

Forgiveness: An Act of Self Love

Randi G. Fine | [Life As A Human](#)

We are all likely to be wronged by others more than a few times in the course of our lifetime. Living in this imperfect world we will surely find ourselves faced with the dilemma of forgiveness over and over.

When someone that matters to us is hurtful we will naturally feel painful emotions such as anger and sadness. We may find ourselves dwelling on the injustice of the situation and holding grudges. Gradually these negative feelings overshadow the positive feelings in our lives, leaving us filled with resentment. That eventually leads to spiritual paralysis and detrimental physical destruction.

The stress of these self-defeating attitudes affects our well being; it may wreak havoc on our immune system, raise our blood pressure, and possibly lead to substance abuse. We may find ourselves suffering from anxiety and depression.

Forgiveness is a hard concept for many of us to grasp. Some think forgiveness is about letting someone who has wronged us off the hook or reinforcing their bad behavior. On the surface it may appear that we are handing someone a "Get out of Jail Free Card," giving them permission to have crossed the line with us. But that is not what forgiveness is about.

Forgiveness does not justify a wrongdoing. We can sincerely forgive someone without excusing their actions. It actually has very little to do with the other person. It is all about letting the burden of our own resentments go.

At best, the emotional energy expended on betrayal should be proportionate to the offense. A problem occurs when it is

not—when we cling tightly to the pain of the past and allow the wrongdoing to define us. By allowing our past to consume us, the bitterness we hold on to will likely infiltrate and impede every new relationship and every new experience. We allow the joy of the present to pass us by while remaining stuck in resentments we have about the past.

Forgiveness is a promise we make to ourselves to change our life. It is about releasing ourselves from the grip that hinders our well-being—the negative hold we have essentially allowed the other person to have over us.

The decision to forgive is one that requires the weighing of issues. It is often not easily done. It becomes particularly challenging when the wrongdoer does not offer a sincere apology or show heartfelt remorse for his actions, or when he continually reoffends. It is difficult when we are not given the assurance that this will never happen again.

Occasionally an offender will make forgiveness easy for us but that is not the norm. People have the tendency to think they are right and are often not willing to look at the situation any other way. Sometimes they come around, sometimes they do not. Some people will apologize, some will not.

Sometimes apologies are offered but are not sincere. An apology is difficult to swallow when it is offered and then canceled out with the word, “but.” And there are times when promises to do better in the future are flimsy—when we are told that the other person “will try to do better” instead of assuring us that they are doing better.

[Read the full post here.](#)