

FREE



H O W T O
FORGIVE

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#1



LET'S START HERE

THE WORSE FORGIVENESS ADVICE

There is a lot of confusion about forgiveness, but after reading this you'll know what forgiveness is, what forgiveness is not, and how to forgive others. By practicing forgiveness—making forgiveness a habit—you will free yourself from your hurts, resentments and relational wounds. First things first, what is the **worst forgiveness advice**? Keep reading to find out.

The worst forgiveness advice can be summed up in three words: **Get Over It**. Often it sounds like this: *"It wasn't that bad... It's fine... I'm use to it..."* A vital step in forgiveness is recognizing what happened to you was not okay, it was not fine, and you should not get use to it. Forgiving our offenders to be free from past injuries, requires this honest acknowledgement.

What happens if you continue to downplay an offense?

When you downplay what happened to you, you diminish yourself. Downplaying the offense is dishonest to the offender, and it does not release you from the pain.

Recognizing what happened to you as bad can be painful, and it most likely will be, but it's the first important step in the process of forgiveness and freedom.

If you continue to downplay the offense(s), then privately, but certainly you'll become a bitter, broken person. When you harbor bitterness, you betray yourself and deny the truth of the situation. Worst, betrayal to yourself cannot be contained to one area, you'll bring the bitterness, brokenness to all other areas of your life.



What does bitterness look like?

Work may become less satisfying, or resentment, distrust, and impatient towards others grows, or you sabotage your relationships. Bitterness [or unforgiveness] will always spread to the other areas of our lives. It can never be contained or compartmentalized.

Now, let's become aware of what forgiveness is not. Continue reading to find out more.

1. Forgiveness is not Fair

There is nothing fair about forgiveness. For example, when you are "forgiven" from a debt, the debt is canceled with no payment. Actual forgiveness is similar. When you cancel emotional debts, you become free of hurtful memories and experiences. Free of

the need for the offender to apologize before you can move on. Free to love people who are different and more kind than the offender. If you think, "When _____ happens, then I will [or can] forgive," you're not forgiving. You're setting the price to buy forgiveness; that's business, not forgiveness. Forgiveness only requires you to be willing to forgive.

Forgiveness is not fair, but it is a choice.

2. Forgiveness is not Distance

Sometimes, people will move away physically and/or emotionally from the person who, betrayed, or damaged them. They move to avoid being hurt again, or to be reminded of the hurt . Sometimes people move away to "keep the peace" and avoid confrontation. They hope and think distance and time will heal them. It won't.



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**Forgiveness is about the past
and trust is about the future.**

You can move away, but you're still cut, shattered or broken. For emotional, mental, and spiritual injuries, you need emotional, mental, and spiritual healing. Distance or time doesn't heal anything. And it could make things worse.

Forgiveness is not distance, but it is healing.

3. Forgiveness is not Trust

All of us have been taken advantaged of, or stolen from, or molested, or lied to, or betrayed or let down by someone. Forgiveness will heal you gradually [or immediately], release you from the pain, and give you new eyes to reinterpret your past, *but it will not make the offender a better person.* Forgiveness is about the past and trust is about the future.

Forgiveness is not trust, but it is freedom.

Finally, how do I forgive? Read the following paragraphs to learn about the three types of forgiveness and how they apply (special thanks to UCLA psychiatrist Dr. Stephen Marmer for his explanation).

Forgiveness doesn't require a specific—or any—religious tradition. It only requires your willingness to get rid of emotional baggage. Here are the three types of forgiveness and how they apply.

1. Forgive and Forget

This is how most people think of forgiveness. But this doesn't apply to all situations which require us to forgive. When should you forgive and forget? If the person cannot take responsibility for their actions because of a lack of maturity or skills, or if they sincerely



apologize for the harm they caused *and* there's a valid expectation the event will not happen again, then the healthy response is to completely forgive without reservation.

2. Forgive and Watch

This one requires more effort from us. When someone offers a partial or an insincere apology, or apologizes but blames you for their bad behavior, then you need to forgive and watch. This person has not –and may never–fully accept responsibility for their actions. However, *for your own mental and emotional wellbeing*, you need to forgive them. Do you trust them again? Maybe. You'll need to watch and see if that person can be trusted again. In time, forgive and watch may become forgive and forget, but only after some time has passed and the person has proven to be trustworthy.

3. Forgive and Be Free

This is almost identical to forgive and forget, except no apology is involved. Maybe the person cannot, or will not apologize; they've died, or are unreachable, or they refuse to apologize. Doesn't matter. Remember, first of all *forgiveness is for you*. Then it's for the other person. Their apology isn't necessary. With forgive and be free, you release the bitterness of resentment and free yourself of carrying the hurt with you. You let yourself "off the hook."

Now you know what forgiveness is, what forgiveness it is not, and how to forgive others. Go practice forgiveness and get free

Content adapted from, *It Was A Beautiful Day When My Father Died*, available from now from:
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YOUR JOURNEY BEGINS

WAS THIS HELPFUL?

Interested in having
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