



FREEDOM — THROUGH — *Forgiveness*

Jonathan Parker, Ph.D.

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Freedom Through Forgiveness

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Introduction

Just about everyone has heard of forgiving and no doubt thinks we should do it, but when it comes right down to how to forgive, people often are at a loss.

A dear relative of mine used to say, "I can forgive, but I can't forget." Well, that never sounded like forgiving to me but I recognized the difficulty she was having with people who had been cruel to her. No doubt she heard someone say that once and so she thought it made sense to her and she adopted it into her philosophy of life. Is that an acceptable form of forgiving? In this book I will explore what forgiving is and just how to forgive.

If you do not know what it feels like to forgive, then you are missing out on a great deal in your life. You can make yourself psychologically stronger by learning to forgive and while the process is easier than you can have imagined, it does require practice. As you read through this book, it is suggested that you take the lead by practicing the exercises that are mentioned within each of the chapters.

Often times, people struggle to get past painful memories in their lives. Even though this is not something new and we all know that we should learn to forgive and forget since elementary school! Unfortunately, many people tend to dwell on the past and that only creates a downward spiral of pain and disappointments.

A friend of mine once said to me that everyone has a bag of rocks they carry with them through life, and occasionally, sometimes, if they are lucky, they figure out how to drop one of them. What he meant, of course, is that we seem to hold on to the very things that cause us distress, struggle, and suffering, and they are like a heavy weight we have to bear. No one wants to be burdened carrying a bag of rocks, or the weightiness of the struggles of life, but why do we hold onto the very things we don't want?

Holding grudges to your grave is not something you would wish for, both for yourself or others. Ultimately, what we truly yearn for is a sense of fulfillment and happiness in life.

What Should We Forgive?

First of all, let's discuss what is in your bag of rocks that you carry with you through your life? The "rocks" are the traits that cause suffering such as: Anger, guilt, resentment, fear, worry, criticism, grudges, distrust, regrets, judgments, blame, grief, heartache, etc.

Virtually everyone gets caught from time to time by some of those reactions, and often they destroy relationships and create personal distress. There are a number of ways of coping with these types of reactions but in this book I'm going to focus on forgiving as a means of actually letting them go.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS TRUE FORGIVENESS?



Chapter 1 – Forgiving Others – What is True Forgiveness?

When you learn about forgiveness, it's like giving a gift you give with no strings attached. People who say that they forgive but still bring up the past every time shows that they haven't truly forgiven. So, what is true forgiveness?

Forgiveness is a form of letting go sometimes called surrender. Surrender in this case means a complete letting go of all holding on or attachment to such things as judgments, resentment, anger, and blame.

Forgiving has a beautiful quality of washing you clean and leaving you refreshed, because when you deeply forgive you dissolve the very cause and core of resentment.

In fact, forgiveness is a "gift" that you give to yourself and people you love. You may not see it like this at the moment, but once you study and apply what I'm about to share, you will be able to put negativity behind you and start to enjoy life to its full extent.

Forgiveness is the life preserver every day offers you. It is your choice whether you take it, but once you do, you will understand how much it changes everything about your life and frees you from all of the pain and bitterness that come with it.

True Forgiveness

Daisy is a gifted child. However, she mingled with the wrong kids who were into stealing and because she wasn't very good at it, she was caught. As expected, her parents were angry. After the entire saga, they encouraged her to move on and do better things in life. Verbally, they forgave her.

Several years later, her mother was still constantly reminding the child of the thing that she did wrong every time she got mad. Of course, this didn't sit well with Daisy and she felt terrible every time her mother brings up the past. Furthermore, Daisy found that this stifled her creativity and that she dreaded going home to her mother because she knew that history would repeat itself. In the end, their relationship turned sour and things only got from bad to worse.

When you truly forgive someone, the past shall remain the past and won't ever be brought up again. Forgiveness gives both you and the person you feel has wronged you the freedom to move on with a clean slate. However, forgiving doesn't mean forgetting.

Daisy actually grew up to be a very forgiving person, learning from the lessons that she had been taught by her mother, and embraced with unconditional love. Even though you may remember the event as if it was yesterday, forgiveness means not bringing it up at a future time whenever you feel like it.

You liberate yourself by learning to let go of blame and starting to embrace compassion. Let me give you an example:

John was always bullied by his brother. As he grew up, he had less to do with his brother but could see that his brother's life wasn't a very happy one. Instead of holding onto bad feelings, John learned that compassion was a better answer. He approached his brother to see if there was something he could do to help his brother through a bad patch.

His brother was astounded that John would even bother with him after all the hell that he had put John through as a child, but when people forgive, it helps them to see things from both sides.

You have to remember that people who make your life a misery are usually quite miserable themselves. You have a choice to let go, and to forgive, or to carry a grudge and live with blame and anger. Both are bad for you because these are negative traits and they diminish who you are. Even if you were technically right in the "blame game," deep inside you won't feel good due to all the negativity and sense of grudge.

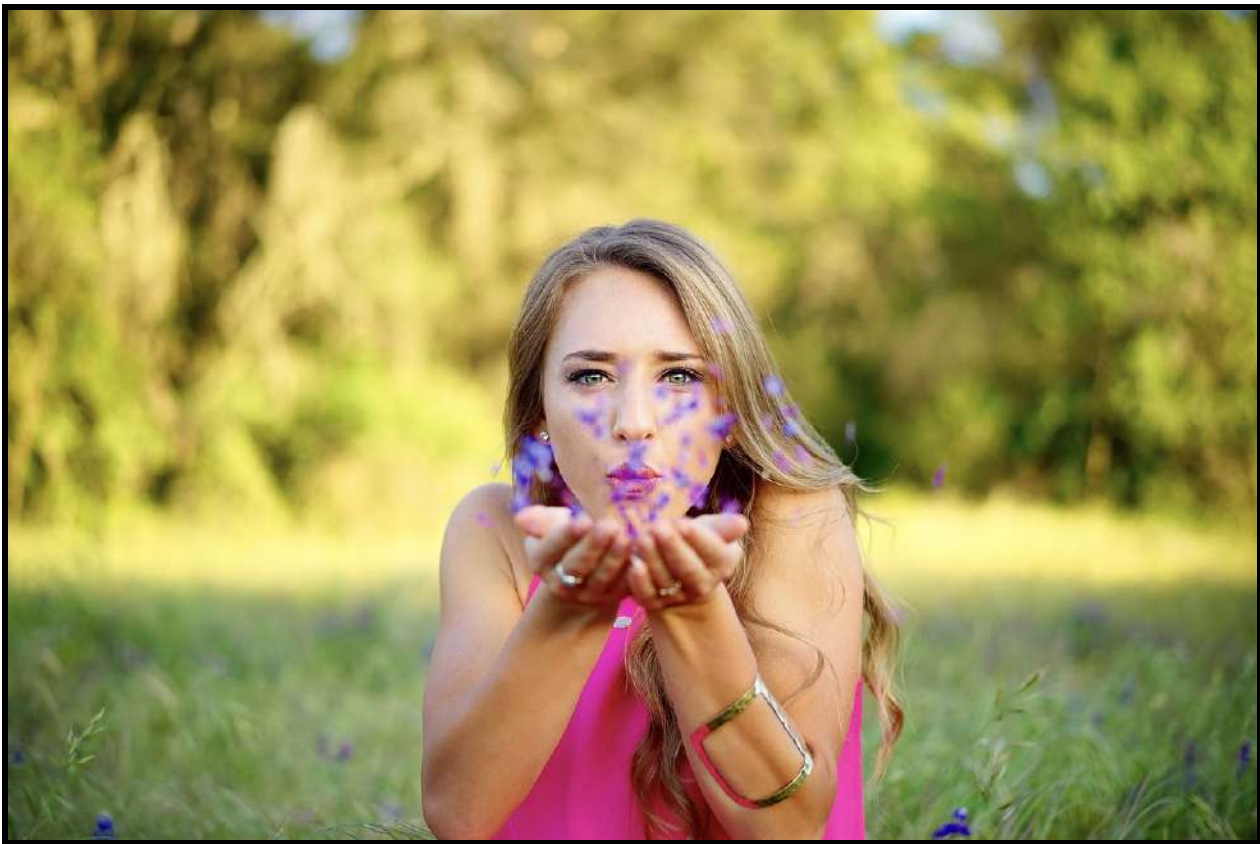


Forgiveness Requires The Strength of Character

Forgiveness requires the strength of character, rather than weakness. Those who are able to forgive are more likely to live happier lives. In John's case, his brother is now his best friend because he learned from the kid he bullied how to move on and create major successes in life despite circumstances. John's brother asked him once how he could forgive and the answer is simple, to love is far better than to hate someone. He didn't despise him, or try to prove that he was better than his brother, but he demonstrated that when you forgive, you become a happier and more fulfilled human being. There is no better example than John himself.

There are so many things that people are unable to forgive from their childhood till death start knocking onto their door. That intangible burden that they carry with them their entire lives will diminish their ability to experience true happiness and fulfillment. This places a heavy burden not only on them, but also people around them. Forgiveness allows you to lift that burden and to see life from a different perspective. No matter what childhood offered or left in its tracks, forgiveness and acceptance of life is a healthier way to go and makes you less bitter. That bitterness tarnishes everything that you do and each interaction you have with others until YOU decide to let it go.

Remember that it's our responsibility to make the world a better place. Believe me, once you experience letting go, you will never go back to the bitterness again, because the choice is so much sweeter. It makes you feel like you have un-laden a huge load and when you feel that way for the first time, you will be shocked at how easy it is. It's not even about pride. It's about saying sorry and moving on in your life to start over with new hopes and dreams.



True forgiveness is when you can look inside and see no hatred, negativities or any strings attached to past bitter experiences.

You begin to see the good in you and it isn't being vain or narcissistic. You'll be freed from the burden of all the bad things that happened and that truly is a gift that only those who are prepared to look beyond remorse and anger will experience. That, my friend, is the Freedom in Forgiveness.

Where Do You Begin with Forgiving?

When you think of forgiving, you probably think first of all about those who have wronged you in some way, but forgiveness is most important when used in relationship with yourself. It's a way of wiping your slate clean and giving you a fresh start.

My favorite self-forgiveness statement to start with is, "I forgive myself for not having forgiven myself." It is so easy to hold yourself in judgment and be tough on yourself, especially when you seem to come up short of the standards you have set for yourself. So, right now, say to yourself "I forgive myself for not having forgiven myself." You'll notice it feels good to say that.

Furthermore, once you forgive yourself of whatever burden you have been carrying, you will find it so much easier to forgive others because forgiving opens your heart to bring healing to your relationship with the other person as well as yourself. It does this by first reconnecting you with your own heart and it brings openness, receptivity, reconnection, and freedom from the burden. So it's a way for you to experience a refreshing awakening to a new life with no baggage.

CHAPTER 2

THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS AND HOW IT CAN BENEFIT YOU



Chapter 2 – The Power of Forgiveness and How it Can Benefit You

When you are angry, it's hard to understand that forgiveness works two ways. It may seem like it lets someone get away with actions that are unacceptable, but there's much more to it than that. Let's look at the ways in which forgiveness helps you. After all, this is a fundamental benefit that you deprive yourself of if you cannot forgive.

3 Steps on How to Forgive

Step 1: You must begin with self-forgiveness, for if you cannot forgive yourself, you are not likely to be successful forgiving anyone else.

Before you can experience deep forgiveness, you must explore what you are holding onto that you need to let go of. What is it that blocks entrance into the spaciousness of your heart? Usually it is a form of resentment, guilt, or blame with one feeling leading to another, and another, and another.

For instance, frustration held over time incubates and grows into resentment which then becomes anger, which can lead to hatred and revenge. Over time it can settle into a long-held grudge and bitterness.

There can also be self-justification and self-righteousness, along with feelings of mistrust, blame & futility. And, to top it off, you can then feel guilty over all of this.

It's all quite an amazing process which usually happens without even giving much thought to how it happens, and before you know it, you are out of control with it...in other words, it controls you!

In either case of not forgiving another or yourself you want to search within your consciousness deeper and deeper for any position that judges a wrong doing. Where do you judge yourself wrong or lacking?

What if the Reaction is Justified?

Recognize that consciously you may think what you did is justified. You may even think you don't need forgiving, but if there is a part of your consciousness that finds what you have done in violation of any inner code or belief (even a subconscious one), you will perpetuate guilt and its natural consequences. The bottom line is that forgiveness works, whether it is directed toward someone else or yourself.

So the first step is to determine on what specific issue do you need to forgive and release yourself. Discern the inner voices of judgment, criticism, and blame.

I'd like you to think about this a bit. What is there about yourself that is not what you would like it to be? It could be a trait as well as what you said or did. It could be a lack of a forgiving attitude toward someone else. What would you like changed in your inner worlds?

If you'd like further help with this subject consider my audio program "Eliminate Fear, Anger, and Guilt."

Step 2: Identify another person with whom you have an issue. Is there anyone in your life now or in the past with whom you have anything unresolved? Consider that even if you think you have resolved it, if there was ever a point of contention or resentment with someone, you may want to explore your inner space with them to see if you are truly, deeply clear.

Step 3: You need to affirm the willingness and intention to forgive yourself and let it go. This needs to be done sincerely and from the heart.

The backdrop needed for all of this procedure is a willingness to forgive. You need the intention to forgive and let go of yourself and anyone else.

What if The Person Did Something Terrible?

Forgiveness doesn't mean condoning, and it doesn't mean you become a door mat. It doesn't mean the person gets off "Scot Free." It means you do, because forgiveness means you have decided to release any resentment, fear, or guilt.

Forgiving means you recognize you are responsible only for yourself and not anyone else. Forgiveness also helps you recognize you can let go of the judgments you hold about yourself.

The object of forgiveness might be yourself for something you said or did, or even an aspect of your personality.

Bring your attention to your heart and soul center area in the center of your chest. Declare to yourself your desire and intention to open your heart to forgiveness so that you may feel free, and your life be made lighter.

You say to yourself, "I am willing to forgive and release myself for whatever pain I have caused, intentionally or unintentionally... including for whatever I did or failed to do. I forgive and release myself from the depths of my heart and soul."

You can repeat these affirmations with regard to anyone else in your life who has caused you a problem.

What is The Difference Between Forgiving Someone and Condoning Their Actions?

There are a lot of people today who experienced some form of child abuse at some point in their lives. So what happens to the upbringing of the child? There are at least 3 possible outcomes: One is that they'll be totally broken down, afraid of their parents, and have low self-esteem. The second possible outcome is that they'll hate their parents deep to the core, go against every word they say, and become a 'rebel' child. In the future, they might even follow their parents' footsteps, thinking that "This is how it should be. I was brought up this way anyway!"

The third possible outcome is they simply forgive and learn from their experience. As a result, they could avoid the same mistake and shape their character into a more compassionate human being. It sure takes a lot of courage, but what you gain is so much more than what is lost.

If you don't learn to forgive, you begin to be the perpetrator and the lack of forgiveness is every bit as wrong as holding onto the memory and allowing it to cloud your judgment in the future.



Studies that were done on forgiveness showed there are other benefits as well. Forgiveness is good for your heart health. It helps you to lower high blood pressure because you are able to let go of the cause of that biochemical change in your body that anger and stress cause.

There are so many stress related ailments these days and much of it is due to the way you interpret events in your life. Compassionate people retain their innocence and can welcome the world with open arms, whereas those who cannot forgive will put barriers between themselves and the world around them. All religions agree that forgiveness is valuable to reform relationships and make a real connection with the world.

Sense of Empathy

Forgiveness opens up the path to empathy. If you can't see the world through someone else's eyes, you limit your own viewpoint of life. Empathy makes you into a more complete person and helps you to peacefully co-exist with others whose opinions differ from your own.

Since the whole world's way of living is based upon what people think, forgiveness frees you from the hold of anger and indignation. Thus, you see the world in a much broader perspective and are able to understand differences of opinion.

Forgiveness is extremely powerful. It frees you from the negative feelings that you may go through as a result of being closed-minded or judgmental. I've known otherwise devout religious people who struggle with forgiveness. They know they are supposed to be forgiving, even 70 times 7 as the Bible says, but they experienced such bad things in their past that they can't seem to let go. When the friend of one woman who had betrayed died, she realized that she could have

forgiven and cherished a very valuable relationship. With the perspective she now had she realized in retrospect how petty and small that grudge was and yet it had eaten up years of what could have been a very productive and loving relationship.

Standing at the grave of her old friend, she realized it was just too late, and now she has to live with all the regrets – until she could forgive herself for what she had done. The problem is that if you can't let go, the repercussion can actually be more serious than the actual event.



We all make mistakes, but they are only mistakes when they get in the way of relationships to the extent that you can never go back. It took her a long time to realize that forgiving herself was just as valuable as forgiving the friend who had wronged her.

Character Traits

For those who are prepared to work on their character traits, there is an action that you can take to show you immediately what forgiveness does. The next time someone hurts you, don't wait for them to apologize. Break the ice and call them to get the relationship back onto a good footing. It really doesn't matter who apologizes first as long as there's forgiveness.

The fact is that the person who cannot apologize is always going to be in a weaker position. If you take the initiative to make up with that friend, you show your strength of character and that can help that friend of yours to understand there are other ways to move forward in life.

CHAPTER 3

THE DANGER OF REFUSING TO FORGIVE



Chapter 3 – The Danger of Refusing to Forgive

There are always going to be penalties of not being able to forgive. Let me give you an example.

The Poison of Unforgiveness

Claire was once cheated on by her husband. She went forward in her life and because she held onto the anger, she took it into future relationships that could have worked out well for her. Before men were able to prove their love for her, her anger made her act in a way that actually drove them away.

You imprison your heart when you cannot forgive. Claire found herself going through the pockets of her partner. She found herself looking for problems even if there were none because she was unable to accept that people could be good to her. By doing so, she diminished herself and made herself less valuable as a partner.

Annie, on the other hand, looked at the situation from a different stance. She loved her husband and accepted – after the initial pain – that she had contributed in some way toward the breakdown of her marriage. Instead of being bitter, she used her experience to learn how to become a better person in the future. She was able to free herself of all of the negative connotations that are attached to blame, by using the negative experience to help her to grow emotionally.

The Imprisonment of Unforgiveness



When you cannot forgive, you imprison yourself, rather than the person you cannot forgive. You suffer from anger, hate, negativity, lack of trust and all of the things that make you less of a person. Even if you've had someone wrong you unjustly, if you can let go of all of these feelings, you become stronger without becoming hardened to life. You retain your innocence and learn that your method of dealing with negative emotions serves you in a much more positive way. If someone wronged you, don't let their wrong become yours. Let go and move on.

It's easier to succumb to addiction when you cannot forgive. You hide behind anti-depressants or maybe you turn to alcohol because it takes you out of that uncomfortable space YOU created for yourself. Those who are not compassionate see anger and resentment as a normal state of mind. The strange thing is that when you manage to let go of it, you change on the outside as well as the inside. You look happier and attract happier people into your life.

Falling into Distractions and Addictions

The feeling that you have in your heart reflects on the outside and shows you how to be a compassionate and empathetic person, thus making you a better person. Hold onto the addictions that you use as a bolster against being hurt again and you create even more tension in your life and have more things to forgive or be forgiven for. It's a vicious circle and alcohol won't help you long term to change something within yourself that is fundamentally flawed. When you learn to forgive, you heal yourself from that damage.

The body of a human being is composed of energy. You must have felt that energy when you are in the company of people who are angry. The ideal scenario is to get as far away from that anger as you can. When you cannot forgive, you give off this negative energy and people around you will avoid you because of it. Even though you may have been the victim to something that you didn't ask for, your victim energy attracts the very things you don't want.

To Apologize is a Sign of Strength, Not Weakness



One of the main reasons that people hold out for an apology is that they feel it vilifies the bad action on the part of the offender. The apology is the acknowledgement of wrongdoing.

Ian explains this very well when he talks about his father. Ian felt most of his life that he didn't live up to the expectations of his father. The anger that he carried with him went on for years.

During the years of growing up, Ian wanted his father to apologize for all of the things he had put Ian through as a child. The fact was that Ian's father wasn't even aware that he had done anything wrong.

The fact is that people don't always realize their sins. Ian had built up this anger towards his father that was unreasonable. And here's the irony...when Ian himself became a father, he realized that he was doing the exactly same thing to his son. It wasn't ill treatment at all. These actions were taken out of care for his son.

When he managed to get all of this into perspective and let go of his bitterness, he managed to forgive his father and attempt to make the relationship a much stronger one.

When you can't forgive, you make your own life a misery and much of the time, those who wronged you are quite happily going about their lives blissfully unaware of all of the negative thoughts you have in your mind. That's why it's so important to forgive and let go.

Put Yourself In Someone Else's Shoes

Try it today. Call someone who you have lost contact with simply because you could not forgive them. Make sure to focus the conversation around them, not you. You will begin to see that life isn't one dimensional. If you have problems with this exercise, then I would suggest that you to practice forgiveness in a meditation because it will help you to let go of all of the negative feelings you feel toward life and see things from a different perspective.

You will become less judgmental and that helps you to embrace compassion in a way you may not have been able to do before. When you do that, your whole life changes for the better.

CHAPTER 4

**FORGIVE
NOT FORGET**



Chapter 4 – Forgive Not Forget – Learn from Experience, not Ignorance

From a very young age, we form our behavior based on years of interaction with others, which includes our family, friends, and even strangers that we came across.

We're Influenced By Our Surroundings

We consciously or even subconsciously emulate the behavior of those we admire. At the same time, we try to avoid behavior of those we feel less comfortable with. But the big takeaway is, we're constantly striving to become the best version of ourselves. While you may not be able to forget what someone did that hurt you, you don't have to use this in a negative way. Instead, you can use all the past painful experiences and failures as a positive reinforcement to improve yourself.

Be Mindful of Who You Want To Be

The best strategy to discover the best version of you is to be mindful at all times. Be mindful of your current behaviors and decide whether each of these behaviors serves your higher purpose. Identify what behaviors you want to take on and what behaviors you should reject.

Learn From Experience

Also, learn from your past experiences. For instance, you forgive the bully at school and realize that his actions are not ones that you condone. Therefore, you know that bullying is bad and you will never be a bully.

You forgive the person who isn't punctual and left you waiting idly for them. You now know how frustrated it is to wait for a person who's late and would never wish to impose that on anyone.

Each of these things seems like common sense, but so many people hold onto grudges and learn nothing from them. Instead of instilling hate, tell them what they did was wrong and move on, regardless of apology. You might feel like a loser in this situation but always look at the big picture. Forgiving others and moving on show your strength in character.

That's a precious lesson to learn. Thus, it's not a question of forgetting. It's a matter of putting that action into your mind and learning never to do that to others. Of course, don't let history repeats itself. Simply learn from experience and move on. That way, you enrich who you are and be a lot happier.

Maybe you saw this article that was in the paper a few weeks ago about the physical effects of anger. This is not the kind of article you

often see in mainline newspapers but I guess the study was so well designed and the outcome so profound it made it into many local papers. Here what the article says:

"Women are more likely to experience hardening of heart arteries when they and their husbands show hostility during marital fights, while men's arteries take more of a hit when they or their wives tried to be dominant in an argument.

Psychologists at the University of Utah did CT scans on coronary arteries of 150 couples to look for signs of hardening and narrowing of arteries.

"Women who are hostile are more likely to have atherosclerosis, especially if their husbands are hostile, too....Some people had such high scores they were advised to consult a doctor."

When you have feelings of anger or hostility, or resentment or blame, you close someone out of your heart, and you also close off a part of yourself as well. A good remedy is forgiveness.

Where Do You Start With Forgiving?

If you were going to start lifting weights for exercise you wouldn't go up to a 300 pound weight and try to lift it. Your inability to lift such a great weight could make you think if that's what weight lifting is all about, it's not for me.

But if you start with 10, 20 or 30 pound weights you might find it fun and you'd feel the benefits. With forgiveness you don't want to start with the 300 pound weighty abusers – those who were very cruel, unjust and abusive.

You start your practice by developing an attitude of forgiveness with whatever capacity you feel comfortable doing until, in time, you can reach into the deeper pain and let it go.

If you push at forgiveness and go for the big tomato, the grand challenge, the *coup de gra* you may end up being more unkind and unforgiving of yourself because of not being able to let it all go

This will only serve to create more unfinished business and compound the problem.

So start practicing forgiveness and letting go of a clerk or waiter who is impatient or rude with you, or a friend who forgets something that was important to you, or a co-worker who is demanding. Think of it as an experiment and you are practicing.

Unless you live in a cave you will find all kinds of situations that you can practice on, because most people tend to be inconsistent and often violate your comfort zone or let you down.

Take a person who was insensitive to you in more of a minor way, and for a moment realize that you are considering forgiving the person even if you are not condoning their rudeness, insensitivity or abuse.

If a person were living fully from their soul they would always be kind, loving and considerate. But few people are in that kind of space 24 hours a day and they revert to ego protective measures.

Where did their ego learn these defenses? From being mistreated when they were growing up, from watching others, from inner insecurities and the need to control, and from decades and even lifetimes of practicing survival.

So each person arrives at where they are after a long series of lifetimes of being beat up by life and struggling to survive.

So now when someone mistreats you, you can know that they, too are human, and get caught in their perceptions and stories like you do, and they fall back on their ego defenses because that is all they know. So you can open your heart and mercifully embrace their need to be rude or insensitive with compassion, understanding and spaciousness.

Can you feel your heart opening at just the thought of being compassionate to another?

The only reason someone would cause you harm in anyway is if they are struggling and suffering in some way themselves. They may not be at the place where they can be patient, understanding and fully kind all the time. So, from time to time they slip into a frame of mind that they really don't like either, and they say or do something from the closed place within themselves.

All you have to do is touch them with some understanding and a possibility of forgiveness. And this opens you to a deeper truer place within yourself.

Haven't you ever been a little rude, impatient, or perhaps even indifferent to someone else? When you reflect on this you may even cringe a little because you realize how you cut yourself off from yourself when you take these positions.

But when we meet others with openness, mercy, generosity, and love we feel good inside ourselves because these are qualities of our soul, and in expressing them we connect with the core of the divine presence within us.

Impatience, rudeness, abuse, anger, all begin in the mind.

Your mind is that part of yourself that is disconnected from the goodness of your soul because it is always trying to protect and defend you in the only ways it knows—through the 5 main senses and physical action.

When you meet those parts in yourself with exploration, spaciousness, kindness, and healing you begin to dissolve the need for the painful ways of dealing with yourself. This in turn enables you to come from the sacred place within you in dealing with others.

Forgiving Thyself

So healing a relationship with someone else must begin by healing yourself. Self-forgiveness opens your heart and let's you back in...it is an open doorway to your own soul... and that leads to a healing to the very core of the issues. Self-forgiveness is an open doorway to your own soul.

The regular practice of forgiveness unfolds the qualities of the soul such as sincerity, honesty, integrity, purity, goodness, kindness, humility, mercy, politeness, surrender, love, generosity, compassion, goodness, and so on.

So if you want to unfold the depths of your soul you will need to be mercifully self-forgiving.

The Key to Self-Forgiveness

One key to self-forgiveness is exploring any areas where you are in conflict with yourself on anything you have thought, said or done.

In other words, if you are in any violation your internal code, you will be out of your integrity. If you are not in your integrity you will only perpetuate karmic consequences until you learn to come in alignment with your integrity.

Integrity is being consistent with your inner beliefs. So by not being in your integrity you judge yourself and thereby create the consequences of your judgments.

The same thing happens when you are not forgiving of another. By holding a grudge you are judging the person and therefore holding within yourself the essence of that judgment. That is, you attune yourself to consciousness level of that judgment and therefore you are essentially passing the same judgment on yourself.

In either case of not forgiving another or yourself you want to search within your consciousness deeper and deeper for any position that judges a wrong doing.

Where do you judge yourself wrong or lacking?

Consciously you may think what you did is justified. You may think you don't need to forgive, but if there is a part of your consciousness that finds what you have done in violation of any code or belief (even a subconscious one), you will perpetuate a karmic consequence. The bottom line is that forgiveness works, whether it is directed toward someone else or yourself.

So the first step is to determine on what specific issue do you need to forgive and release yourself. Discern the inner voices of criticism and blame. What is there about yourself that is not what you would like it to be?

It could be a trait as well as something you said or did. It could be a lack of a forgiving attitude toward someone else. Give this a little thought. What would you like changed in your inner worlds?

And is there anyone in your life now or in the past that you have anything unresolved with. Even if you think you have resolved it, if there was ever a point of contention or resentment, you may want to explore your inner space with them.

Secondly, you need the intention to forgive and let go.

Thirdly, you need to affirm the willingness to forgive yourself and let it go. This needs to be done sincerely and from the heart.

This also applies to when you need to forgive yourself. If you have done something to upset someone else, the best way forward is to be humble and apologize. Whether they accept your apology or not doesn't matter, it's all up to them. You cannot be responsible on how others deal with forgiveness.

Focus on yourself first. If you have done all that you can to make amends, move forward and learn your lesson so that you don't make the same mistake again. Don't beat yourself up when you've done everything possible to make amends as it can never resolve anything.

It is important that you are able to forgive yourself and release yourself from past attachments that can only bind you, and make you suffer. Once you forgive yourself, it is a lot easier to forgive others.

The Past Does Not Equal The Future

Elisa was a victim of domestic violence in a failed marriage. Sadly, she had low self-esteem and by the end of her marriage, she still believed

that she only got what she deserved. Fortunately, she managed to grow in character after being alone for a while. She realized that she held grudges both against her abusive husband for treating her like dirt as if she had no worth – and against herself because she hadn't lived up to his expectations.

After a long struggle, she was surprised that she was able to forgive him and let him know that she held no grudges against him and that she wished him well in his life. It made her feel whole again. It was like walking away with her head held high. She used empathy to try and see the situation from her husband's viewpoint, bearing in mind his background and his own demons in life. Then she had to take the walk toward forgiving herself for several things. Had you asked her what she had to forgive herself for, the answers would have been contradictory which is why she had so much trouble handling her feelings:

- a) She thought she had not lived up to what was expected of a wife.
- b) She thought that she was worthless for thinking all the bad thoughts about her husband.
- c) She also thought she wasn't worth much more than he had offered her.

However, as she went through the healing process, after forgiving herself, she found that she had to let go of her past and move on as the past does not equal the future. Today, she is able to form a strong foundation in her life, before embarking on another relationship.

There are women who believe that holding onto past sins makes them attractive to men who enjoy protecting their other half. Often times, this is based upon not being able to forgive themselves and having lost their sense of self-esteem.



Unfortunately, these are the types of women who will walk from one abusive relationship to the next because they never form that strong foundation when they're single and rely on someone else for strength. That's a huge mistake. You have to find yourself, plant your roots and become a person you love and respect before you can expect to have that kind of love and respect from someone else.

The truth is that we never really do forget about the things that people do that hurt us. However, when you're able to forgive, you can also learn how to make your life a much better place. Also, you'll discover how to approach life from a much more compassionate standpoint.

CHAPTER 5

WAYS TO ABSOLUTE FORGIVENESS

I'm sorry!



Chapter 5 – Ways to Absolute Forgiveness

When something ‘bad’ happens that makes you mad, annoyed, and frustrated, don’t let the emotions control you. Be the master of your emotions and don’t react to the negative emotions. Instead, take a step back and calmly look at the situation as a whole. Then forgive others and look for solution in a positive state. You’ll be surprised with the incredible outcome.

How much you suffer depends on how quickly you are willing to forgive fully!

However, before you’re able to do this, you need to learn how to let go. This is something that is often taught in yoga and meditation classes. The benefit of these is that you are taught to be able to breathe in such a way that you’re able to bring down your blood pressure and the rate of your heartbeat. As a result, you’re able to look at this negative situation with an open and spacious mind. Meditation requires mindfulness, which is a crucial part of being able to let go. Be sure to also read my e-book on Mindfulness for more information.



How To Use Meditation for Forgiveness

The interesting part of meditation is that it teaches you how to let go of all thoughts and to give them no credence. As you ponder upon your life, you are subjected to all kinds of opinions. Thoughts come and go and you seem to have very little control over them.

However, when you meditate, you start by focusing on your breathing. If your thoughts wander, you acknowledge the thoughts and simply let them go without allowing your emotions to take over. At the same time, you're practicing the principle of non-judgement. After all, it's just a thought and that's all there is to it. Of course, in the real world, it's easier said than done. But in meditation, you simply come back to your focus on your breathing.

Even when you are not meditating, you can distance yourself from negative thoughts by taking deep, mindful breaths.

Sit on a chair that gives you plenty of support. It's best to use a dining chair rather than something that you sink into because the straightness of your back is helpful. Your feet should be planted onto the floor and remain flat. Your hands are placed in your lap and palms upward. Breathe in but instead of only using the top of your lungs like people normally do, breathe in deeply until you feel the air expands your abdomen. Hold onto it for an instant and then breathe out through your mouth. You continue in this way, slowly counting to 5 for the inhale, 3 for the holding your breath and 5 for the exhale.

During this exercise, your mind is busy with counting and concentrating on the breath, so you don't have time to think about anything else.

This is the bit that people find difficult, but that's why they suggest that you practice meditation 20 minutes a day every day and make meditation part of your lifestyle. Practice makes perfect and it helps to discipline the mind. If you notice that there are thoughts popping up in your mind, don't resist them and realize that it's normal. Simply observe them, rather than submitting into your jumbled thoughts. See them, acknowledge that they are there and then let them go.

When To Mediate?

The best time of the day to meditate is when you are in the mood, but generally it is a good thing to do the first thing in the morning before breakfast or in the early evening on an empty stomach.

When you are learning to forgive, either yourself or someone else, you need to acknowledge the thoughts that you have and try to see them without all the emotions kicking in. Then let them go. You can get so much peace of mind as you free yourself from being caught up in situations and emotions.

Meditation gives you the inner peace that helps you immensely in forgiving others and moving on rather than harboring bad feelings. Trust me, it feels refreshing and you'll be able to empathize others easily in that uplifting state.

Achieving Absolute Forgiveness

When you wish to forgive someone, let them know that you forgive them and it's time to move on or reconcile. You should never have to bring up the past and remind others how they've wronged you. Otherwise, it isn't absolute forgiveness. Absolute forgiveness means that you are able to put all of that behind you and move on.

The same can be said when forgiving yourself. After you decide to let go of the past, never bring back those negativities and fuel your emotions. Be kind to yourself. Giving yourself absolute forgiveness is a great way to make you stronger and helps you to thrive in future relationships.

Spiritual Teachings on Forgiveness



Buddha discovered an interesting truth on his journey to enlightenment. When he was trying to find ways to diminish the suffering of people, he found that much of the pain wasn't caused by external factors, but rather from within.

Buddhism follows a set of approaches which helps to get rid of any negativity. Right Approach, right concentration, right speaking, right thought are all parts of what Buddha's teachings. If you start to speak positively to yourself instead of living in a negative state, you eventually reach absolute forgiveness and gain the ability to move on unscathed by any unfortunate events.

Jesus asked the father to forgive those who had crucified him because he knew that underneath it all, none of them really understood the extent of their actions. To forgive is to put aside all thoughts of revenge or anger. When you're able to do just that, you'll achieve absolute forgiveness.

CHAPTER

6

THE LAW OF FORGIVENESS



Chapter 6 – The Law of Forgiveness – Healing Mind, Body, Relationships, Personal and Professional Life

Let's get started by using William's story as an example. William had been working in the bank for many years, hoping that one day he could be the bank manager. However, time and time again, younger men got promoted before he was offered anything. He began to resent everyone around him. He saw them as being favored above him.

Learn To See Things Differently

Things began to change after he took on yoga classes. Not only did yoga brought him health benefits, it taught him valuable life lessons. Since then, he began to look at things differently. When someone was promoted, usually he was resentful, but yoga opened up his mind and he began to accept the realities that he have no control over.

What William didn't realize was that the reason he wasn't promoted was because of his resentment and the way he treated people around him. He was perpetually unhappy and stressed out because he couldn't accept the fact that it was all his fault. Yoga helped him to face his own demons and learned the importance of forgiveness. He had to forgive himself for the negative attitude he had carried with him all his life.

As soon as he changed the way he looked at things and broadened the spectrum of his thoughts, he could see quite clearly that the reason he was always passed over for promotion was because of his performance at work. His colleagues did not think he would be a great leader. He was being seen as someone with bitterness and anger. Within two years of forgiving, he was promoted as a bank manager and he recognized it wasn't a coincidence.

When you see the whole spectrum of difficulties that are caused by jealousy, hate, greed and negative thought, you also see that it's an obligation to yourself to step beyond negativity toward something more positive.



While you might not believe in Karma, you probably know the saying "what goes around comes around," meaning that if you do something wrong, you always get your comeuppance in some way or another.

Power of The Law of Forgiveness

That's where the power of the law of forgiveness kick in. If you are able to forgive, it empowers you so much that everything seems so positive and you are able to go through life with a whole new viewpoint. We're all human beings. We all make mistakes. We all go through peaks and valleys. Life is never smooth sailing. However, when you learn to use the Law of Forgiveness and make them part of the way you live, you will find happiness and the weight of burden will lighten and disappear.

Earlier in this chapter, I talked about William and when he was asked whether he believed in Karma, he laughed, one of those laughs that is hard to forget – that comes from the heart. Had I asked the same question many years ago, he could not have seen Karma as being something that was valid.

However, ever since he started taking up yoga and meditation classes, he learned the importance of forgiveness. Yoga and meditation helped him to look beyond his narrow spectrum. He soon learned that all his earlier failures in life were caused by the way he treats others and also his closed heart.

Once he understood this he changed his approach and began to celebrate other people's successes, rather than seeing them as a threat. Things changed for the better when he changed the way he looked at life. When he learned to let go his life changed.

Never Underestimate The Power Of Forgiveness

You have the power within you to make that change in your life. Never underestimate the power of forgiveness. The Law of Forgiveness is all about getting things into the right perspective. If someone calls you names, do you see it as an insult? How about seeing that person as being in need of drawing attention to himself and feeling empathy rather than anger? If someone treads on your toe, your toe is quick to recover. However, the injury inside lasts much longer if you can't forgive straight away.

People do things and sometimes the driving power behind those things is their own lives being out of control. When you forgive, you allow them to look at life from a new perspective and sometimes that's all that they need. Show them the bigger picture, rather than the small picture that makes you appear smaller.

CHAPTER 7

FOCUS ON THE BIGGER PICTURE
FROM PERSONAL FORGIVENESS
TO WORLD PEACE



Chapter 7 – Focus on the Bigger Picture from Personal Forgiveness to World Peace

It doesn't take much for you to be aware of all of the unhappiness in the world today. And the reason behind all these unhappiness is the lack of understanding and forgiveness.

Now imagine a world where people are able to show empathy and understanding...

Don't you think this is a much better place to live in?

Rate of Happiness of Countries

According to a recent study done on the rate of happiness of countries from all over the world, Norway, Denmark and Iceland came up as the happiest nations.

The Norwegians, Danish, and Icelandic are all nations that are close to nature. They know all about respecting nature and the environment. Schooling is free and healthcare is also universally accepted as being very good. However that wasn't the only criteria. Something different came into play that was every bit as important and that was freedom of choice. Trust and generosity were also among the criteria for finding the happiest country in the world. It is found that the least happy nations of the world were those involved in political turmoil, war and poverty.



Jealousy, greed and all of the other negative feelings that people go through actually unbalance the state of happiness and security. People want more and are perfectly willing to tread over others to get it.

So how can we address the balance? How can we forgive on a national scale?

The answer lies in being as true as you can to your own beliefs while making space in your mind for the beliefs of others.

Things You Need To Learn

You need to broaden the spectrum of your life to be able to put things into perspective. If you haven't thought about how lack of forgiveness is making your life miserable, then you need to look at life from a different perspective, that of compassion. No, you can't save the world from all the wrongdoings but you can change yourself and lead by example.

In today's world, through social media, the petty jealousies and the close mindedness of the human race are laid out for all to see. You have a choice. You can decide for yourself and learn to forgive life for being so contradictory or you can go with the crowd.

The bigger picture is that life is much more complex than that but so much more simple when you learn the power of forgiveness. When you learn to forgive, you become more compassionate. It can lead you down the path of peace and healing. You learn to let go and move on. You see the value of forgiveness and its importance in your life at a given time.

If you are looking forward with dread, it is equally relevant that you are missing out on the opportunities in your life. All over the world, people are suffering. It was the intention of the original Buddha to try to teach people to walk away from their suffering and learn a new way.



Forgiveness is an important part of a full and healthy life. It enables you to begin to build a foundation for your life. A foundation built upon negative thoughts is like building a house in quicksand. You can't do it. If you continue to walk through your life without rectifying the things that you have done wrong, you carry all of that burden with you. If you learn to forgive, you build a solid foundation that can help people around you to trust who you are.

Tomorrow, we could see hope being spread like its grass seed in a big wind, but it's really up to each individual to start the process. Social media is a powerful way to spread happiness and to share positive views. This is what the world needs now.

Forgiveness Is The Key To Your Happiness

There are many things we cannot change in life, but each one of us can change that little part of history that is our lives.

When you learn to forgive, you lead others by example. Never underestimate the power of forgiveness. It is the key to your happiness. It's as simple as that. If you can write down all of the people you need to forgive and then make an active choice to forgive, you will feel better about your life. Not only that, you will begin to notice that your life is changing for the better. Keep on spreading good positive vibes to people around you. Make the world a better place.

CHAPTER 8

**WHAT HOLDS YOU
BACK FROM FORGIVING**



Chapter 8 – What Holds you Back from Forgiving?

Blame vs. Forgiveness

What has happened over the years is that many have become complacent. It's easier to blame than to forgive. It's easier to look at life and ask what's in it for you, rather than understanding that the greatest things you can expect from life actually come from being able to forgive.

We live in a society that assigns responsibility to others although doesn't seem able to take personal responsibility. People always ask "What's in it for me?" and the only way that you can ever experience what there is in forgiveness for you is to actually forgive. There are times when you struggle in life, and it is easy to project blame, but what's important is that instead of pushing blames or pointing fingers at others, learn to do some self reflection and forgive.



Implement Forgiveness Into Your Everyday Life

Most of the times, it's the way you look at things, how you react and deal with pain and hardships in your life. Perhaps, life would be much easier for you if you could see it from a different perspective.

Take some time to do some self examination by asking yourself these questions:

- How did I contribute to this situation?
- What can I do to make the situation better?
- What can I do to show people I love them?
- What does it matter who says sorry?

You'll be fulfilled knowing that you had already done the best you could and leave no regrets. You'll also discover the freedom that can be achieved by a simple act of forgiveness. Forgive yourself and forgive others for their seemingly thoughtless actions. When you learn to let go, you open up the potential to have great relationships and to feel spiritually awakened.

The Wisdom of Forgiveness

You can never discover the best version of you until you are able to forgive and let go. Let's finish this chapter with some quotations on forgiveness that will help you to see the benefits for yourself.

"To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you." – C. S. Lewis

"The truth is, unless you let go, unless you forgive yourself, unless you forgive the situation, unless you realize that the situation is over, you cannot move forward." – Steve Maraboli

"True forgiveness is when you can say, "Thank you for that experience." - Oprah Winfrey

"Forgiveness has nothing to do with absolving a criminal of his crime. It has everything to do with relieving oneself of the burden of being a victim--letting go of the pain and transforming oneself from victim to survivor." – C. R. Strahan

The first step toward a more loving and positive relationship with yourself and others is to be forgiving.

Conclusion

Once you understand the process of forgiveness, it's time for you to use it to make the world that you live in a better place.

You'll be stronger, more compassionate and empathetic. The wonderful thing about being able to let go and forgive is that it'll also make a major impact on the lives of people you love. Nonetheless, this habit will also benefit your social and business life.

Let's do some self-discovery. Go ahead and ask yourself these questions:

- Who had wronged you in the past?
- What attempt have you made to forgive them?
- What is it that you cannot forgive yourself for?

Little by little you can put the pieces of your life back together again. Although it may be just one small step at a time, it really doesn't matter as long as you keep making progress to achieve true happiness and freedom deep within.

Who haven't you called for a long time? Make that call and make it about that person, rather than about yourself. Show your interest in the lives of others and become more compassionate in the process. If the last time you wronged this person in the past, let him/her know that you are sorry and mean it.



Forgive yourself. Stop holding your life back all the time.

Stop living in your head and get beyond it. If this means facing your demons one at a time, then do so. Write down what you did that was so wrong and forgive yourself for it, unconditionally. After all, we're just humans and we do mistakes. Learn from it and start focusing on things that really matter.

Forgiveness is a wonderful value to pass on to your children. But here's the irony, children are actually better at forgiving than most adults! Think about it, we often ask our children to shake hands with kids they have fallen out with and say "Sorry" – So why can't you?

Never stop practicing forgiveness. Remember to recognize what's in it for you. It's the best gift that you can ever give yourself and life is too short to hold onto the unnecessary grudges.

Here's my last question for you:

Do you want to experience more bitterness or happiness in your life?

Today is the day for you to find the *Freedom Through Forgiveness*.

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To guide you through meditations on forgiving I created an audio program titled, "**Deep Forgiveness**." You'll find it along with many other audio programs on my website: www.JonathanParker.org

