

THE BEAUTY of FORGIVENESS

Forgive yourself, Forgive others, Change your future!



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INTRODUCTION

Every time we turn on the news, we hear the roar of violence, both on a global scale and on an individual level. Is there a way out of the violence, revenge, wars, and hate taking over our world today? Could part of the solution be something as basic as forgiveness?

Forgiveness does not justify the evil which occurred. It is a process of letting go of the bitterness and resentment towards another person or situation so you can move positively into the future without the burdens of enmity and revenge.

Forgiveness is not only extremely helpful on a personal level; it can be beneficial if practiced as a society. It can rescue nations and people from the grip of hate and revenge. Mahatma Gandhi was right when he said: “If we all live by ‘an eye for an eye’, the whole world will be blind.” Without forgiveness life is governed by an endless cycle of resentment and retaliation.

Somehow we must find the means and the strength to forgive so our world will not continue on its downward spiral of wars, destruction and hate. Forgiveness is the act that helps another’s wrong not to become our own wrong as well and will help free up our mental and emotional energies so that we can apply them to creating a better life and hopefully a better world as well. - Jon Rose



* **Cover Photo:** The photo shows a Raku, a type of pottery traditionally used in Japanese tea ceremonies. Now kept in the Smithsonian Museum, the broken pieces of the cup are bound with liquid gold to emphasize and embrace its imperfections. This concept is called Kintsugi, and symbolizes embracing the pain and moving on.

QUOTES

“Let us forgive one another – only then will we live in Peace.” – Leo Tolstoy

“As long as you don’t forgive, who and whatever it is will occupy a rent-free space in your mind.”
– Isabelle Holland

To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.

“Anger makes you smaller, while forgiveness forces you to grow beyond what you were.” – Cherie Carter-Scott

“Be Like a Tree, even if people throw a stone to harm you, drop a fruit to benefit them.” – Khalid Yasin

“To forgive is the highest, most beautiful form of love.” – Robert Muller

Imagine a world filled with people willing both to apologize and to accept an apology. Is there any problem that could not be solved among people who possessed the humility and largeness of soul to do either—or both—when needed?

Forgiveness is mercy, not justice. To err is human, to forgive, divine.

Holding on to a hurt is like grabbing a rattlesnake by the tail: You are going to be bitten.

It can be natural to feel that if you forgive someone, it excuses them for what they have done. It doesn’t. Rather it sets you free to let go of the pain of the offense, to move on without your feelings of ill will toward the person who harmed you constantly plaguing you.

“He who cannot forgive breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass.” – George Herbert

Forgiveness is the key that unlocks your prison cell of resentment, hurt, and pain. You can only unlock the cell from the inside, and only you have the key.

Keep in mind, hurting people often hurt other people as a result of their own pain. If somebody is rude and inconsiderate, you can almost be certain that they have some unresolved issues inside. They have some major problems, anger, resentment, or some heartache they are trying to cope with. The last thing they need is for you to make matters worse by responding angrily.

What is true love if not to forgive the one who you feel has done you great harm, to love your enemies, to do good to them that do you harm, to turn the other cheek? This is love. This is mercy. You will be a better person because of it.

FORGIVENESS

IS FOR YOUR

BENEFIT!

Forgiveness is something you do for yourself. Many people rightfully argue that their offender does not “deserve” to be forgiven.

How many people do you know who are bitter and consumed with hatred because years ago someone—a parent, brother, sister, friend, neighbor, lawyer, etc.—did something to them that was hurtful?

Realistically, that person who hurt you has damaged your past and remains in control of you at the present time. As a practical matter, surely you’re not going to give him or her permission to control and negatively influence your future, are you?

FORGIVENESS SETS YOU FREE!

It is impossible to go as high as you’re capable of going if you’re carrying the burden of hate, revenge, and bitterness. Those are heavy loads to carry, and the chances of you realizing your full potential are nonexistent with those three burdens on your back.

And even if you were successful in your profession carrying these loads, how happy would you be as an individual? How many friends have you seen an angry or bitter person acquire? How many of them have good relationships with their families and are optimistic and enthusiastic about the future?

Forgiveness is the key, and if you’re incapable of forgiving on your own—and many are—often people seek counseling to guide them through the maze, to finally reach the point where they can forgive. The day you do is the day you become a happier, healthier, more secure person.—Zig Ziglar

SPECIFIC BENEFITS OF FORGIVING

Forgiving is for giving yourself the freedom to be happy again.

As long as you bear a grudge against someone you will be unhappy—feeling frustrated, bitter, or angry. You will be suffering, while the person you resent might not even be aware that you resent him or her. . . or even care! When you forgive, you stop giving that person power over how you feel and free yourself to be happy again.

Forgiving is for giving yourself the ability to be attuned to others.

When you harbor resentments, you are in that judgmental state of mind that causes you to feel separate from others. When you forgive, you return to a state of mind that is once again open and receptive to insights, inspiration, and intuitive direction.

Forgiving is for giving yourself valuable insights about yourself.

Sometimes the person whom you need to forgive is actually “mirroring” a behavioral trait that you may have, but don’t want to consciously admit. If you are willing to “look in that mirror,” you may see something within yourself that needs healing. You may discover a long-neglected emotional wound that has been causing you to behave in unproductive ways. But now that it’s revealed, you have the opportunity to heal that wound through a little self-love. . . as well as the opportunity to see that person who is your “mirror image” in a more compassionate light.

Forgiving is for giving yourself the ability to enjoy the peace that exists in the here and now moment.

Whatever it is that is causing you to feel resentful happened in the past, right? By harboring those negative feelings, you are keeping the past alive. Generally, the “now” moment is pretty peaceful. But you rob yourself of that peace by dwelling on something that is not actually happening in the here and now. If you want to be able to enjoy the peace of the present, let go of the past through forgiveness.

Forgiving is for giving yourself the power to create a different future.

The future is formed in the present, through the thoughts and feelings

that you are having right this minute. If you have dragged the past into the present through unforgiveness, then it is highly likely that you will create a future that is just like the past. If you want a different future, forgive what happened in the past—let go of it—and open yourself up to the infinite possibilities that exist when your mind is free of all prior influences.

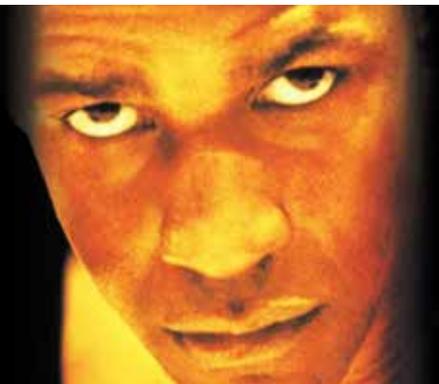
“When we hate our enemies, we are giving them power over us: power over our sleep, our appetites, our — blood pressure, our health, and our happiness. Our enemies would dance with joy if only they knew how they were worrying us, lacerating us, and getting even with us! Our hate is not hurting them at all, but our hate is turning our own days and nights into a hellish turmoil.” — Dale Carnegie

RUBIN HURRICANE CARTER

Making Things Right

“Hurricane” starring Denzil Washington, was wrongfully convicted of a murder for which he served 19 years in prison before he was released. He said he is repeatedly asked if he is bitter. He went on to explain. He had a great boxing career taken from him. He had his wife and children taken from him. He had his freedom taken from him. He was threatened with execution. He had 19 years taken from him.

He went on to say he has lost so much he could not afford to lose even more. Bitterness would steal from him the quality of life he now has. Being bitter would not hurt the judicial system that locked him up. Being bitter would not hurt the people who testified against him. Being bitter would not hurt anyone but him. Bitterness would keep him from sleeping and ultimately destroy him because “bitterness destroys the vessel that holds it.”





RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS

“A happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers.” — Robert Quillen

“The things two people do to each other they remember. If they stay together, it’s not because they forget; it’s because they forgive.” — Demi Moore

“We can never change another person but we can change ourselves. As you change your perception of the relationship you have to another person—as you shift how you feel about him/her and what he/she did—your entire experience changes.”

“There is no love without forgiveness, and there is no forgiveness without love.” — Bryant H. McGill

“Forgiveness is easier said than done. If forgiveness was that easy, everyone would be doing it.”

“A choice to forgive is a choice to love in spite of the pain.”

“Love as though you have never been hurt before.”

“Once a woman has forgiven her man, she must not rehearse his sins for breakfast.” — Marlene Dietrich

“Real Love will not exist without forgiveness. In any relationship, you will love, and every day you will forgive.”

“Forgiveness is not about forgetting. It is about letting go of another person’s throat. Forgiveness does not create a relationship. Unless people speak the truth about what they have done and change their mind and behavior, a relationship of trust is not possible. When you forgive someone you certainly release them from judgment, but without true change, no real relationship can be established. Forgiveness in no way requires that you trust the one you forgive. But should they finally come to understand, you will discover a miracle in your own heart that allows you to reach out and begin to build between you a bridge of reconciliation.” — Wm. Paul Young

“Forgiving does not erase the bitter past. A healed memory is not a deleted memory. Instead, forgiving what we cannot forget creates a new way to remember. We change the memory of our past into a hope for our future. Only the future matters. Love’s power does not make fussy historians. Love prefers to tuck the loose ends of past rights and wrongs in the bosom of forgiveness—and pushes us into a new start” — Louis B. Smedes

An unforgiving nature will rob the joy from your life!

If we wish to build lasting relationships, we must learn to forgive. Why? Because our loved ones are imperfect, and so are we!

Politicians and Peacemakers on Restitution and Forgiveness

A single deed of kindness has the power to call a whole history of animosity into question.

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“As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn’t leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I’d still be in prison. Honesty, sincerity, simplicity, humility, pure generosity, absence of vanity, readiness to serve others—qualities which are within easy reach of every soul—are the foundations of one’s spiritual life.”

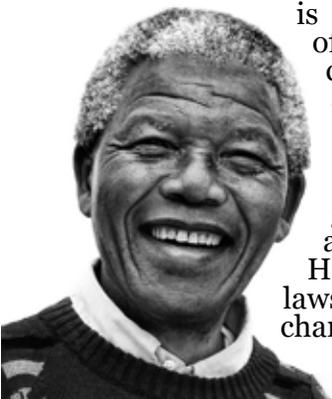
~ Nelson Mandela, South African anti-apartheid leader and a model of forgiveness.

“Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies.” ~ Nelson Mandela

Tributes to Mandela given at his funeral: “It took a man like Madiba (Nelson Mandela) to free not just the prisoner, but the jailer as well; to show that you must trust others so that they may trust you; to teach that reconciliation

is not a matter of ignoring a cruel past, but a means of confronting it with inclusion and generosity and truth.

He changed laws, but he also changed hearts.”



“He showed the awesome power of forgiveness—and of connecting people with each other and with the true meaning of peace, That was his unique gift, and that was the lesson he shared with all humankind.”

“I will remember Nelson Mandela for the great example he gave of the power of forgiveness. And from his forgiveness, great hope grew. Nelson Mandela taught us forgiveness on a grand scale.”

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“We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude.” ~ Martin Luther King, Jr American Civil Rights leader

“Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” ~ Martin Luther King, Jr (1929–1968)

“The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.” ~ Mahatma Gandhi, founder of modern India

Whoever seeks revenge should dig two graves. ~ Chinese Proverb

Without forgiveness, there is no future. ~ Desmond Tutu

Forgiveness: A Way out of the Chaos the World is in...

“The practice of forgiveness is our most important contribution to the healing of the world.” —Marianne Williamson

A concealed and unforgiven hurt never gets better on its own; it requires the soothing balm of forgiveness to bring deep healing and peace. Choosing to forgive does not mean brushing aside a very painful wound; rather it's acknowledging that you are hurt and treating the wound to allow it to heal. Don't try to close the wound without forgiving, for the longer you wait, the deeper it will burn, and the harder it will become to heal. As long as we hold grudges, resentments, shame or guilt, the energy of those feelings is poisoning us. Holding on to hate will not give you power, it will leave you powerless.

In order to forgive, don't even associate the forgiveness with the deed. Don't put one on one side of the scale and the other on the other. It's not a scale. The two sides won't ever balance. It will never be “fair.” That's not really the point. The forgiving is for you. It's how you will be healed.

Forgiveness is a decision, an act of the will. Forgiveness is not mind over matter; it is heart over matter. Forgiveness is the portal through which flows love, cleansing and healing. Taking the step to forgive is a sign of great strength of character.

Forgiveness pushes you to new limits. When you are hurt, you have to choose what you'll do with that hurt. You can forgive and go on stronger than ever, or you can hold on to it and try to maintain, and eventually you'll grow weaker. When you choose not to forgive, you find that the strength and good in your life slowly slips away from you.

When you are wronged or harmed by another person or group of people, your soul suffers damage and needs restoration. It is human nature that an injury that is done to you hurts you—not just on the surface, but deep down. And the solution, the healing potion, is forgiveness. You cannot find full healing until you forgive. Forgiveness is a healing agent.

There are a thousand questions that come to mind when you are dealing with wrong that was done to you. But when you find yourself in a position where you have been harmed by the wrongs or mistakes of others—whether in a small or large way, whether by intention or mishap,—the solution remains wrapped within the package of forgiveness. There is simply no other way to fully heal the wounds of the heart.



There can be many steps toward healing, and some may involve communication and understanding in the form of finding out what happened. Also, it may be necessary to enlighten other parties as to what happened and engage in dialogue and reconciliation to various degrees. There are also times when the greatest manifestation of forgiveness is silence. The steps to be taken are a very personal matter.

But the choice and act of forgiveness is the vital ingredient. The rest of the things you can do play a minor part in comparison. Forgiveness itself, however, is a choice of the heart and is a channeling of divine power. The fact is that the act of harm that you have suffered isn't truly over and you can't start to heal until you have granted forgiveness to the one who caused the harm. Until that time, the harmful act is continuing to strike at you, like a dagger slowly pushing deeper into your body. Forgiveness stops this hurt.

The call of "fairness," anger, hate, and revenge is strong. It seems so easy to slip into the poisonous cycle of retribution and "an eye for an eye." It seems the easier thing to do is to believe that the responsibility is not on you to forgive, but to instead enjoy each blissful thought of retribution, and to never let that person have the relief of your forgiveness. But this is not the answer. This is hurt that will go on hurting, a knife that will only plunge deeper.

The more you resent someone, the more what they did to you will hurt you. This wound will never close, and its poison will someday ruin your life. Take back your life and reclaim your happiness by choosing to forgive. It does not mean someone else was right in the way they acted towards us. It does not mean loving others; that may or may not happen. It just means finally letting go of a painful hurt you suffered.

Forgiveness is the ultimate antidote to the poison of loss, harm and sorrow. Drink it fully, even though it looks like the most bitter of cures. It will end your pain more quickly than anything else, and those who drink this healing potion will find their wounds healing, and their life and joy returning much faster than those who go without it.

"Without forgiveness there is no healing. You have suffered enough, you have lost enough, and there has been enough pain. Take forgiveness, give forgiveness, and be healed!"

When We Don't Forgive, We Hurt Ourselves

“A person who has an unforgiving attitude is always the real loser, much more so than the one against whom the grudge is held. By refusing to forgive and by waiting for restitution to be made, individuals allow their personal growth to hinge on the decision of others they dislike to begin with. They allow themselves to be held hostage. They say, “If he apologizes.” “If she comes back to me.” “If he rehires me.” They play the game of waiting for others to make the first move. In the meantime they allow an unforgiving spirit to weave its way into the total fabric of their lives. As the poison of bitterness works its way through the many facets of your personality, death will occur--death that is more far-reaching than your physical death, for it has the potential to destroy those around you as well.”
—Charles Stanley

“Resentment” comes from two Latin words meaning “to feel again.” When we resent, we allow the negative emotions we feel at the time of a hurt—a disappointment, a betrayal—to recur long after the event is over, flooding our systems with their poisons over and over again. In my 27 years as a practicing psychiatrist—and in the 15 years before that when I was a medical doctor—I have come to regard resentment as a cancer of the personality that is as deadly as any physical growth.” —James A. Stringham

FORGIVING OURSELVES

“There will be no peace in our hearts until we forgive ourselves for the wrongs that we have committed.” An important part of forgiveness is self-forgiveness. Our inner critic at times tortures us mercilessly with feelings of guilt, shame or self-blame. It has told us how we have failed and been a disappointment. It is time to claim back that energy as well. Feelings of resentment – no matter whether directed at others or at ourselves – poison us from the inside. They can literally make us sick.

Forgiveness is the gift that you give yourself, the gift that frees you from the pain that you gave yourself by judging others. Forgiveness is a choice to release, to let go; freeing up the energy that binds and blinds you. Forgiveness completes your own healing. Forgiving others is a gift to yourself because you deserve the serenity and joy that comes from releasing resentment and anger, and from embracing universal forgiveness. It is important that we forgive ourselves for making mistakes. We need to learn from our errors and move on. The truth is, unless you forgive yourself, unless you forgive the situation, unless you realize that the situation is over, you cannot move forward.” - Steve Maraboli

Research has shown that victims of war who are able to forgive their former enemies are better able rebuild their lives, no matter what the physical scars. Those who nurse their bitterness remain invalids.

CONCLUSION

The healing power of forgiveness is so needed both on a personal level and for society as a whole, and yet it seems so difficult to attain. Legendary psychiatrist Victor Frankl, in his classic “Man’s Search for Meaning” asserts that, “Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way. Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom. When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.”

There are many situations today that we cannot change. However, we can greatly change how things affect us by changing our attitudes. When we change the direction of our focus, the direction of our life changes too.

Forgiveness has been spoken of for centuries, and yet has somehow eluded man’s grasp throughout the ages. If we want to make the 21st century a true age of enlightenment, we need to embrace forgiveness as never before, or we will fall into the same errors of the previous century with its horrific world wars. The poet Longfellow wrote that “If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we would find in each person’s life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility.”

All major religions proclaim its benefits. The Koran in Surat Ash-Shura verse 40 says “The repayment of a bad action is one equivalent to it. But if someone pardons and puts things right, his reward is with Allah.” The prophet David in the Psalms says “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.” Jesus the Messiah taught us in Matthew chapter six to forgive with his admonition that “if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will God forgive your trespasses.”

It is our hope that both individuals and nations would seek to make “forgiveness” a part of life to help create the better world that we are all seeking! Perhaps forgiveness is the key to break the cycle of revenge that is gripping the world today! “Will world peace be established through might and violence, or will it be established through compassion and forgiveness?” We must decide which road we choose to bring true peace to our home, our family and our part of this weary world. Forgive and Live!



One last word

Justice is human; forgiveness is divine.
Once we forgive, we make way for healing.
Your future begins where your grudge ends.
The happiest people in life are those who learn to forgive.
Forgiveness leaves the past behind and invests in the
future where everything is new.

When you forgive you don't change the past
but you do change the future!

CONTACT