

FORGIVENESS

Living a Spiritually Motivated
Life

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Sometimes...
the first step
to forgiveness
is realizing
that the other
person... is
bat-shit crazy.

PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS

(11TH STEP PRAYER)

- “Lord, make me a channel of thy peace----that where there is hatred, I may bring love----that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness----that where there is discord, I may bring harmony----that where there is error, I may bring truth----that where there is doubt, I may bring faith----that where there is despair, I may bring hope----that where there are shadows, I may bring light-- --that where there is sadness, I may bring joy. Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted-- --to understand, than to be understood----to love, than to be loved. For it is by self-forgetting that one finds. It is by forgiving that one is forgiven. It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life. Amen”



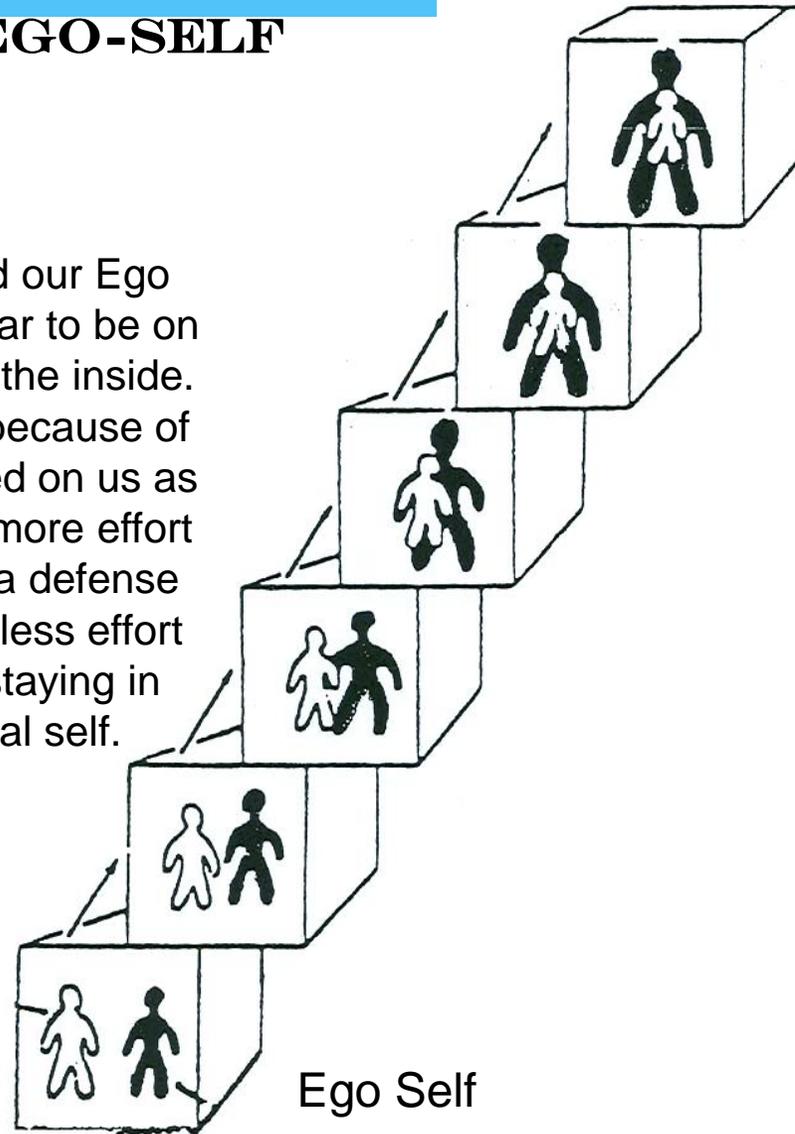
The Struggle to Begin the Process of Forgiveness

- “This reopening of emotional wounds, some old, some perhaps forgotten, and some still painfully festering, will at first look like a purposeless and pointless piece of surgery. But if a willing start is made, then the great advantages of doing this will so quickly reveal themselves that the pain will be lessened as one obstacle after another melts away”.
- 

THE CULTURALLY CONDITIONED EGO-SELF

At birth our Spiritual self and our Ego self are equal. Who we appear to be on the outside is who we are on the inside. As we proceed through life, because of damage that has been inflicted on us as the psyche interprets it— the more effort we put towards maintaining a defense against these hurts, and the less effort goes towards healing and staying in touch with our true spiritual self.

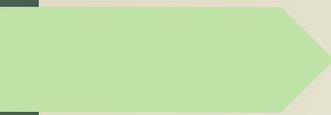
Spiritual Self



Ego Self

Throughout
Adulthood

EARLY CHILDHOOD



The Struggle to Begin the Process of Forgiveness Cont'd

- ▶ The first, and one of the most difficult obstacles we face, has to do with forgiveness. “The moment we ponder a twisted or broken relationship with another person, our emotions go on the defensive. To escape looking at the wrongs we have done another, we resentfully focus on the wrong he has done us. This is especially true if he has, in fact, behaved badly at all. Triumphantly we seize upon his misbehavior as the perfect excuse For minimizing or forgetting our own”. (Ego-Self) (12&12, Pages 77,78)



“Forgiveness is something you do for yourself to sever your emotional attachment to what happened.”

PERSONAL REASONS WHY TO FORGIVE

‘Maybe to Get YOUR Life Back’

- ▶ You Forgive for the sake of your own inner freedom.
- ▶ You Forgive so that you can live in the present instead of the past.
- ▶ You Forgive because your grievances and grudges ----- even more than hopes and attachments and fears----bind you to old patterns, old identities, and especially to old stories. In other words; **Freedom from the past**.
- ▶ You Forgive to have more Loving Relationships.
- ▶ You Forgive to have Spiritual Growth at a much higher level.
- ▶ You Forgive to have better Physical and emotional Health
- ▶ You Forgive to have increased emotional Self-confidence

PERSONAL REASONS WHY TO FORGIVE CONT'D

- ❖ The Journal of Behavioral Medicine Study showed that Forgiveness is associated with a whole range of health measures, including medication taken, sleep quality and fatigue.
- ❖ Health Benefits of Forgiveness comes largely from its ability to reduce negative affect (feelings of tension, anger, depression and fatigue).
- ❖ With Forgiveness, “the victim relinquishes ideas of revenge, and feels less hostile, angry, or upset about the experiences”.
- ❖ “If there is a causal role between Forgiveness and health, then reduction of anger, anxiety, and depression may explain how Forgiveness operates on the body.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a yellow and blue striped jacket, is shown in profile, looking down at a glowing lotus flower she is holding in her hands. The background is a dark blue gradient. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

The act of
forgiveness
takes place in
our own mind.
It really has
nothing to do
with the
other person.
- Louise Hay



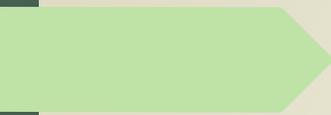
COLLECTIVE REASONS WHY TO **FORGIVE** ON A GLOBAL SCALE

- Heal old scores Between Races
 - Releasing Collective Emotional Baggage
 - Transforming the Energies of Violence
 - Reducing Tension in the World
 - Promoting Open Heart Politics
 - Healing the Planet
 - Raising the Consciousness of the Planet
- 

HEARTFELT FORGIVENESS

Heartfelt Forgiveness Is:

- ❖ A spontaneous and natural uprush of peaceful letting go, even of tenderness.
- ❖ Is the natural, spontaneous opening to someone who has hurt you.
- ❖ It is not something the EGO can make happen.
- ❖ The separatist, culturally conditioned EGO-SELF, formed by thousands of years of judgement and vengeance, demands punishment as the price of Forgiveness.
- ❖ When your heart forgives, it has stepped beyond the EGO to grasp your innate kinship---even your identity---with another person.



“FORGIVENESS” comes from the RECOGNITION that no HUMAN BEING, however harmful or hurtful THEIR ACTIONS, is without basic goodness!”

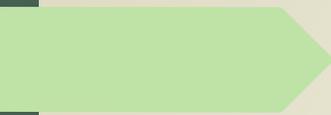
SOUL-BASED **FORGIVENESS** is;

- ❖ YOU experience the emergence of a POWERFUL AND ESSENTIALLY SPIRITUAL EMOTION that comes not from the personality but from the DEEPER LEVEL OF BEING that’s sometimes called the “SOUL”.
- ❖ AT this level of the “SOUL”, we as individuals connect most deeply with other Individuals.
- ❖ AT this level your “HEART” is moved by the sheer HUMANNESS of the other person.



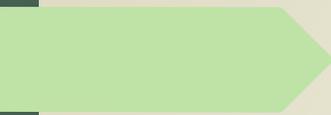
May I mindfully acknowledge
That others, like myself, are still growing
spiritually,
And forgive their past offenses,
As I forgive my own,
So that I can know
The blessing of a loving heart.

Jean Smith in *NOW! THE ART OF BEING TRULY
PRESENT.*



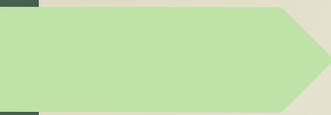
FORGIVENESS MODEL BY SUSANNE AND SID SIMON

1. Painful topic/scary and confusing---Everyone has been hurt in Life.
2. Healing cannot occur without Forgiveness.
3. Forgiveness has nothing to do with the other person, only has to do with you.
4. Work towards healing is working on self-esteem.
5. If we continue to hold on to our feelings, beliefs etc., about the person who hurt us, we cannot let go----
FORGIVENESS MEANS MOVING FROM HOLDING ON TO LETTING GO.
6. FORGIVENESS moves us towards maturation.



FORGIVENESS IS:

- a) Willingness to move on.....
 - b) A process of letting go.....
 - c) Something you do for yourself.....
 - d) Healing.....
- 



FORGIVENESS IS NOT:

- a) Absolving the other person; the other person also has to forgive themselves for what happened
- b) Condoning
- c) Forgetting
- d) Punishing
- e) Getting even
- f) Something you can do overnight

6 STEPS TO FORGIVENESS

1. DENIAL: Blocking the pain; pretending or believing it did not happen ; we don't want to feel like "DAMAGED GOODS"; too scary to feel the impact

2. SELF-BLAME: Searching for what I could have done differently; thinking "it was my fault": If I only had.....
REALITY IS; maybe there are some things you could have done differently however, certainly as a child we don't know we can or may. Learning some about what we might have done differently will help us in our current growth process.

Very important not to dwell on our mistakes; put things in perspective!!!!!!!

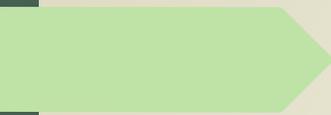
6 STEPS TO FORGIVENESS CONT'D:

3. VICTIM: shifting from putting the blame on self, to holding someone else responsible for the hurt (s), or something else (disease, accident, etc.)
Mourning can now take place if under the anger we recognize our own sadness (Mourn the loss of childhood, safety, trust, etc.)

A cycle of Victimization can keep the person stuck in this place (if the person is unwilling to give up the Victim position (s)he will teach others to keep him (her) in that place. This is a lonely place --- support network is important.

Typical Feelings: Powerlessness; playing out the life script of VICTIM!----- I am not loveable (no one loved me as a kid), very scared; vulnerable; not trusting; people are out to get us; complaining/whining (it's important to wait to feel sorry).

Easy to get stuck here: ***In this stage occurs use of drugs, alcohol, promiscuity, overeating, etc.***



6 STEPS TO FORGIVENESS CONT'D

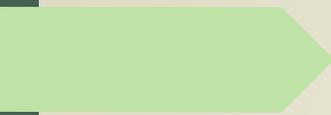
- 4. INDIGNATION: Righteous anger; screaming; wailing. We have every right to feel angry and need to feel the pain and anger: We want the abuser to be punished.
- Often this stage gets translated into being angry at the world or at all men or women, etc.
- Easy to stay stuck at this stage: NEED TO LET GO AND LET GOD

6 STEPS TO FORGIVENESS CONT'D

- ▶ 5. SURVIVOR: Reasons to celebrate: "I survived it" (the pain, the hurt); Take ownership of life; No longer responding to, but moving on; Commitment to healing and wholeness.
- ▶ In this place we can discuss our hurtful experiences without extreme emotion.
- ▶ Beginning to understand that the person who hurt you did the very best they knew how to.
- ▶ Beginning to realize that the person who hurt you had various life experiences that shaped his/her life.
- ▶ Develop some understanding for the other person's life experiences. Let go of our Self-righteousness.
- ▶ Reclaim your own power, your instincts; Learning to trust one self and our inherent wisdom
- ▶ Work on self-esteem; Pat yourself on the back. If successfully achieved: person can become a sponsor to others.
- ▶ Once achieved: A person when in Regression is more likely to return to this stage since it feels good.

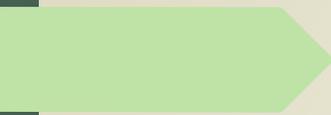
6 STEPS TO FORGIVENESS

- 6. INTEGRATION: We can finally see how the experiences fit into our whole life, saying: “Yes it happened to me, or, yes I have been a victim of something, but that is not my role in life, I do not have to act accordingly.”
- Knowing that I am more than a victim.
- Knowing that the other person is more than the hurt inflicted upon you.
- I don't need the victim role anymore to be somebody in life; I can be much more!
- DON'T CONDONE OR FORGET THE EXPERIENCE!



Harm We Have Done to Ourselves

- ▶ “In many instances we shall find that though the harm done others has not been great, the emotional harm we have done ourselves has. Very deep, sometimes quite forgotten, damaging emotional conflicts persist below the level of consciousness. At the time of these occurrences, they may actually have given our emotions violent twists which have since discolored our personalities and altered our lives for the worse.”
(12&12, Pages 79,80).



“Making Amends helps you Forgive Yourself”

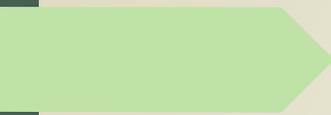
The Journal of Positive Psychology & The Journal of Health Psychology Say;

- ❖ Making Amends to the person you have wronged can better help you to Forgive yourself.
- ❖ People who asked for Forgiveness for a wrongdoing were found to be more likely to feel like it was OK to Forgive themselves.
- ❖ One barrier people face in Forgiving themselves is that they feel they deserve to feel bad; the study showed that “making Amends gives us permission to let go”.
- ❖ Forgiveness trumps time, relationship satisfaction and commitment in overcoming the hurt from infidelity.

Self-forgiveness is critical to well-being --- but it needs to be balanced with Responsibility-Taking!!

- ▶ Research suggests that while it relieves unpleasant feelings like Guilt and Shame -----
- ❖ It may also—in some cases---reduce empathy for others and motivation to make amends.
- ❖ In other words, Self-Forgiveness may at times serve as a crutch, producing a comforting sense or moral righteousness rather than a motivating sense of moral responsibility.

IMPORTANTLY, IT IS NOT RELEVANT TO THOSE WHO UNFAIRLY BLAME THEMSELVES FOR AN EVENT FOR WHICH THEY WERE NOT RESPONSIBLE, SUCH AS BEING THE VICTIM OF VIOLENCE OR ABUSE!



“The Turning Point”

The Turning Point of the Self-forgiveness Process is when we **Pause**. By **Pausing and Accepting our Suffering** we become released from the Story Line or the Trance. In the **Pause** we are returning to what we have spent a life time hiding from, to rest in the bodily experience of the present moment – even if it is a feeling of being humiliated, of failing, of abandonment, of unfairness. Through this **Pause** we develop the capacity to stop hiding, to stop running away from our experience. We begin to trust in our natural intelligence, in our naturally wise heart.

From “Radical Acceptance” by Tara Brach, Ph.D.

“SELF-FORGIVENESS CONT'D”

What about Guilt & Shame?

- ❖ Guilt, feeling bad when we do something wrong is natural, and maybe even useful. But guilt should only be maintained to the extent that it helps fuel positive change; when it's excessive or relentless, it can become harmful. Remorse, rather than self-condemnation, has been shown to encourage prosocial behaviors.

“Guilt---involves feeling bad about one’s behavior and its Consequences”

- ❖ Shame, which involves negative feelings about the self as a whole (i.e., feeling worthless), is associated with defensive strategies like denial, avoidance, and even physical violence.

“Shame---feeling like you’re just a bad person at your core can undermine efforts to change, as change may not even seem possible from this perspective”

“SELF-FORGIVENESS CONT'D”

TAKING OWENSHIP:

- ❖ Acknowledgement of both positive and negative aspects of the SELF.
- ❖ Self-Forgiveness is most helpful when combined with responsibility-taking exercises. Alone Self-Forgiveness seems to do little to motivate change.;

Make Amends:

- ❖ Forgiving ourselves may be most likely to stick when we feel like we've earned it.
- ❖ We should consider what kinds of reparative behaviors will actually make a difference for others, and for our own growth.

“SELF-FORGIVENESS CONT'D”

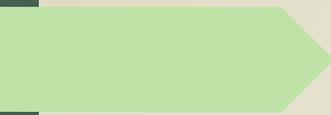
➤ FOSTER EMPATHY FOR THE VICTIM:

- ❖ Self-Forgiveness is negatively associated with empathy for victims. As Self-Forgiveness increases, empathy tends to decrease. This disconnect is understandable: It's difficult to have compassion for oneself while also having compassion for those one has hurt. But Self-Forgiveness is not supposed to be easy, and without incorporating EMPATHY it can feel empty.

SELF-FORGIVENESS CONT'D

- Self-Forgiveness need not be all-or-nothing. It's a slow process that may not result in a full release of negative feelings or an exclusively rosy view of oneself. Rather than being a form of Self-indulgence, Self-Forgiveness might be better seen as an act of Humility, an honest acknowledgment of our capacity for causing harm as well as our potential for doing good.

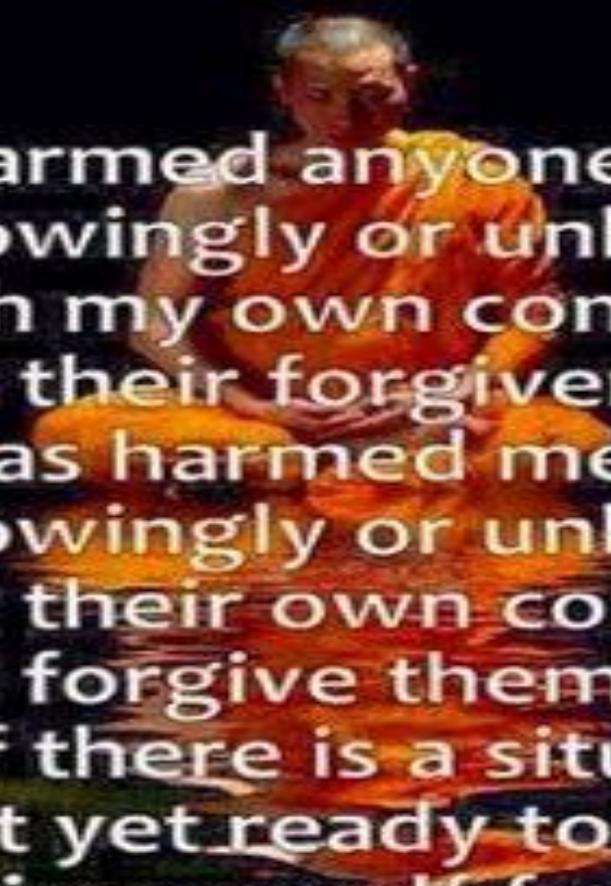
➤ ***Greater Good, the Science of a Meaningful Life***



A SCHEDULE FOR ACHIEVING A FORGIVING HEART

- **SUNDAY:** Forgive yourself.
- **Monday:** Forgive your Family.
- **Tuesday:** Forgive your Friends and Associates.
- **Wednesday:** Forgive across economic lines within your own Country.
- **Thursday:** Forgive across cultural lines within your own Country.
- **Friday:** Forgive across political lines within your own Country.
- **Saturday:** Forgive other Countries.
- **“Only the Brave know how to Forgive. A coward never Forgives. It is not his nature.”**

"A Buddhist Prayer of Forgiveness"



"If I have harmed anyone in any way
either knowingly or unknowingly
through my own confusions
I ask their forgiveness.
If anyone has harmed me in any way
either knowingly or unknowingly
through their own confusions
I forgive them.
And if there is a situation
I am not yet ready to forgive
I forgive myself for that.
For all the ways that I harm myself,
negate, doubt, belittle myself,
judge or be unkind to myself
through my own confusions
I forgive myself."



"I think I'm cured. I now forgive my parents, love my wife, adore my children and hate you."