The Grievance Story

Dr. Fred Luskin, author of, “forgive for good”, is the leading expert in the field of forgiveness research. His research included Catholic and Protestant men and women who lost a family member in the wars in Northern Ireland. Some people’s parents had been murdered others had lost brothers or sisters and still others have lost a child. Yet at the end of one week of forgiveness training the victims were less depressed, more physically healthy and energetic, and less hurt by their loss. These folks began their healing by identifying and admitting their grievance story.

A grievance begins when something happened that we did not want to happen. Or alternatively, something we really wanted did not happen. Think for a minute of a resentment or grudge you’re holding against someone. Or some guilt you have over something you did or did not do.

Write down or think about a very brief summary of the experience. Do you think about this painful situation more than you think about the good things in your life?

1. When you think about the situation do you become physically or emotionally uncomfortable?
2. Do you think about this situation with the same old repetitive thoughts?
3. Do you repeat the story over and over in your mind or to others?

If you answered yes to any of these four questions you have likely formed a grievance that is renting too much space in your mind. The basis of any grievance that something painful happen to you and at the time you did not have the skills to manage your emotional pain.

To form a grievance that interfered with your life, you have done the following three things:

1. Took an offense too personally.
2. Blamed the offender for how you feel.
3. Created a grievance story.

Being hurt is not a sign of weakness, stupidity, or lack of self-esteem. It simply means that we lack training in how to do things differently. Feeling hurt is a normal and difficult aspect of all of our lives, and almost everyone creates grievances at some point.

Finding the impersonal:

Painful experiences are common.

 It is a fact of life that nothing has happened to you is unique.

Most offenses are committed without the intention of hurting anyone personally.

 When we fail to acknowledge the impersonal aspect, we set the stage for creating a grievance.

Each offense carries the personal and the impersonal within it.

 When we fail to acknowledge the impersonal aspect, we set the stage for creating a grievance. [[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Forgive for Good. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)