# UNDERSTANDING FORGIVENESS

"How Can I Ever Forgive Them?"

### The Hope Line® Dawson McAllister Network



The Hope Line. com

# Why write an eBook on ?

For one, so many of the issues people face, such as abuse, divorce, cheating, abandonment, etc., all require the willingness to forgive before real healing can occur.

Additionally, it is safe to say that *everyone* has been hurt by someone, and *everyone* has someone to forgive. Every meaningful relationship you will ever have will require some level of forgiveness at one point or another. And more often than not, a person's happiness, or lack of it, often rises and falls on whether they choose to forgive or choose to stay wrapped up in anger, resentment and bitterness toward those who have caused them pain.



# The intent of this eBook is to help you choose happiness by:

Looking at why forgiveness is so important.

Dispelling several misunderstandings about what forgiveness involves.

Providing a game plan on how to start the process of forgiveness.

Helping you seek forgiveness if you are the one in the wrong.



Let's be honest...Forgiving others goes against our human nature. There's an old saying: "Don't get mad, get even." When someone has deeply hurt you, they owe you a debt. They have taken from you your sense of happiness and wholeness and now you want to take something from them.

However, forgiveness is giving up our right to get even. Forgiveness erases their debt to us and allows the forgiven person the freedom of your generosity. It is an active process in which you make a conscious decision to let go of negative feelings whether the person deserves it or not.

But it is so much more than that....Forgiveness frees you from the toxic emotions that trap you in bitterness and hate. It is the only thing that can truly release you from the insane grip of a painful past.



### Forgiveness says:

- I refuse to babysit these horrible emotions any longer.
- I refuse to allow the person who hurt me to continue to have this power over my emotions.

**Consider this statement:** Holding onto unforgiveness is like continually drinking rat poison, hoping the rat will die.

Are you drinking the poison of unforgiveness, hoping it will somehow hurt the person who hurt you?

Josh wrote: "I was under the impression that we were fine and going to marry, but yet she was living this completely separate life. This tore me apart. I am very bitter and I hold a strong grudge against her. I know that this is tearing my life apart and I need to let go of the hate in my heart and forgive her. It is just so hard. I almost don't feel like I should forgive her, yet I am the one hurting because of it."



### Emotional consequences of unforgiveness

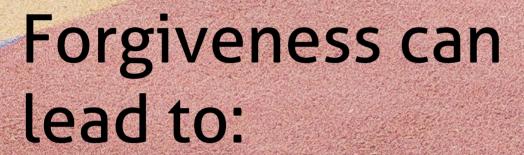
- Bring anger and bitterness into every relationship and new experience
- Become so wrapped up in the wrong you have done, you can't enjoy the present
- Become depressed or anxious

- meaning or purpose, or that you are at odds with your spiritual beliefs
- Feel that life lacks ●Lose valuable and enriching connectedness with others
- Become exhausted or emotionally drained from all the energy it takes to hold a grudge or desire revenge



### Health Benefits OF FORGIVENESS

Studies have found that the act of forgiveness can reap huge rewards for your health. "There is an enormous physical burden to being hurt and disappointed," says Karen Swartz, M.D., director of the Mood Disorders Adult Consultation Clinic at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. "Forgiveness, however, calms stress levels, leading to improved health."



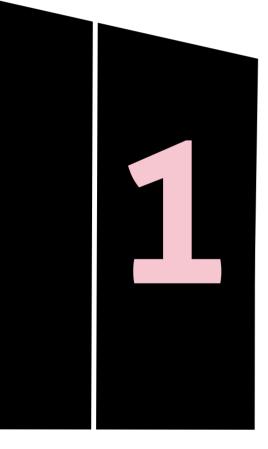
- Healthier relationships
- Greater spiritual and psychological well-being
- Less anxiety, stress and hostility
- Lower blood pressure
- Fewer symptoms of depression
- Stronger immune system
- Improved heart health

"To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you." Lewis B. Smedes



### MYTHS about Forgiveness

There are many popular ideas about forgiveness that are false, and these myths often keep people from forgiving someone who has hurt them.



You need to be friendly with the person that hurt you again and go back to the old relationship.

Just because you forgive someone, doesn't mean you have to trust that person again. Forgiveness is a gift we give to others. Trust is something that is earned. You will need to make a decision about whether to continue a relationship with the person you are forgiving, or if it would be better to maintain your distance. Forgiveness is not letting the offense recur again and again.



### To forgive is to excuse or ignore the offender's actions

If you could excuse the behavior of the person who hurt you, forgiveness would not be necessary. In fact, what the person who hurt you did is inexcusable. You aren't excusing them for what they did, you are forgiving them. Forgiving them allows you to let go of the bitterness while remembering very clearly your rights to healthy boundaries.

Sara learned: Forgiveness doesn't mean you have to be around someone who has abused you.

### 5

### To forgive is to forget.

Forgiving others does not eliminate the memory of their violating you. It is because we remember, that we need to forgive. It's not as though when you forgive someone, some kind of magical amnesia comes over you and you forget the horrible hurt that was caused. When you forgive someone you're saying that the memory will no longer fill you with bitterness and hate.



### To forgive, I must feel forgiving.

So many of people let their feelings dictate just about everything they do. In reality, there are many things you must do as an act of your will. If you act right, your feelings will follow. Forgiving someone is an act of the will. It's a choice you make, not a feeling you have to stir up. Even if you don't feel like it, choose forgiveness. In time, you will be happy you made the choice to forgive.

### Forgiveness means I have to revert to being the victim.

Forgiving is not saying, "What you did was okay, so go ahead and walk all over me." Nor is it playing the martyr, enjoying the performance of forgiving people because it perpetuates our victim role. Playing the victim is the worst outcome of having been hurt by someone else.

### When I forgive I only have to do it once.

It is only natural to want to have some kind of emotional moment where you forgive and then everything is wonderful from that point on. This is usually not the case. Even after you forgive someone your feelings of hurt, anger and resentment might come over you again. Forgiving someone is a process.

Forgiving and healing take time - the greater the hurt, the greater the time. You have to choose forgiveness again and again.



### How to Forgive

To begin with, don't be pressured into false forgiveness. This needs to be your choice when you are ready. When you feel obligated to forgive or you forgive so others will still like you, it's not true forgiveness — it's a performance to avoid rejection. Maybe all you can offer today is, "I want to forgive you, but right now I'm struggling. I promise I will work on it." Once you've decided you are ready, then here is how you can get started.

### 6 STEPS to help you get started on forgiving:

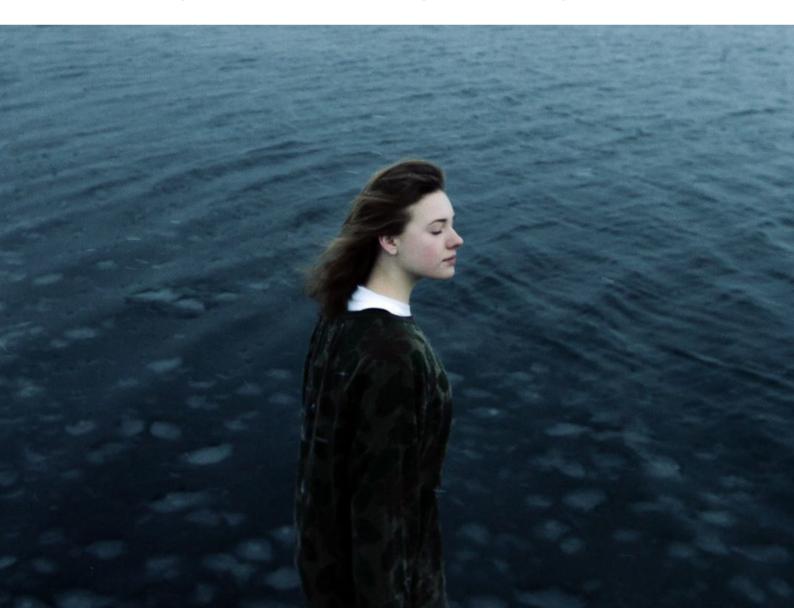


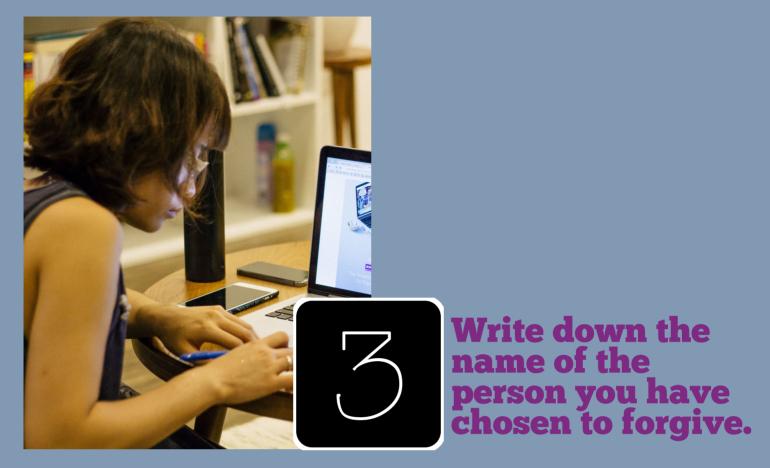
You can't truly forgive until you come to terms with how deeply you've been hurt. With the help of a counselor, minister, or another

professional, you need to seek to understand what happened to you when you were wronged and why it hurts so much.

### Think of times when you've been offered forgiveness from others or from God.

Reflect on things you have done for which you need forgiveness. When you realize you can be forgiven for everything you have ever done, you are then able to begin forgiving people who have hurt you. This doesn't mean that whoever hurt you is somehow justified because everyone messes up. Rather, it allows you to show mercy to others because you realize your own need





Try to understand them. What motivates them? Why would they have hurt you in this way? What is in their past that could have caused them to act as they did? Again, this is not excusing their actions, rather it is helping you see them as a flawed person...a person who shouldn't hold power over you any longer.

Make the decision to surrender.

Let go of your deep desire to get even with the person who has violated you. Come up with a prayer or statement announcing your

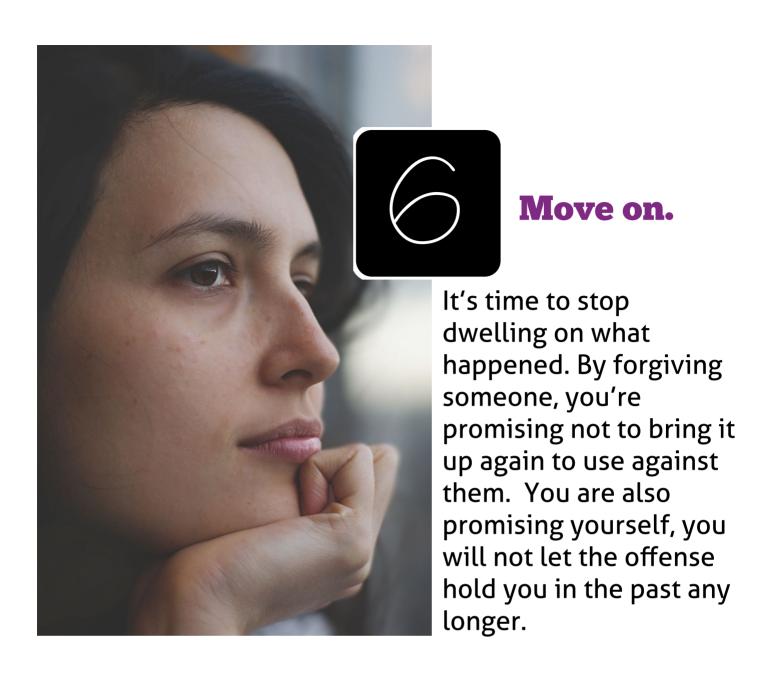


decision. Here's an example: "By an act of my will, and God's power, I give up my rights to get even with (insert name). I make a commitment that when these negative feelings come over me again, I will release them. I won't babysit them. I admit the feelings are real, but I choose not to be controlled by them any longer."



Look at them first, as a tragedy. Realize that some people will never change even after you offer forgiveness. They will remain obnoxious, mean-spirited, uncaring, or unreliable. For your own sake, forgive and change the way you respond to them and quit expecting

them to be different. Maybe you can even pray for them or someday even reach a point where you can wish them well.



If you want help walking through the steps of forgiving someone who has wronged you.

Chat with TheHopeLine anytime!

"Grudges create stress, but forgiveness creates freedom. If you're carrying around a big, invisible scorecard of everyone who has ever wronged you, it's going to create a lot of unnecessary strain and stress in your life. When you choose to forgive and move forward, you're not saying those betrayals didn't hurt; you're just choosing to live in freedom instead of a prison cell of anger." -Dave Willis



### Jon Jorgenson answers the question:

J- | J-

### "How Do You Forgive Someone Who Has Repeatedly Hurt You?"



Have you ever heard the words: "I wished I never had you and I never want to see you again." by a parent or something equally as hurtful from someone close to you? Shayna's mom told her that after she was in a minor fender bender with her boyfriend. Shayna said she was treated more like a slave than a daughter during her 18 years of growing up She explains her struggles to Dawson.



**Dawson McAllister** explains to her what happens if she doesn't forgive her mom:

"If you don't learn how to forgive her, she will be forever controlling you, forever abusing you, she will always be on your mind and your feelings will turn to the toxic. And then you become a different person, you become a bitter, angry, hostile person which will affect who you marry and it'll affect your kids, it'll be passed on to the next generation.

We're not forgiving her for her sake. She may never accept you forgiving her. You forgive her because it's the right thing to do and what it will do for you. Forgiving her takes away your right to get even, which takes away the toxic poison."

### Seeking Forgiveness

Are you the one who has hurt someone and needs to be forgiven?



If you have admitted to yourself that you have caused pain to someone, intentionally or unintentionally, this is an important first step. Many people never attempt to heal broken relationships because they refuse to take responsibility for their own actions.

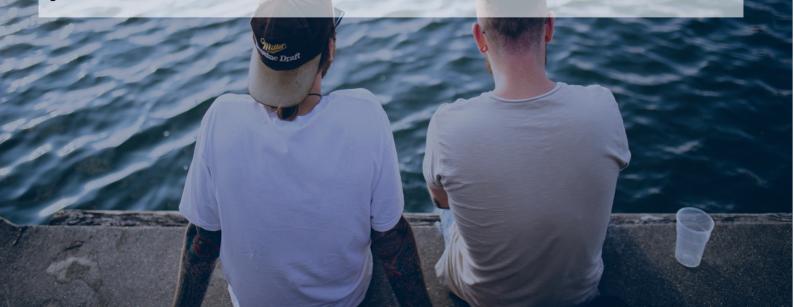
### **5 STEPS** to help you get started on seeking forgiveness:

### Admit to yourself you have hurt another person.

You can't make excuses for your actions. You have to realize that you were in the wrong. Asking someone to forgive you requires humbleness and a willingness to repair the damage you have done.

### Ask for forgiveness from the person you hurt.

Be honest and be genuine. Don't apologize just to make an uncomfortable situation go away. You need to clearly explain what you are sorry for and help them to see that you mean it.





### Let the other person respond to you without getting defensive.

You may need to give the other person time to sort out their feelings. You many need to allow them to get some things off their chest. Don't expect them to immediately jump up with joy (or forgiveness) the moment you apologize. Continue to stay humble. Be patient and kind.





### Show yourself as continually trustworthy.

Avoid slipping back into wrongful behavior. Even if the other person does not forgive you immediately, in time they may come around. Remember, you are responsible for this conflict because of your actions. Demonstrating a new attitude or actions will be the best way to prove you are truly sorry for what happened.

### Whether or not the person you wronged forgives you, learn to forgive yourself.

If you have done everything you can to show yourself as genuinely sorry and you have changed your ways, yet they still won't forgive you, you need to now move forward. You can't control how another person feels and reacts. So it's time for you to forgive yourself. You realize you've made mistakes. You've owned up to them and you've learned from them. Now move on because continually dwelling on past mistakes will make you a miserable, unproductive person. It's important to note that God will forgive you, even if the other person won't. Accept God's forgiveness.

Press play to hear Step 5 said to you out loud. It may help you internalize it more. Remember: FORGIVE YOURSELF!!!

### A Spiritual Perspective on



"The hurt from the harm someone has done you is so big you cannot forgive on your own. I tried to put it aside, to rationalize it, even to blame myself for it. It was poisoning my spirit. Then one night I cried out to God realizing that this burden was too big for me alone. I laid the pain and anger and hurt at His feet, and He lifted the burden from me. It was only then that I could begin breathing in God's love and peace and move on." - Karen

Wherever you are in the process of dealing with the pain that someone else has caused you, God will help you through it. In the Bible it says, "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." (Psalm 34:18)

God will also help you find it within yourself to forgive the person who has wronged you. Forgiving others is often a spiritual exercise.

God can help you forgive because not only has He forgiven tens of billions of people, he can move in your heart to give you the ability to forgive. He helps those who admit their helplessness and need for him. You might say a simple prayer like this: God I admit I can't forgive (insert name) with my own power. Please help me. Help me to understand how much You have forgiven me, so I can forgive the person who has hurt me.

Finally, you can trust God to deal justly with the person who has wronged you. You don't need to take the burden of revenge upon yourself...leave the judgement to God. No one gets away with hurting others without some kind of consequence.

There is nothing quite like living at peace with yourself and others. God asks us to simply do our part: "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

Romans 12:8

### **Verses of Hope for Forgiveness**

If you want to know more about having a relationship with God or have questions about forgiveness, chat online anytime with a HopeCoach at TheHopeLine.

COM.

## Check out our eBook library and here are some of our other eBooks:

Understanding Self-Worth
Understanding Abandonment
Understanding Dating
Understanding Lying
Understanding Anxiety

### We would love your feedback on this eBook about forgiveness. Please comment below.

(We look at every single comment!)

Please rate this eBook on forgiveness.

If you have found this eBook helpful, please help us get our eBooks into the hands of others by donating HERE.

