Academy of Management Review* 34, no. 1 (2009): 105–26, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2009.35713307>.
 29. Ren and Grey “Repairing Relationship Conflict,” 122.
 30. Fehr and Gelfand, “When Apologies Work.”
 31. For the purposes of this discussion, *individualism-collectivism* describes the relationship between individuals and their relationship to groups. *High-low power distance* refers to the way power is distributed and the extent to which the less powerful accept that power is distributed unequally.
 32. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959).
 33. Hazel Rose Markus and Shinobu Kitayama, “Culture and the Self: Implications for Emotion, Cognition and Motivation,” *Psychological Review*, no. 98 (1991): 224–53; and Susan E. Cross et al., “The What, How, Why, and Where of Self-Construal,” *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, no. 15 (2011): 142–79, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868310373752>.
 34. Qin Zhang et al., “Making Up or Getting Even?: The Effects of Face Concerns, Self-Construal, and Apology on Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Revenge in the United States and China,” *Communication Research* (2015): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650215607959>.
 35. William Swann Jr., “Identity Negotiation: Where Two Roads Meet,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 53, no. 6 (1987): 1038–51, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.53.6.1038>.
 36. Gunnery sergeant interview.

37. Another translation of this Arabic word is “clout.” Since the inception of the global war on terrorism, *wasta* is a commonly used term by the American military. Gunnery sergeant interview.
38. Gunnery sergeant interview.
39. Fosher et al., *Culture General Guidebook for Military Professionals*.
40. As an example, see Gen John R. Allen, “ISAF Statement,” YouTube, 20 February 2012.
41. See Barbara L. Frederickson, “The Role of Positive Emotions in Positive Psychology: The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions,” *American Psychologist* 56, no 3 (March 2001): 218–26, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.218>.
42. Gunnery sergeant interview.