



Forgiveness

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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When it comes to forgiveness I think we have it all wrong.

Most people refuse to forgive someone who has hurt them, thinking that it will "serve them right" for what they have done. They believe that the other person deserves to suffer from the broken relationship and sit waiting for them to apologize for all of their "evil doings".

Well, it's actually just the opposite. When you don't forgive someone, you are the one who is actually suffering whether you realize it or not.

Many people become physically or emotionally ill because they are stuck with the toxicity that accompanies not forgiving someone else. In fact, the other person might not even know that they have offended or upset you. Your martyrdom might actually be acted out in vain.

Consider your broken relationships. Are you harbouring resentment that is hurting you? Perhaps you need to meet with the other person and follow the three steps that will all both of you to enjoy freedom:

1. Say "I'm Sorry" - You will notice that many people who are caught for doing inappropriate stand in front of the television cameras to make a statement but never say they are sorry for what they did. It is humbling to say these words but if there is a choice between arrogance and humility, I choose humility every time.

2. Name the Sin - State exactly what you did that caused the problem. Did you lie, gossip, steal, or cheat? Sometimes you may feel that the other person was to blame but it is still a good idea to state "I am sorry for the part that I played in this relationship problem".

3. Ask "Will you forgive me?" - Now it is out of your hands. You have done what was necessary and the other person can decide if they are ready and able to let go of their hurt. If they are, you can both enjoy the freedom that comes with forgiveness. That doesn't mean that you will have a close or ongoing relationship in the future but you can both go on without being weighed down by the past. If they don't forgive you, it is then their problem. You can move on knowing that you have done what you needed to do.

We live in a world where it is often easier to blame others than acknowledge the role we played. No one is comfortable going to someone else to admit that they have been wrong or nasty. It's hard to say that you have done something to hurt the other person but, unless you can and will do this, you are the one who suffers.

And, if someone comes to ask you to forgive them, you have a choice. Forgiveness doesn't mean that you forget. It does mean, however, that you let yourself off the hook because if you refuse to forgive you are the one who ultimately pays the price.

You see, sometimes we are unhealthy not because of disease or illness but because of guilt, anger, hurt and resentment.

Is there someone you need to meet with this week to ask for forgiveness? Have you been holding back on forgiving someone who has asked you to forgive?

Hopefully this is the day that you will get back on track and start enjoying the freedom that healthy choices can offer.

If you are not sure how to begin or need support to do what will help you, book an appointment with a psychologist who will be able to guide you through the process.