

Forgiveness:

The Gift We Can Give Ourselves



Do you need to forgive anyone in your life? I do. Does the person deserve forgiveness? Probably not. So why must we forgive him or her?

Being hurt by someone you trust is among the most painful of human experiences. The pain can linger for quite some time, but how long it lasts is up to you. It all depends on whether you can forgive.

Although we often think of forgiveness as something we do for others, it is actually something we do for ourselves.

The choices we have are to:

1. **Forgive, which positively affects our own happiness, well-being, and future relationships.**
2. **Let the hurt and anger inflicted on us continue to dominate our lives.**

Terrible hurts may only take minutes to inflict, but forgiving the person who hurt you often requires some time. Getting over feeling disappointed, hurt, and angry, can take weeks, months, or even years, but every step brings you closer to freedom and happiness.

Different people go through the process of forgiveness at different rates to get to the point where they can truly let go. Some people may never reach the final stages of forgiveness, but even partial forgiveness can be beneficial.

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.

—Gandhi

“Always forgive your enemies. Nothing annoys them as much.”

—Unknown

Anger and hatred take a great deal of energy, eat up your life, and keep you tied to the past. As long as you are angry about something or at someone, the situation or the person is still controlling you. When you forgive, the situation or the person no longer holds you hostage.

Genuine forgiveness is demanding because it requires an inner change of heart toward those who hurt us, not just a thin veneer patched over a strained relationship.

Forgiveness Is Not About:

1. **Excusing the person**
2. **Accepting the person back into your life.**
3. **Saying that what the person did was OK.**
4. **Giving in.**
5. **Letting the other person off the hook.**

Forgiveness Is About:

1. **Empowering you.**
2. **Deciding to no longer be tied to the past.**
3. **Refusing to allow the other person to control your emotions, thoughts, future, and life.**
4. **Letting go.**
5. **Pulling the knife out of your own gut.**

Forgiveness is not a natural process. We don't automatically forgive, and we will probably never forget what the other person did.

“Holding on to anger, resentment, and hurt only gives you tense muscles, a headache, and a sore jaw from clenching your teeth. Forgiveness gives you back the laughter and lightness in your life.”

—Joan Lunden

We often hold a grudge against people who have hurt us, and we tend to want revenge. However, the best way to feel better and possibly the most powerful thing you will ever do is to say the words, “I forgive you.”

We hope that the articles this month at <http://www.melbabenson.com/articles.php> will help you pinpoint the reasons you have for not forgiving and take the necessary steps to forgive others and reclaim your power.

“Reasons for Not Forgiving”

“Steps to Forgiveness”

“Resentment is the cocaine of the emotions. It causes our blood to pump and our energy level to rise. But also like cocaine, it demands increasingly large and more frequent dosages. There is a dangerous point at which anger ceases to be an emotion and becomes a driving force. A person bent on revenge moves unknowingly further and further away from being able to forgive, for to be without the anger is to be without a source of energy. Hatred is the rabid dog that turns on its owner. Revenge is the raging fire that consumes the arsonist. Bitterness is the trap that snares the hunter. And mercy is the choice that can set them all free.

—The Applause of Heaven,
by Max Lucado

Melba W. Benson, Ph.D.

Educator/Coach/Mediator
1007 Bucknell • Arlington, Texas 76012



Metro (817) 265-2820

Fax (817) 265-2571

mwbenson@aol.com

<http://www.melbabenson.com>