



## \_\_\_\_\_ Inspires: Step #1-Forgiveness

*Inspires (def. To fill (someone) with the urge or ability to do or feel something)*

### Forgiveness is:

- The #1 step to healing as you **acknowledge harm** and make an active decision to **choose freedom** and **move forward with your life**.
- **For you!**
- Not an **occasional act**, it is a **constant attitude** (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.)

### Why you should forgive:

- **Self: To escape the prison of shame and guilt** that defines you by your mistakes and leaves little to no room for **redemption**
- Helps you **release a victim mentality**
- **Gandhi** once said "The weak can never forgive. **Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.**" It takes a strong person to face pain head-on, forgive, and release it.
- **bell hooks:** "For me, **forgiveness and compassion** are always linked: how do we hold people accountable for wrongdoing and yet at the same time **remain in touch with their humanity enough to believe in their capacity to be transformed?**"

**Exercise:** Draw a picture of how unforgiveness currently shows up in your life. Who do you need to forgive? Is there anyone you need to seek forgiveness from? What are some consequences of unforgiveness in your life?

*(Examples: prison, a rose with thorns, a house on a shaky foundation, natural hair "in transition" etc.)*



**Write a letter to yourself:**

Imagine the **harm you may have done to others** (parents, friends, significant others, etc.) and/or to yourself. Write a letter forgiving yourself.

OR

Imagine the **harm others** (parents, friends, significant others, etc.) **have done to you**. Write a letter forgiving them.