

Forgiveness, Healing, and Wellness

By Laura Silva Quesada

Every New Year brings with it the hope for a new start and practicing forgiveness may be the action to take for acquiring that fresh start this year.

Forgiveness is the ability to allow, and deal with error, and weakness in yourself and others. It is a way to give up resentment, and work through offenses resourcefully. Forgiveness has the power to heal every part of your being; spirit, mind, body, and emotions. Through the healing energy of forgiveness, your spirit finds compassion, your mind thinks more positively, your body can heal faster, and your emotions are free to experience joy.

Forgiveness has the potential of soothing uncomfortable feelings between people, reuniting broken relationships, creating new relationships and giving you the necessary strength to move forward in a healthy manner. Forgiveness can be experienced as warm, releasing, and very empowering, and something that comes out of your own free will. No one can force you to forgive anyone, not even yourself, and the energy involved in forgiving is the same energy involved in being forgiven. We often want forgiveness, yet refuse to forgive others. If we cannot forgive others, then we cannot expect others to forgive us.

Not forgiving is costly, and painful. Not forgiving feeds negative energies that lead to grudges, hatred, revenge, and illness. It allows the hooks of those past actions to stay hooked deep within us, holding us back from living fully, and completely. You have nothing to lose, and everything to gain by forgiving.

Forgiving offenses can be difficult to do, yet, we must for our own wellbeing. Offenses are negative, and any negative experience, or memory has the potential of weakening the immune system in much

the same way as chronic stress, and more so if the experience was traumatic.

On a more personal level, when *we* offend, we experience guilt. Guilt is often experienced when you have done something you “should” not have done, or did not do something you “should” have done, and now you are suffering, or someone else is suffering because of that. The presence of guilt can break anyone’s spirit, mind and body through time, and cause high levels of stress. The best cure for guilt is forgiveness.

Holding on to resentment due to someone else’s offenses can also lead to similar negative effects on the body. The automatic release of unnecessary chemistry into your system every time you think of the offense can have a damaging effect on your health through time. Let go of the anger, and resentment. Remember, it is the forgiver that is freed in forgiving.

Considerations for forgiving others:

- Find the strength to rise above negative energies like anger, fear, resentment, hatred, vengeance, finger-pointing, suspicion, bitterness, and condemnation.
- Remind yourself not to get caught up in the negativity, and do not get even with the offender. Do not stoop to that level.
- Consider the offenders perspective, and realize that people are doing the best they know how according to the resources, tools, and wisdom they have. You may have reacted the same way in a similar circumstance.
- Accept the fact that the action is past, and that chapter of your life is closed. For the sake of your future you must let go of the past, become wiser, and move forward. Forgiveness is

necessary if you ever plan to live fully and happily again.

- Separate the offense from the offender, and in your heart, and soul, release the offender, let him/her go. It is recommended that you do this part while in a meditative state.

While meditating, do the following:

1. Imagine the offender standing in front of you.
2. Tell the offender how the offense affected you, and the pain it has caused.
3. Tell the offender that you understand he/she was doing the best they knew how, and that you are now ready to release it to the past where it belongs.
4. Imagine severing an imaginary connection between you, and the offender, or removing the imaginary hooks from deep within you, and as you do, say "I forgive you."
5. Imagine the offender floating quickly away, like a balloon floating high into the sky until it completely disappears.

Considerations for forgiving self:

There may be a need to forgive yourself. Having done something you "should not" have done, or not having done something you "should have" done can be a source of tremendous stress. Through time it can weaken your immune system, and lead you to illness.

While meditating, do the following:

1. Imagine standing in front of yourself, or the person(s) who you have offended.
2. Tell them that you feel deep repentance for your past action(s) (Specify the offense), and that you understand how they have suffered because of what you did. Tell them that you will never behave in that way every again. Let them know

that you were doing the best you knew how under those circumstances, and that you have learned, and grown from that experience.

3. Let the person(s) know that you are deeply sorry for the hurt you have caused him/her. Mentally say to them "I am sorry for _____, and ask them for forgiveness. Let them know that you will make it up to them if you can. Mentally say this in a genuine, heartfelt manner.
4. Imagine severing an imaginary connection between you, and person(s) you have offended, or removing the imaginary hooks from deep within you, and as you do, hear that person(s) say "I forgive you." Feel deep inside you the burdening weight lifting, the hooks released, and you being freed. Feel, and express your gratitude.

By just reading this, you have taken the first step. Let these thoughts find a place inside you. Let them settle, and strengthen. When the time is right, don't be surprised if the act of forgiving happens all by itself, and in a most natural way. Be open to the possibility of reconciling with the offender, or those you have offended, and be strong even if, and when you realize that not everybody is as ready as you are to forgive. Nevertheless, do it anyway. Do it for yourself. You deserve it.

There is nothing you can do about changing the past physically. You can change it, although, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally. Make the decision to let the past go, and to release the negativity that is attached to it.

Then Peter came up to him and said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times but seventy times seven.'

Assignment: On a sheet of paper write a statement of forgiveness seventy times.

"I forgive myself for not being there for my children."

Do this for seven days.