

Accomplishing Forgiveness

Forgiveness is one of the most empowering acts you can accomplish. It is a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your forgiveness. It means letting go of your need for an apology... Forgiveness does not mean forgetting, nor does it mean condoning or excusing offenses.

For forgiveness to occur you must let go of judgement. You have judged and decided someone has wronged you or someone else. True forgiveness comes only when you no longer judge. Forgiveness is the process of coming back to unconditional love.

Once you understand this concept, you can decide to move to forgiveness.

Assumptions about forgiveness to keep in mind:

- Forgiving benefits you most
- You believe that frustration or anger caused by the experience is worth carrying on
- You continue to live in the negative energy that happened in the past experience
- Forgiveness lets go of negative energy
- The experience you are carrying is not happening at this moment
- What you are experiencing with non-forgiveness is a LACK of love
- Non-forgiveness is choosing fear over love
- Choosing to forgive is simply the decision to stop withholding forgiveness
- When you are truly ready to forgive, all is forgiven – this includes forgiving yourself
- Forgiveness is not weakness. It is the most powerful thing you can do. It breaks the hold that has been put on your life. Refusing to forgive allows the person or thing that was hurtful to you continue to hurt you.

Quotes about forgiveness:

“Forgiveness releases the past to divine correction and the future to new possibilities. Whatever it was that happened to you, it is over. It happened in the past; in the present, it does not exist unless you bring it with you. Nothing anyone has ever done to you has permanent effects, unless you hold on to it permanently.” – Marianne Williamson

“You have no idea of the tremendous release and deep peace that comes from meeting yourself and others totally without judgment.” – From student who took a course in Forgiveness

ACTION STEPS THAT LEAD TO FORGIVENESS

1. Acknowledge the Hurt

- Don't make excuses for the offender.
- Write it down. Journaling is a great way to work through anger and hurt. It organizes your thoughts and helps you acknowledge the truth as you see it in black and white. Sometimes writing a letter to the offender is helpful (this letter is usually not to be sent but is for working through your own thoughts and feelings).

2. Identify Your Emotions

- When someone does something to hurt you, you might experience regret and anger. These emotions are a normal response to an offense.
- It is important to identify how the offense made you feel and then to express it. After writing down the offense, write down how you felt when the offense happened and how you have felt since then.

3. Cancel the Debt

- Write a "blank check" of forgiveness.
- You may want to write down the offenses they have done and then write "Canceled" or "Paid in Full" over them. You may want to burn the letter you wrote expressing your grief and hurt. Let the anger and fear go.

4. Set Boundaries

- Decide what you need to do to protect yourself from letting this person hurt you again. For instance, if someone is offensive to you verbally, you can choose not to associate with them, or tell them that if they begin to insult you that you will not talk to them until they are willing to speak kindly.
- Don't continue to look for approval from a person who has hurt you.

5. Make a Commitment to Forgive

- Make a personal or (if possible) public commitment to forgive the person for what they have done.
- Commit to not using the thing they have done against you as a weapon against them.
- When you have doubts about whether you "really" forgave the person, remember the commitment you made to forgive. Remember that forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling.

If you are struggling to forgive an offense that was done against you, you are not alone. Forgiving can be an extremely difficult process. The thing about unforgiveness, it will hurt you more than it hurt the person who has wronged you.

Forgiveness allows love to come back to you.

