

FORGIVENESS EXERCISES

First things first, you must get control of your mind, master your mind so to speak.

The only thing that you have any control of is your current thoughts.

There's nothing you can do about your past thoughts, they're done, they're over with, there's nothing that you can do about them, except live out the experiences that they have caused.

Your thoughts right now, your current thinking is totally under your control.

Let's use a child for example. If you have a child that's used to going to bed late, say 11:00 PM and you decide that you now want this child to go to bed at 8:00 PM every single night what do you think the first night will be like? The child is going to rebel against the new rule and might kick and scream and do his best to stay out of bed. If you give in at this time, the child wins and will try to control you forever. You also teach the child that the more they act out the easier it is to control you.

However, if you remain calm and stick to your decision and firmly insist that this is the new bedtime, that rebellious child starts to realize that you have made a decision, and you aren't budging. We aren't screaming and yelling at that child, we're not forcing them into their room, we are simply remaining calm and sticking to our decision of an 8:00 PM bedtime. In about two or three nights the new routine will start to be established.

The mind is the same way. Of course the mind is going to rebel at first, it does not want to be retrained. But you're in control and if you stay focused and firm, and in a relaxed state, in a very short time the new way of thinking will be established. You're going to feel so good and realize that you're not a helpless victim of your own thoughts but rather the master of your own mind.

Exercise 1

Take a deep breath and let all the tension in your body go. Relax your jaw, your face, your forehead, relax your neck and your shoulders. Let your tongue and your throat relax. Let your back and your abdomen and your pelvis relax. Breathe peacefully as you relax your legs and your feet.

Do you notice a big change in your body since you began? Notice how much you hold on. If you're doing it with your body, you are doing this with your mind.

In this relaxed comfortable position say to yourself:

“I am willing to let go. I release. I let go. I release all tension. I release all fear. I release all anger. I release all guilt. And release all sadness. I let go of all old limitations. I let go, and I am at peace. I am at peace with myself. I am at peace with the process of life. I am safe.”

Go over this exercise two- or three-times. Feel the ease of letting go. Use this whenever you feel thoughts of difficulty coming up. It takes little practice for the routine become part of you. When your affirmations take hold, you become open and receptive to them. There is no need to struggle, stress, or strain, just relax and think the appropriate thoughts, “yes, this is easy.”

Exercise 2

Somatic release

Sometimes we need to have a physical releasing of certain emotions. Yes, we can do emotion code and we can release trapped emotions but sometimes we must physically get it out.

Screaming in the car with the windows all rolled up on a remote side street can be very releasing if we have been stifling our verbal expression.

Hitting a pillow or the bed is a harmless way to release pent up anger.

If you are an active person, running, playing tennis or any other sport is a good way to get physical energy out. But be intentional and make that activity about the emotion release.

Example: A while ago I had pain in my shoulder for a day or two, I realized that something was happening there because logically there was no reason for me to have pain in that area. So I thought about it and asked myself, “What’s happening here? What am I feeling?”

The pain was like a burning sensation, and it felt like anger: if you're not sure what emotion the pain is linked to we can have a conversation about what you're experiencing.

I couldn't figure out why I was angry, so I said, let's just see if we can find out and started hitting a pillow. After about 12 hits I realized exactly why I was angry. So, I hit the pillows even harder and yelled and released the emotions from my body and when I got through I felt much better and the next day my shoulder pain was gone.

Exercise three

Letting go of the past

Here are some reasons that people say the past holds them back:

They cannot possibly enjoy today because of something that happened in the past.

Because they did not do something or do it in a certain way in the past they cannot live a full life today.

Because they no longer have something they had in the past they cannot enjoy today

Because they were hurt in the past, they will not accept love now.

Because something unpleasant happened when they did something once, they are sure it will happen again today.

Because they became angry over a situation in the past they hold on to self-righteousness.

Because of some very old experience where they were treated badly, they will never forgive and forget.

Here are some specific examples:

Because I did not get invited to the high school prom I cannot enjoy life today. Because I did poorly at my first audition, I will be terrified of auditions forever.

Because I am no longer married, I cannot live a full life today.

Because I was hurt by a remark once, I will never trust anyone again.

Because I stole something once, I must punish myself forever.

Because I was poor as a child, I will never get anywhere.

What we often don't realize is that holding on to the past no matter how hurtful or how awful it was, is only hurting us, not them. They don't really care and they're not even aware that you're hurting over it. The past is over and done, it cannot be changed.

We can only experience the present moment. Even when we think about the past, we are experiencing our memory of it in this moment and losing the real experience of this moment in the process.

Exercise: Think back to 3rd grade. Do you remember an outfit that you used to wear in 3rd grade? Do you remember any emotional attachment to that outfit? No. It's just a memory. All our memories can be just like that, even ones that were painful in the moment in our past.

Let us clean up our minds in the past and release our emotional attachment to it. Allow your memories to be just memories. As we let go, we become free to use all our mental capacity to enjoy this present moment and create a great future.

Get your journal out and make a list of all the things you're willing to let go of.

- How willing are you to do this? Notice your reactions.
- What will you have to do to let these things go?
- How willing are you to do so?
- What is your resistance level?

Exercise 4

Forgiveness

Forgiveness of ourselves and of others releases us from the past. Forgiveness is the answer to almost everything. When we're stuck it usually means that there is more forgiving to be done. When we do not flow freely with life in the present moment it usually means we're holding onto a past moment. These moments are usually regret, sadness, hurt, fear, or guilt, blame, anger, resentment, and sometimes even the desire for revenge. Each one of these states come from a space of unforgiveness, a refusal to let go and to come into the present moment.

Love is always the answer to healing of any sort. And the pathway to love is forgiveness. Forgiveness dissolves resentment there are several ways in which we can approach this.

Exercise:

Dissolving resentment

There's an old Emmett Fox exercise for dissolving resentment that always works. He recommends that you sit quietly, close your eyes, and allow your mind and body to relax. Then, imagine yourself sitting in a darkened theater, and in front of you is a small stage. On that stage place the person you resent the most. It could be someone in the past or present, living or dead. When you see this person clearly, visualize good things happening

to this person----things that would be meaningful to him or her see him or her smiling and happy.

Hold this image for a few minutes, then let it fade away.

I like to add another step. As this person leaves the stage, put yourself up there. See good things happening to you. See yourself smiling and happy. Be aware that the abundance of the universe is available to all of us.

The above exercise dissolves resentment that most of us carry. For some of us it will be difficult to do but each time you do it will get a little easier and easier, you may get many different people, or you may get the same person over and over. Do it once a day for a month and notice how much lighter you feel.

Exercise 5

Revenge

if you're headed down the spiritual pathway you already know the importance of forgiveness. But for some of us there's a step that's necessary before we can totally forgive. Sometimes the child in us needs to have revenge before it is free to forgive and for that this exercise is very helpful.

Close your eyes sit quietly and peacefully.

Think of the people who are hardest to forgive.

- What would you really like to do to them?
- What do they need to do to get your forgiveness? Imagine that happening now. Get into the details.

When you feel complete let it be over forever. Usually at this point you should feel lighter and it should be easier to think about forgiveness. To indulge this every day would not be good for you so do it once.

Exercise 6

Forgiveness pt 2

now that you're ready to forgive you can do this exercise with a partner you can do it out loud or you can do it alone.

Again, sit quietly with your eyes closed and say: "The person I need to forgive is _____ and I forgive you for _____"

Do this over and over. You will have many things to forgive some for and only one or two to forgive others for. If you have someone sitting with you let them say to you, "Thank you I set you free now".

When you have cleared as much as you can for now turn your attention to yourself. Say out loud to yourself, "I forgive myself for_____."

Do this for another 5 minutes or so. These are powerful exercises and good to do at least once a week to clear out any remaining rubbish. Some experiences are easy to let go and some we must chip away at until one day they're gone.

Exercise 7

Little Child

Close your eyes and sit quietly. Visualize yourself as a little child, five or six maybe. Look deep into this child's eyes and see the longing that is there. There is only one thing that this little child wants from you, and that is love. So, reach out your arms and embrace this child. Hold it with love and tenderness. Tell it how much you love it; how much you care for them. Admire everything about this child and say that it's OK to make mistakes while learning. Promise that you will always be there no matter what period now let this little child get very small, until it is just the size to fit into your heart. Put it there so whenever you look down you can see this little face looking up at you, and you can give it lots of love.

Now visualize your mother as a little girl of four or five, frightened and looking for love and not knowing where to find it. Reach out your arms and hold this little girl and let her know how much you love her, how much you care period let her know she can rely on you to always be there, no matter what. When she quiets down and begins to feel safe, let her get very small just the size to fit into your heart. Put her there with your own little child. Let them give each other lots of love.

Now imagine your father as a little boy of three or four frightened, crying, and looking for love. See the tears rolling down his little face when he doesn't know where to turn. You have become good at comforting frightened little children, so reach out your arms and hold his trembling little body. Comfort him. Let him feel how much you love him. Let him feel that you will always be there for him. When his tears dry and you feel the love and peace in his little body, let him get very small, just the size to fit into your heart. Put him there so there are three little children that can give each other lots of love and you can love them all.

Now there is so much love in your heart that you could heal the entire planet. But for now let us use this love to heal you. Feel a warmth beginning to glow in your heart center, a

softness, a gentleness let this feeling begin to change the way you think and talk about yourself.