



My Healing Program

Steps to Forgiveness

This activity can be done with the person whom you are needing to forgive, otherwise in a roleplay scenario with someone else, or you talking to the person as though they were present.

If it is for you needing to forgive yourself, find a quiet place, with no distractions, and treat it as seriously as you would if it were someone else.

Forgiveness is not about forgetting, nor does it mean a reconciliation **has** to take place. It is also not a feeling. It is a conscious choice of an action you need to take.

Step 1: Acknowledgement

Acknowledge the hurt / pain / anger / anxiety that was caused to you through the person's words or actions

Step 2: Consider

Consider **how, and how deeply**, the hurt / pain / anger / anxiety has affected you since you experienced it

Step 3: Acceptance

Acceptance that you are unable to change the past. Consider what could have driven the person to treat you that way. Even if you do not feel it was justified, if the person is available, can they tell you why they treated you in that way? If it will not cause you trauma, ask them if they know how it affected you. If not, or if they're wrong, then tell them, if they will listen to you.

Step 4: Determine

Determine whether or not you will forgive, and what the potential consequences can be if you choose not to do so.

Note: Forgiving the person for their actions is not the same as 'condoning' what they did to you.

Step 5: Repair

If the person is available and you wish to repair the relationship you had with them, how do you intend to achieve this? Are you clear in your mind why you wish to repair it, and how do you think the relationship will be between you moving forward?

Step 6: Learn

It is important to find meaning in the hurt / pain / anger / anxiety you suffered. What did you learn from how you felt? What did you learn from the way the other person treated you? What can you take away from the experience/s?

Step 7: Forgive yourself

Learning to forgive yourself is a critical step in the forgiveness journey. We often carry guilt around with us about why we didn't do something to stop ourselves being hurt when it was happening.

We are not always in a position to stop it. The hurt may occur when you're a child, youngster or simply just not in a position to stop it (whether due to the other person being an authority figure / elder / relative / or various other reasons).

Know that if you could have, you would have, and now that you have experienced it, you will be in a position to assist someone else who has gone through it or may be going through a similar experience.

Let that guilt loose, it has no place in your life now, it is not serving any purpose but to hold you back.

Step 8: Forgive the person

There are various actions that can be taken physically to forgive the person who harmed you.

- **You could write them a letter** telling them how it made you feel when they were hurting you. You could explain to them the hurt and suffering they caused you then, and over the subsequent years. You can tell them how it affected your relationships, your self-esteem and your sense of self-worth.

Once written, you can read the letter aloud as if you were reading it to them, then either tear it up and throw it away, or go outside, to a safe clearing, and burn it. This act of destroying the letter serves to allow you to let go of the past, the hurt, the anguish and the destruction the person caused you.

- You could talk to them about the above and tell them you hope they realise the extent of the harm they did to you, but that you forgive them and you wish them well.
- You could sit quietly and think about all they did to you and silently, feeling a sense of peace within, take a deep breath, focus on your heart, and feel the sensation of letting them go.

Follow all of these up with a quiet moment taken to feel your heart healing from the hurt and trauma you have experienced. Feel it beating strongly, with purpose, reminding you that you still have reason to live a full and happy life.
