

6 Days in the Garden of Forgiveness

MENTORING YOU THROUGH THE *5 STEPS* OF FORGIVENESS

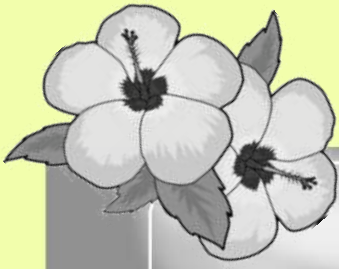


To forgive

Is to set a prisoner
free and discover that
the prisoner was you.

LEWIS B SMEDES





You can't forgive

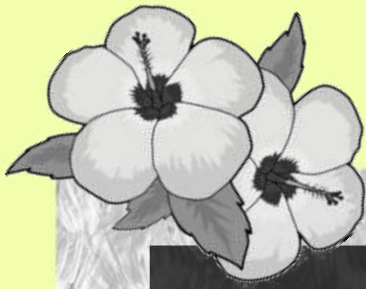
without loving. And I don't mean sentimentality. I don't mean mush. I mean having enough courage to stand up and say, 'I forgive. I'm finished with it.'

MAYA ANGELOU



WHY FORGIVE?

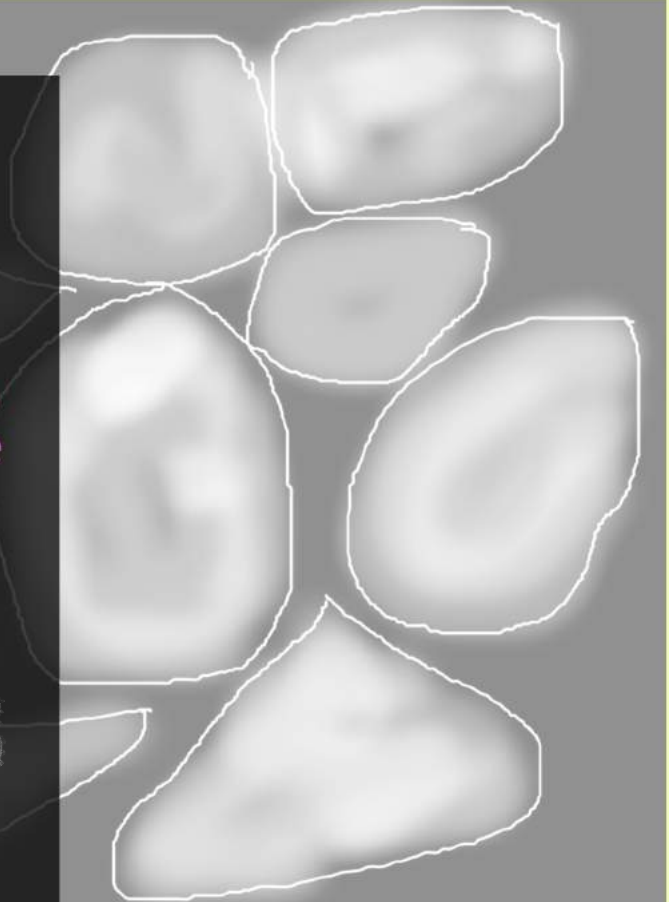
Because the pain of unforgiveness can be unbearable and it holds us back. It robs us of the peace we so deeply yearn for. It creeps into the relationships that we want to nurture, putting us on guard in subtle and covert ways. We're afraid that we will be hurt again, by someone else, for as long as our hurt burns silently within us.



It's not

an easy journey, to get to a place where you forgive people. But it is such a powerful place, because it frees you.

TYLER PERRY



WHAT DOES FORGIVENESS OFFER US?

Freedom. Freedom from our hurts. Freedom to love without fear.

It allows the power of Love to flow freely through us and in us once more. We reclaim the power that our unforgiving held back from us. We reclaim the creative energy that unforgiving withheld from us.



Take forgiveness

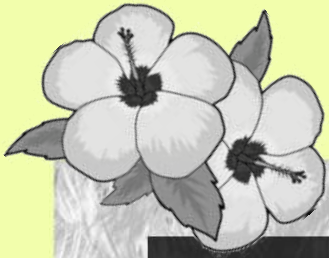
slowly. Don't blame
yourself for being slow.
Peace will come.

YOKO ONO



HOW DO WE DO FORGIVENESS?

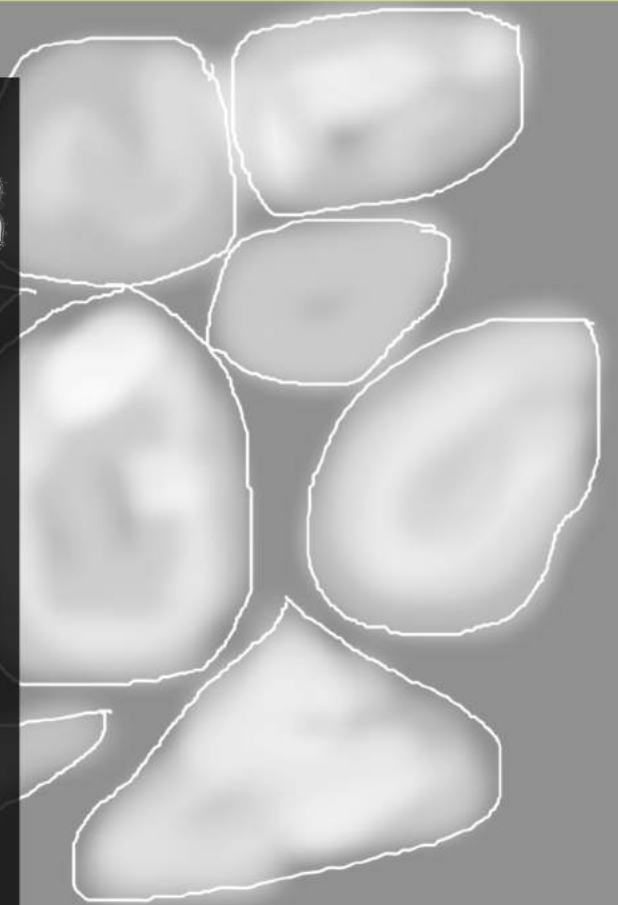
Slowly. We mustn't hurry it. We have been hurt grievously. Or we have hurt another grievously. The emotions around our hurts are raw. Our guilt haunts without shedding light. We need to let our hurts, our attacks and defenses reveal themselves safely. It may take time for us to accept fully even when we don't understand fully. Or when the other hasn't said sorry or is truly sorry.



Forgiveness

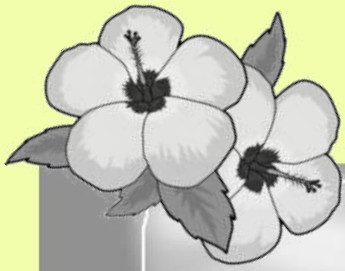
does not mean ignoring what has been done or putting a false label on an evil act. It means, rather, that the evil act no longer remains as a barrier to the relationship. Forgiveness is a catalyst creating the atmosphere necessary for a fresh start and a new beginning.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR



WHAT DOES FORGIVENESS REQUIRE?

Honesty. And courage. To acknowledge what was done. No whitewashing. No excusing. No blaming. Simply calling it as it is. And then, awful as the act may have been, willful as the one who caused hurt may have been, we come to a point where we say, *'This is not going to stand in the way of our relationship. And I only intend to relate with you peacefully.'*



Forgiveness

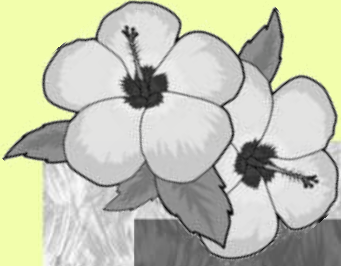
is a strange thing. It can sometimes be easier to forgive our enemies than our friends. It can be hardest of all to forgive people we love.

FRED ROGERS



WHY DO WE FIND IT HARDEST TO FORGIVE THOSE WE LOVE THE MOST?

Actually, this is when we might realize to our utter dismay that our 'love' has been conditional. Understandable of course. After all, haven't we trusted so completely? Haven't we allowed an intimacy as with no other? Yet, we have only trusted and allowed *on condition that...* But...now, we have a chance to love, perhaps for the first time, unconditionally. Hard, yes. But oh so liberating!



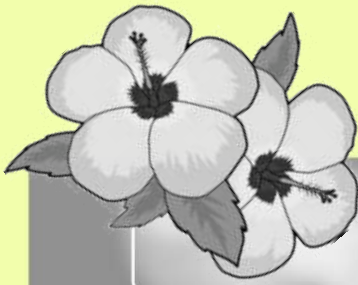
As I walked out
the door toward the gate
that would lead to my
freedom, I knew if I didn't
leave my bitterness and
hatred behind, I'd still be
in prison.

NELSON MANDELA



WHAT WILL FORGIVENESS LEAVE BEHIND?

Our anger. Our need for 'justice' which often really means revenge exacted in some form of punishment. Our bitterness. Our resentment. Our self-pity. Our need for acknowledgment of our hurt. Our need for an apology. Our need for proof of repentance. Not easy but it's the only way we will reopen the gates of peace and joy within us.



Forgiveness

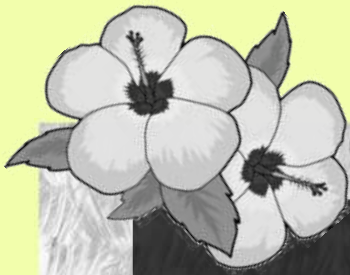
is the needle that knows
how to mend.

JEWEL



HOW SHALL WE MEND OUR BROKENNESS?

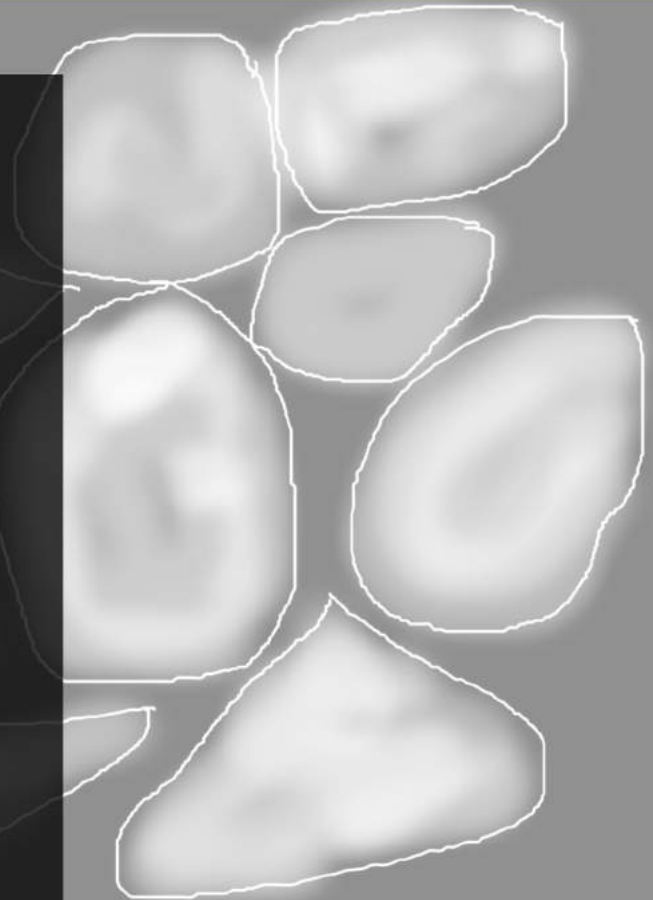
With Love. Forgiveness allows love to flow through us once again, freely, tenderly, nourishingly, through our fragile being, slowly piecing together the parts of us that had felt damaged, scattered, uncared for. And we realize that it was only our Ego that was bruised, broken and had self-banished. We discover that, in truth, we have only ever been the ocean of Love.



Let's shake free

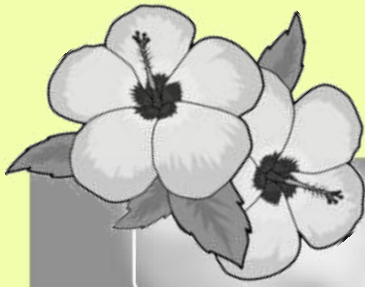
this gravity of judgment
And fly high on the wings
of forgiveness.

INDIA. ARIE



AND WHAT ABOUT JUDGMENT?

Oh yes, that noble, righteous self we hold in high esteem, over and above ourselves and others. We will learn that judgment is not our friend. That it sows seeds of discontent and conflict. We will learn that LOVE, that which is supreme, has no need to judge. Yet, its knowing is infinite and its response perfect. Always.



*Feeling
compassion*



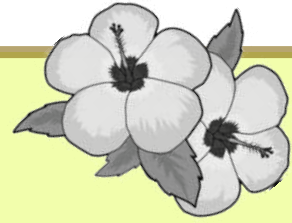
for ourselves in no way releases us from responsibility for our actions. Rather, it releases us from the self-hatred that prevents us from responding to our life with clarity and balance.

TARA BRACH

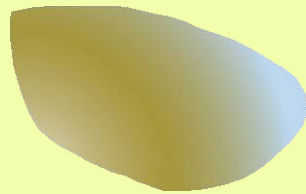
AND MYSELF. DO I DESERVE FORGIVENESS?

When you wake up to the truth that you have been created in the very image and likeness of God which is Love, you will see that there is in fact, no 'one' to forgive, other than a self that pretends to be you. To forgive then, is to wake up to the truth of who you are. It is this truth that sets you free from the self-loathing and guilt and showers grace upon you. Grace that allows you to be the child of God, of Love that you truly are. No more false self!

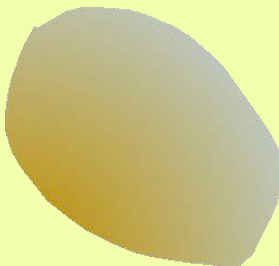
The 5 steps of Forgiveness



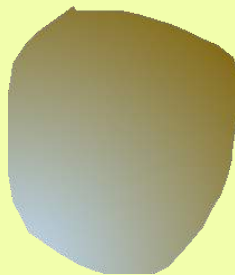
STEP ONE
Releasing the Role



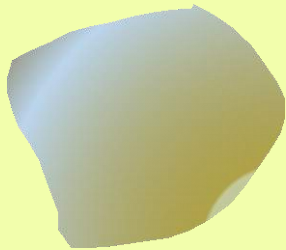
STEP TWO
Uncompromising honesty



STEP THREE
The other



STEP FOUR
Love's perspective



STEP FIVE
In union



Forgiveness in Relationships

It's not fair that I have to change and take the step toward reconciliation.

I don't think I even want to do this. It's not right. It's just not right.

I can't and won't force myself to forgive

I just want to forget about it and be left in peace.

OK, I'll forgive but don't expect me to forget. I don't want to forget!

I feel revenge and rage in me especially whenever I see him. I really want to forgive and forget but how can I achieve this?

Why should we forgive those who hurt us on purpose? Don't!

I think forgiveness is a daily struggle, depending on the depth of the offense

Forgiving someone does not cancel out the consequences of their actions.

I've come to terms with the fact that I will never forgive. I'm at peace with that.

Anyone who's capable of doing something like that is inhuman. Forgiveness would mean nothing to them. It means nothing to me either.

How can you forgive these people when they don't even acknowledge their wrongdoing?

Yes, I'm not perfect. But he's let his family badmouth me too many times. I am a human being. I have my limits. I am tired of being treated like I'm nothing.

SO, I FORGIVE AND THEY GET TO CONTINUE BEHAVING THE SAME WAY? I DON'T THINK SO!

I just think people don't forgive because of pride, they think that their status is so important than forgiving, but we are not the same, some can forgive now and others it takes a long time to heal that scar. they want to forget about it and be left in peace.

Forgiving of course doesn't mean it's "ok" to re-offend, but I do believe forgiving is to also let go of the charges too from you. Otherwise, that's like saying God will punish you anyway when you die.

Dear fellow traveler

What you've just read above are real comments from real people. I think you'll sense the realness of these comments because, sadly, at least some of them ring true for you.

I wish I could tell you that there's a magic pill you could take to forgive someone who has hurt you (and perhaps continues to hurt you) and you'll be totally fine from here on. Then again, perhaps you might prefer a magic pill that the other person could take that would turn them into the person you'd like them to be :).

Forgive me, but it does help to have a bit of humour around this most serious and often painful subject.

Dear fellow traveler, can I share something I've come to realize from my personal journey in forgiveness and that of people I've worked with? It's this:

The pain of our hurt can often hide the pain of our unforgiving.

Most of us will focus on the first pain - the pain of our hurt. It's the obvious one. What we don't realize is that, mixed in with that pain is the pain of our unforgiving. But what we'll discover, if we go on this journey, is that by addressing the pain of our unforgiving, we will reopen the gates of love, love which is capable of healing ALL hurts. Nothing else will.

*We believe that our greatest pain comes from not being loved. How wrong we are!
Our greatest pain comes from withholding love!*

Now, here's another thing that I'd like you to know:

You're not a bad person if you choose not to forgive.

That's right. You're not a bad person if you choose not to forgive but...it's quite possible that you'll feel unhappy, unfulfilled, constrained, frustrated, angry, mean-spirited, defensive, and even bitter. And not just occasionally but over sustained periods of time...weeks, months and even years. For some people, it might even be a lifetime.

Dear fellow traveler, I'd like you to consider the following question:

Who would you be if you weren't holding the hurt that you currently have in a particular relationship?

Please take some time to answer the question sincerely. And please allow your heart to speak. Because I guarantee that if you do, you're going to touch a place within you that you've been keeping under lock and key. Keeping safe from further hurt. At least, that's your reasoning.

But you know as well as I do that far from being safe, that is the most vulnerable part of you. The part that bruises and bleeds so easily. It doesn't take much - a memory, a sound, the sound of their voice, a smell, a thought, a certain song, something someone says no matter how unrelated...this hurt has never really had a chance to heal and you suffer it more than you care to admit.

Admitting would be yet another pain, another cause for anger, despair, frustration, failure, indignation...Best to forget. Let sleeping dogs lie. Trouble is, they don't lie. Because they're not sleeping! They're wide awake. Barking and howling endlessly no matter how hard you try to silence them with your noble intentions or busyness or distractions or avoidance or prayers...It seems like you're always having to be one step ahead of the game but it's hard to maintain that pace without getting tired, worn down, and yes, bitter.

Let me ask it again.

Who would you be if you were not holding the hurt that you currently have in a particular relationship?

Would you dare to find out? Would you be willing to risk it? I'm not going to make you grand promises. But I will tell you this from my own experience and from the experiences of those who have been willing to risk it, scared and reluctant as they may have been:

It was so worth it.

You see, when the gates of forgiveness are finally unlocked, love flows freely again, bursting with the currents of peace, joy, creative energy, abundance, compassion, health, vitality...

We believe that our greatest pain comes from not being loved, from being hurt. How wrong we are! Our greatest pain comes from withholding love!

If you're willing, let's walk together!

Lucy

The Mentoring Journey

SIGN UP FOR
6 DAYS IN THE
GARDEN OF FORGIVENESS



Lucy Lopez

getenlightenedtoday.com



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In our journey together...

Let us seek to use each other's experiences as fertile material for reflection.

Let us honour each other's lived experiences and enquire into the ideas, beliefs, and values that have informed these experiences.

As your mentor, I will take responsibility for guiding you through a process that I have used successfully for myself and others. It is my sincere intention to offer this guidance in a loving i.e. non-judging and deeply respectful way.

I also recognize that the answers and the insights to *your* situation lie within *you*, not me. My job then is to guide you through a process that helps you uncover those answers and insights.

For me, a successful mentoring partnership is one in which we are both enriched, inspired, encouraged and empowered.

As a mentor, I am guided by the

Prayer of St Francis:

*Make me a channel of peace
Where there is hatred, let me bring love
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, true faith*

*Grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul*

*Make me a channel of peace
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving to all that we receive
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.*

Let us welcome each other into the mentoring journey!

Lucy