

## WHY SHOULD I FORGIVE?

Have you ever been in an abusive relationship? With a boss, a mate, or perhaps a family member? Have you ever been betrayed... filled with bitterness, toward someone you used to call "friend?"

People say we should forgive, but in most cases, they weren't there to witness the hurting. They say we should forgive and forget, then get on with our lives. Most of us agree with, getting on with our lives. We say "maybe" to forgetting...but why in the world should we forgive?

For you. Forgive them for your own well being. If you think about it, resentment lives in the heart of the person doing the resenting. The person you direct your resentment toward, is probably off in Vail skiing, having a wonderful time...and you're stuck back here with the resentment.

People don't realize the price they pay in harboring a resentment. Resentment is incredibly expensive! It costs you your joy, your peace, your ability to focus. It fills you with thoughts contrary to your own integrity. Even if you're in a great new relationship, it's only a matter of time before that old resentment shows up in one form or another with your new partner. It's like going out to the dumpster, retrieving decaying garbage and setting it on the dining room table. Yuck!

Resentment is a parasite that feeds on the human heart. If you feed it long enough, it will consume you...first emotionally, then physically. Personally, I think we are far too precious to treat ourselves this way.

There are several reasons why we are reluctant to forgive. Often, people carry resentment in order to make a point. The assumption here is, if you resent someone enough, that person is eventually going to straighten right up and behave just the way you think they should. Don't hold your breath for this one.

Another reason we resent is that we think forgiveness would in some way, condone the perpetrator's actions. It would be saying that what they did to us was "OK." Please know that forgiveness is not at all about approving their inappropriate behavior!

Forgiveness is about our own healing. It's about setting ourselves free inside.

Is forgiveness about being a doormat? Absolutely not! It takes courage to move forward in life...to maintain our personal boundaries...to say “no” when we need to...and to do it with an open heart. When you’re ready...here are some keys to forgiveness:

- Creating willingness is a choice you freely make in your own heart. If you are not willing to forgive, that’s OK...but the consequence is, you get to keep the resentment, and everything that goes with it. The willingness to do...creates the ability to do. Until you’re willing, nothing changes.
- Be willing to fully experience all the hurt that comes up. Underneath the anger, is the hurt. Don’t resist the hurt. Embrace it. Cry if you can. Release all the sadness and let it go.
- Notice that, just like you, they did the best they could with a very limited awareness. If they were wiser and more aware, they would have done things very differently, but they weren’t.
- Then forgive yourself. Forgive yourself for anything you’ve done in retaliation. Forgive yourself for attracting a dysfunctional relationship. Forgive yourself for making the mistakes that destroyed the experience of loving, and give yourself permission to be who you are, a precious human being with limitations.

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