

How Can Forgiveness Work For You?

People make mistakes. Because we're human. It's what we do.

We're supposed to make mistakes! That's how we learn about life and develop character and personal depth. That's how we become wise. That's why we're here in the first place.

But for most people, making mistakes is not okay. Instead, they beat themselves up every time they do something wrong.

Mistakes become a source of shame and a justification for self-punishment.

Is There Something Wrong With Being Human?

Many people think so. Here's the logic they use:

"There's something wrong with making mistakes."

"But I do make mistakes." (Because I'm human!)

"Therefore, there's something wrong with me."

So the very fact that I'm human means there's something wrong with me.

Do you see the problem here?

If I believe these stories, then I can't possibly win. I'm guaranteed to lose. Which means I'll never feel good enough. I'll never think I deserve. And I'll probably never let myself have much happiness. Instead, I'll go around beating myself up and putting myself down.

Just for being human! For being who I am.

Is this really the way you want to live your life? In a no-win situation?

Take it from me, it's no fun. I used to feel like I was living with a jagged metal spike stuck through my heart. I was the one who put it there, but I had no idea at the time what was going on.

What's wrong with me?

That question was always on my mind, as I tried to make it through the day so I could try to make it through the next day. It still scares me how close I came to ending it all.

Those days are long gone. At this point, they don't even haunt me anymore. Actually, life is pretty good. It could be better. But it's good enough.

What Turned Things Around?

The first secret I learned was how to handle my emotions. Maybe 'handle' isn't the right word. Actually, it's more like 'surfing' my emotions. Letting them wash through me, without getting caught up in them.

I learned all emotional pain comes from not letting your emotions flow through you. It occurs when you block your emotions because you don't — or can't — or won't — feel them. Which always starts early in life.

If you're not familiar with this flow, then you might want to read my free e-book and listen to my free guided meditation that will take you directly to your emotional wellspring.

I'm not saying it's a piece of cake to all of a sudden start opening up the emotional flow. It's not. It's tough at first. But the longer you put it off, the worse it's gonna be.

Don't wait too long to heal your emotional pain.

You can reach a point of no return, where there's no turning back.

I've seen it happen to people.

You can reach a point where the pain becomes too great, the separation becomes too wide, and you just can't heal yourself. You can't mend.

You'll be broken for the rest of your life, and you'll die broken. A wasted life. I've seen it. I've talked to people in that predicament. They will never heal because they went too far. It's scary and you want to help them so bad but there's not much you can do except be there for them as they die a slow painful death.

I talk to people like that on the phone in my job as an emotional healing coach. You don't want to be in that position. Trust me.

The sad thing is it could have been avoided. If only they're started to turn things around before it got too late. But they didn't know. They believed the lies of society which says emotions are bad and wrong and you should be ashamed of yourself for even having them.

They didn't know emotions are the source of your aliveness and your power and your very reason to live. They didn't know. And now, they might want to believe me when I say those things, but it's too late to do anything about it.

That's why I'm writing these words today. It hurts me so bad to see people suffering because they bought into the lies of society. If I could save even one person from a similar fate it will be worth all the hassles and insults I've had to put up with by getting on the internet to tell my story.

Be willing to feel — if you want to heal.

Listen, step one is to be *willing* to start feeling your emotions. All of them. Even the painful ones.

Because you'll find that once you do, then you'll be able to pretty much feel whatever you want, *whenever* you want. That's where I am today. And you can know what that feels like, too.

I wrote an e-book about it, called the Emotional Healing Quick Start Guide. Maybe you've heard of it. It's getting around. If you don't have a copy yet, you can download it by filling in the blanks below, so I'll know where to send it.

You'll get lots of other free goodies too, but I don't want to spoil the surprise. Besides, that's not really what this web page is about anyway.

Today I want to talk about the next step. What do you do after you're willing to start feeling your feelings? That's where forgiveness comes in.

Forgiveness. Don't get all goofy on me here. Forgiveness is not what you think it is!

What forgiveness Is Not

Just like we've been taught to believe a bunch of lies about our emotions, so we've also been taught to believe a bunch of nonsense about forgiveness.

Most people think it's a heave and a sigh and scowl on your face as you let someone off the hook for how they screwed you over. So they can do it to you again as soon as you turn your back.

And forgiving ourselves means we're taking some sort of quick and dirty shortcut so we can dump all that emotional baggage and obsessive thoughts we've been juggling these last - how many years???

Forgiveness means we got away with it. Or, even worse, it means they got away with it. That's what most people think.

Now here's the tricky part. Please listen carefully. *All that stuff can be true.*

They could screw you over again. It could mean you or someone else got away with it. And it can be a quick and dirty way to not pay your dues. But it doesn't have to be! And besides, that's not really how forgiveness works anyway.

Those scenarios happen not when you truly forgive, but when you go through the motions of forgiveness.

You see what I'm saying here? You can pretend to forgive — you can go through the motions — but not feel the experience of forgiveness. And it'll just be a sham. A lie. You may as well just stay home and eat a ham sandwich. Because you're lying to yourself.

Let me tell you something, and you can take this to the bank:

Forgiveness Is An Emotional Experience

It's something you FEEL. It's something you experience. Not something you do by rote.

If you only *think* about forgiveness, without feeling the realness of it, then it ends up as an intellectual concept rather than a living, breathing energy.

If you don't feel the forgiveness, then you're wasting your time. That's why I say you need to be willing to feel, before you start working on forgiveness. Because you have to be able to feel the forgiveness before it will do any good.

If you want to heal, you've got to feel. But just feeling, by itself, won't get you there. Hey, you're already feeling something. The question is, what are you feeling?

**If you're feeling the energy of forgiveness, life is pretty good.
Or it's getting that way.**

That's because **forgiveness is a lubricating energy that reduces the friction in your life.** It's like oil for your car's engine.

When you don't feel it, however, life becomes heavy, frustrating, painful and stagnant. Like a car dangerously low on oil.

You stay stuck. Time flies by while nothing changes. Which means old issues doesn't die... they fester.

It doesn't have to be this way any longer.

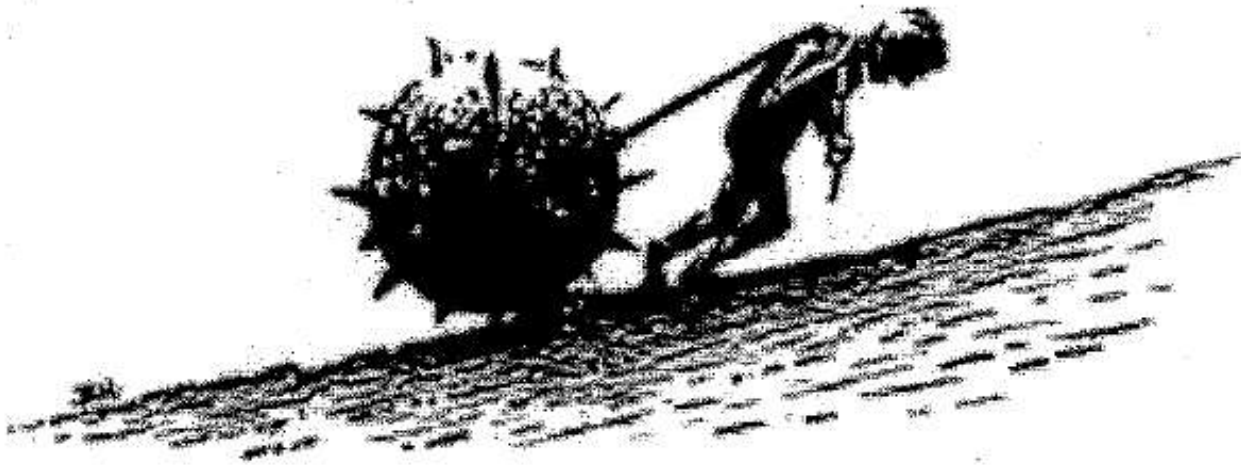
So what's the answer?

You need a systematic, fool-proof road map that's proven to take you through the barriers and blockages and straight to the energy of forgiveness. Then, once you've created new neurological pathways, you truly will be able to feel the energy of forgiveness whenever you want.

No longer a dream, you can live in a 'state of forgiveness' that will change your life in ways unimaginable to those who've never experienced it.

Forgiveness really is the lubrication that allows a smooth and easy life, A life you'll want to live.

Here's what happens when I don't forgive.



You can't even see the burden you're dragging, but everyone else can.

The Power of Forgiveness

Have you thought about giving yourself the gift of forgiveness this year? Are you ready to be free and ready to move ahead into a life of graciousness and love in the future? If you are, you must forgive yourself for the mistakes you've made — and that can be a difficult thing to do! It's easy to try and hide our mistakes and not think about them, but what we hide has power over us; it can sit there in the back of our minds and fester, eating away at our self-assurance. We have to let go of our mistakes and forgive ourselves. Humility is one combatant that helps people to forgive themselves. Humility is comprised of four different stages. These four stages are *1) Admittance, 2) Acknowledgment, 3) Acceptance, and 4) Accountability*. Admittance is when the person is honest with what happened and the emotional motivation behind their actions. Acknowledgment is when the person can acknowledge their contributions and the goals they were trying to accomplish by their contributions. Acceptance is when the person recognizes the behavior (They don't justify/rationalize their reactions).

Forgiveness: Letting go of grudges and bitterness

When someone you care about hurts you, you can hold on to anger, resentment and thoughts of revenge — or embrace forgiveness and move forward.

Nearly everyone has been hurt by the actions or words of another. Perhaps your mother criticized your parenting skills, your colleague sabotaged a project or your partner had an affair. These wounds can leave you with lasting feelings of anger, bitterness or even vengeance — but if you don't practice forgiveness, you might be the one who pays most dearly. By embracing forgiveness, you can also embrace peace, hope, gratitude and joy. Consider how forgiveness can lead you down the path of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

What is forgiveness?

Generally, forgiveness is a decision to let go of resentment and thoughts of revenge. The act that hurt or offended you might always remain a part of your life, but forgiveness can lessen its grip on you and help you focus on other, positive parts of your life. Forgiveness can even lead to feelings of understanding, empathy and compassion for the one who hurt you.

Forgiveness doesn't mean that you deny the other person's responsibility for hurting you, and it doesn't minimize or justify the wrong. You can forgive the person without excusing the act. Forgiveness brings a kind of peace that helps you go on with life.

What are the benefits of forgiving someone?

Letting go of grudges and bitterness can make way for compassion, kindness and peace. Forgiveness can lead to:

- Healthier relationships
- Greater spiritual and psychological well-being
- Less anxiety, stress and hostility
- Lower blood pressure
- Fewer symptoms of depression
- Lower risk of alcohol and substance abuse

Why is it so easy to hold a grudge?

When you're hurt by someone you love and trust, you might become angry, sad or confused. If you dwell on hurtful events or situations, grudges filled with resentment, vengeance and hostility can take root. If you allow negative feelings to crowd out positive feelings, you might find yourself swallowed up by your own bitterness or sense of injustice.

What are the effects of holding a grudge?

If you're unforgiving, you might pay the price repeatedly by bringing anger and bitterness into every relationship and new experience. Your life might become so wrapped up in the wrong that you can't enjoy the present. You might become depressed or anxious. You might feel that your life lacks meaning or purpose, or that you're at odds with your spiritual beliefs. You might lose valuable and enriching connectedness with others.

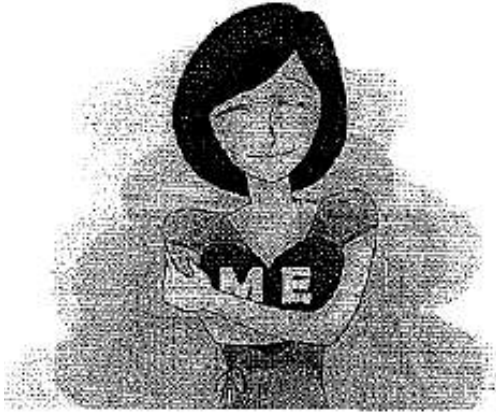
How do I reach a state of forgiveness?

Forgiveness is a commitment to a process of change. To begin, you might:

- Consider the value of forgiveness and its importance in your life at a given time
- Reflect on the facts of the situation, how you've reacted, and how this combination has affected your life, health and well-being
- When you're ready, actively choose to forgive the person who's offended you
- Move away from your role as victim and release the control and power the offending person and situation have had in your life
- As you let go of grudges, you'll no longer define your life by how you've been hurt. You might even find compassion and understanding.

Steps for forgiveness

Practice self-acceptance. You don't need forgiveness for being you. Forgiving yourself is about targeting the specific things that you feel bad about, not about the person you are. As a forgiveness technique, self-acceptance allows you to acknowledge that you're a good person, faults and all. It doesn't mean that you ignore the faults or stop trying to improve yourself but it does mean that you value yourself above those elements and cease to allow your faults to halt your progression in life.[1]



- Love yourself and give yourself permission to heal.
- Laugh more; it'll give you more freedom to stop taking it all so seriously.

Understand the importance of *forgiveness*. Living in a state of being unable to forgive requires a lot of energy. You are constantly chewed up by fear of your vulnerability, burning with anger with the source of pain, and living with the constancy of *sadness*, hurt, and blame. This energy deserves to be put to better use, so that your creativity and abilities are fed, not your negativity. Forgiveness also allows you to live in the present instead of the past, which means that you can move into the future with a renewed sense of purpose focused on change, improvement, and building on experience rather than being held back by past hurts.

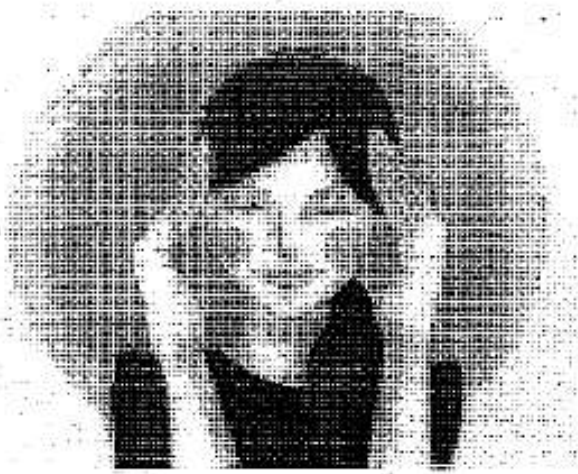


- Some people are afraid to forgive themselves because they fear losing their sense of self that has been built on the back of anger, resentment, and vulnerability. In this case, ask yourself if that angry, easily hurt and reactive person is the identity you're keen to show the world and live with. Is the security of this mode of thinking worth the effort and harm it is causing you? It's better to have

a small time of insecurity as you find your way again than to continue a lifetime bogged down in anger.

- See forgiveness in a positive light. If you're bothered that forgiving suggests that you shouldn't experience strong feelings such as *resentment* and anger, try viewing it as the chance to feel strong positive feelings, such as joy, generosity, and faith in yourself. Switching it to thinking about what you'll gain rather than what you'll lose has the benefit of keeping you positive while minimizing the negative emotions.

Take into account the challenges raised by not forgiving yourself. Not only do you allow yourself to remain stuck in the past, but not forgiving yourself takes a huge toll on your emotional and physical health. Inability to forgive is sourced from anger and resentment, two *emotions* that can wreak havoc with your health. Numerous studies have shown that people stuck in constant anger are more prone to disease and illness than people who can learn to forgive both themselves and others.[2]



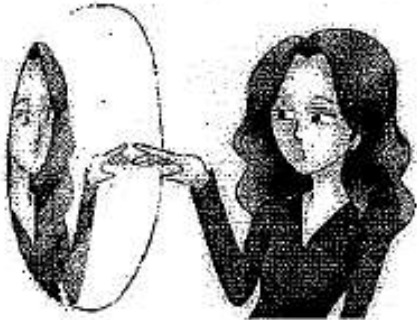
- Always remember that forgiving doesn't equate with forgetting. You're entitled to learn by experience and be guided by that experience. It's about leaving aside the resentment and self-inflicted berating that comes with remembering.

Accept your emotions. Part of the struggle is often being unable to accept that you are experiencing such emotions as anger, fear, resentment, and vulnerability. Instead of trying to avoid facing these negative emotions, accept them as part of what is fueling your lack of self-forgiveness. A problem named is a problem ready to be tackled.

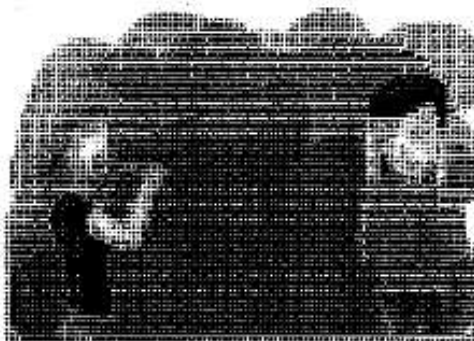


Reflect on why you're trying to hold yourself to a higher standard than anyone else around you.

Perfectionism can cause you to hold too high a standard for your own behavior, a standard that you wouldn't hold anyone else to. And if your perfectionism causes you to be too hard on yourself, you are caught in a situation where self-forgiveness is very hard to do because it seems like acceptance of a sub-standard you. Remove yourself from this vicious cycle of thinking by doing what Martha Beck called "welcoming imperfection". Beck claimed that "welcoming imperfection is the way to accomplish what perfectionism promises but never delivers." It allows you to accept that all human beings are imperfect, and you are human, and imperfect too.



Let go of other people's expectations for you. If you're stuck in a spiral of self-hate and never feeling good enough because of things that were once said to you, self-forgiveness is essential. You have no control over what other people do and say, and many things are said and done unconsciously, often motivated by the other person's own shortcomings.[3] Living your life in self-loathing because you don't feel you lived up to someone else's expectations is based on making too much of another person's mixed-up feelings. Forgive yourself for trying to live a life according to other's *expectations* and start making the changes needed to follow your own purpose instead.



- Always remember that forgiving doesn't equate with forgetting. You're entitled to learn by experience and be guided by that experience. It's about leaving aside the resentment and self-inflicted berating that comes with remembering.
- For every person who has been hard on you, remember that someone was hard on them. Break the chain of harshness by being kind to yourself, not trying to live up to someone else's expectations for you.

- Whenever someone criticizes you unfairly, realize that they have just made it that much harder for themselves if they make a mistake or fail to fulfill their own perfectionist ideas. Take this moment to remember where you've come from and why you no longer want to live that way.

Stop punishing yourself. There is a frequent misunderstanding that forgiveness equates to forgetting or condoning. This misunderstanding can lead a person to feel that it is not right to forgive oneself because in the process of doing so, it's akin to an act of forgetting or condoning the past wrong. If this is the factor preventing you from forgiving yourself, keep in mind that forgiveness is a process of *mindfulness* in which you continue to remember what happened and you do not condone something that was “wrong” as suddenly “right”. [4]



- It's perfectly fine to say: “I am not proud of what I've done (or how I've devalued myself) but I'm moving on for the sake of my health, my well-being, and those around me.” Affirming this is healthy and allows you to break the cycle of self-harm you've fallen into because you openly acknowledge what was wrong and the intention to set it right from now on.

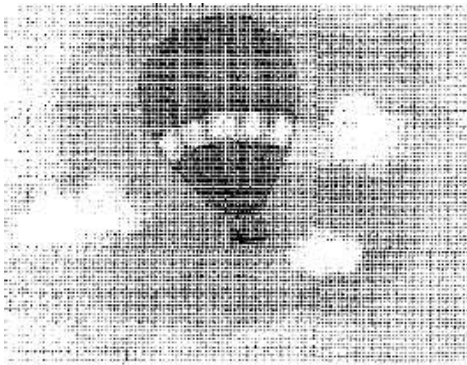
Think about what will improve in your life if you can release yourself and how to bring this into fruition. As part of forgiving yourself, it's usually not enough to simply resolve to forgive yourself. Doing things to confirm the forgiveness process will help you to realize your self- forgiveness and to give you a new sense of purpose. Some of the things you might like to consider doing include:



1. Taking up *meditation*. Meditation is an ideal way to find inner quiet, spiritual, self- realization, and physical relaxation. It will allow you to take time out, to tune into and appreciate the moment, and to get in touch with your inner self. Done regularly, meditation will improve your well-being and sense of self.
2. *Affirm* your self-worth. Remind yourself regularly that you are a valued and beautiful person and say simply: “I forgive myself ‘ or “I will no longer let anger eat away at me’”, whenever the negative thoughts reappear.

3. *Keep a diary.* Write down your journey to forgiveness. Having the writing space to share your thoughts and feelings with, one that nobody else will ever read, is a liberating and self-enlightening way to breaking through negative approaches to your life.
4. *Seek therapy.* If you've tried hard to get over anger, resentment, and other fearful, out-of-control emotions but you're still struggling, connect with a therapist who can help guide you through to a better state of being. If therapy's not your thing, at least find a friend or more to talk to, and who will help to affirm your worth.
5. If you have a faith, draw strength from its teachings to support you.

See forgiveness as a journey, not a destination. If you're liable to thinking that you're unable to "get to" self-forgiveness, you may be sabotaging your chances of even starting the forgiveness journey. It helps to accept that forgiveness is an ongoing process and that you'll have your up days and your down days, as with most feelings and experiences in life. You may feel that you've reached a point of forgiveness, only to have something happen that causes you to feel it was all a wasted effort and that you're back to square one, angry and annoyed with yourself. The best approach is to let the slip-ups happen and see them as minor setbacks in an otherwise more forgiving self. In addition, realize that forgiveness has no timetable; instead, you can do your very best to prepare yourself for the process and to get it started.[5]



1. Self-forgive in gradual stages. Start with valuing yourself and making a resolution to stop letting the past continue to haunt the present and direct the person you are now.
2. Learn from what you've done in the past but value your whole self (see step above on practicing self-acceptance).
3. Enjoy positive experiences consciously and don't seek to downgrade them.
4. *Be grateful* for what you do have -great relationships, a home, a family, an education, abilities, interests, hobbies, pets, health, etc. Look for the good in your life.
5. Be self-compassionate. Shift your thoughts to more fulfilling, value-focused things when negative reproaches arise.
6. *Apologize* if others have been involved and you have not already done so, or you have not done so genuinely. Only do this when you have changed your negative outlook and if doing so will not harm that person.

Forgiveness and Acceptance

Souring the Mind

Abreaction produces unpleasant consequences. Resentment is generated by the abreaction of guilt, and bitterness by the abreaction of pride.[1]

If the resentment and bitterness are not worked through then they lead to the production of long-term effects. Resentment narrows a person's views of society. And bitterness hardens a person. The result is a sour mind.

Why do resentment and bitterness have the power to sour the person? To understand this effect we have to look at the factors of these two emotions.

I repeat the sequence of the abreaction of guilt.

Narcissism leads to jealousy; then jealousy leads to guilt; then guilt leads to resentment.

Looking at the jealousy-guilt stage in more detail,

jealousy (= love + self-pity) leads to guilt (= self-hate + self-pity).

It took me a long time to analyze resentment; the difficulty is that guilt is inward-looking and resentment is outward-looking. How does this change of direction occur? In the abreaction of guilt the switch from jealousy to guilt involves love leading to hate. Hence guilt is in the mode of self-hate; this then leads to resentment. Resentment has an outward-looking factor that is conditioned by guilt. I eventually identified this factor as my idealism. It is idealism, in some form, that gives power to resentment. The idealism can be moral, ethical, or a spiritual idealism.

So resentment arises when the person's idealism is shaped and narrowed by guilt in the mode of self-hate. Therefore the more intense that a person's idealism is, the more intense will be his/her resentments.

I repeat the sequence of the abreaction of pride.

Jealousy leads to narcissism; then narcissism leads to pride; then pride leads to bitterness.

Looking at the narcissism-pride stage in more detail,

Narcissism (= love + vanity) leads to pride (= hatred of others + vanity).

In the abreaction of pride the switch from narcissism to pride involves love leading to hate. So pride is in the mode of hatred of others. Bitterness is outward-looking and it too involves the person's idealism.

Bitterness arises when the person's idealism is shaped and made hard by pride. Similarly, the more intense that a person's idealism is, the more intense will be his /her bitterness.