



## Top 10 Takeaway's in Forgiveness

Forgiving others, or ourselves, is some of the toughest work we can ever do as a human. We have a world of people around us (maybe us?) who still harbor the poison of unforgiveness. We drink the poison, and hope the other person dies. Let's look at some ways to make progress in forgiveness!

By the way, let's look at what forgiveness is for just a moment. **What is Forgiveness?**

A definition I like comes from the philosopher Joanna North of Great Britain: **"When unjustly hurt by another, we forgive when we overcome the resentment toward the offender, not be denying our right to the resentment but instead by trying to offer the wrongdoer compassion, benevolence, and love; as we give these, we as forgivers realize that the offender does not necessarily have a right to these gifts"**. (From the book *Forgiveness is a Choice*, by Robert Enright)

### 1. Enter the Healing Room:

- Commit to wanting to figure out how to forgive.
- Enlist the gracious help of Jesus, who wants to help us. **(See Matthew 11:28-30 and Psalm 91:1-16)**
- Study every Bible Scripture related to the word forgiveness. How do these verses relate to your personal situation? **(See Matthew 5:43-48 about Loving our Enemies.)**
- Find a good mentor, who themselves have encountered forgiveness issues in their own lives.
- Read good books on forgiveness: **Forgiveness is a Choice, by Robert Enright; Let it Go by TD Jakes (workbook too!)**

### 2. Review what happened to cause pain:

- What caused you so much pain, injury, or woundedness?
- Write down all the details of what happened. Get it ALL on the paper in front of you.
- Be willing to be honest with yourself. Did you overreact to harm? Was it really intended for you? Were you too "thin skinned?" Did you take things too personally?
- Did you fan the flame of hostility and animosity due to your own actions or words?

**3. Why did the harmers do what they did? Was it:**

- Them lashing out due to their own unresolved pain?
- Them not having any clue about what they were doing? **(See Luke 23:34)**
- Them being caught up in the “ways of the world”, totally oblivious to their own words or actions, and the impact they had on others? **(See Galatians 5:19-21)**
- Their own narcissistic selfishness, with no regard for anyone except themselves?

**4. How do we feel about what happened? Are we:**

- Still very angry? **(See James 1:19-21)**
- Seeking Revenge on our own terms? **(See Matthew 5:38-42)**
- Filled with hopelessness, despair, dismay, or even depression?
- Still wanting to judge and condemn the people who hurt us? **(See Matthew 7:1-5)**
- Filled with anxiety, aggravations and regular agitation?
- Stuck in profound sadness, and with a question: **How could all this have happened to me?**
- Stuck in bitterness and resentments toward the person/people who hurt us? **(See Hebrews 12:15)**

**5. How are we acting out? How are we behaving? Are we:**

- Drinking alcohol too much to numb our own pain?
- Taking drugs, to get away from the pain we feel?
- Overeating, assuming that this will help us to recover?
- Over spending on credit cards, to acquire material goods we don’t need, as a means of wanting to feel better?
- Responding to others in a surly, vicious, or nasty tone--- simply because our Pain is not resolved, and we feel justified in letting others have it?
- Going ballistic over minor life events?

**6. Realizations?**

- We come to realize that life is way too short to be harboring grudges, resentments, and bitterness toward others.
- We realize that we are destroying ourselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- We notice that past events take too much space in our minds, and we replay our grievance story way too much.
- We decide that enough is enough. We are just sick and tired of being sick and tired. We know something HAS TO CHANGE. We come to our senses! **(See Luke 15:11-32)**
- We ask ourselves, how do I move on from the ugly ravages of unforgiveness?

**7. What's in the way of wanting to forgive?**

- Still waiting for an apology? How about the \$ owed?
- What they did was unforgiveable!
- I'll wait for them to reach out to me... I was right, they were wrong. Our pride in the way?
- I can't imagine ever wanting to be around this person ever again. Why bother trying to reconcile?
- We want revenge on our terms!
- We like the comfort zone of being a victim, our own little Pity Party?
- We blame God, asking--- "Where were YOU when all this was happening?"
- Our self-talk... I will never forgive this person--- not on my watch!

**8. Get rid of all that anger!**

- Realize and admit to how angry we really are. Be honest with ourselves!
- Pray for a forgiving heart--- the heart of Jesus for others. **(See John 8:1-11)**
- Pray for our harmers. Understand their situation, and what has caused them to act badly.
- Ramp up Mercy, Compassion and Empathy for the PERPS. **(See James 2:13)**
- Rely on the Holy Scriptures to help us to RELEASE all our anger! **(See Ephesians 4:31-32)**
- We capture our angry thoughts, and head them off quickly. **(See 2 Corinthians 10:3-6)**
- Use the Vent Letter + method, suggested in the Workbook on pages \_\_\_\_

**9. Reconcile in person, if appropriate**

- Arrange a meeting or a phone call with the person who harmed us.
- Pray first before meeting, so that we can remain calm, and unemotional.
- Clearly lay out your perspectives of hurts, to the person who harmed you.
- Apologize, if necessary, for how you contributed to the problem. Seek their forgiveness. Some of the most powerful words we can ever say are: "I owe you an apology. Could you forgive me?"
- Realize that some people will never admit to any wrongdoing. We are called to Forgive them anyway.
- Realize that some people are and will be incompatible with us. We can choose to (or not) maintain a relationship with these people. It's our choice!

**10. See others through the Eyes of Christ**

- Reflect on how Jesus sees all humans. Can we see others as He sees them?
- Judge Not! Let God do all the judging. All of us will be held accountable before God.
- Take the Log out of our own eye. We ARE sinners as well! **(See Matthew 7:1-5)**
- Forgive, forgive, forgive--- 7x70 forgiveness. **(See Matthew 18:21-22)**
- Become a Prayer Commando, on behalf of others. Pray and intercede to God on behalf of the very people who caused us so much anguish. This requires the Supernatural Graces of our Lord Jesus, to help us.
- **Colossians 3:12-15**--- the quintessential Scripture on our call to forgive. We are to **clothe ourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.**