

Four stages of forgiveness

Forgiveness does not
Change the past,
but it does
Change the future.



1. Solidifying

Taking time to find ways to keep yourself stable and grounded regarding revisiting the experience internally. Ensuring this as your first step will support you as you move through the other stages of forgiveness (more of how to achieve this below).

2. Uncovering

Gaining insight into whether, and how, the injustice and subsequent injury have compromised your life. Confronting the secondary emotion of anger (for more regarding anger as a secondary emotion [click here](#)). Becoming aware of potential emotional exhaustion. Becoming aware of cognitive preoccupation regarding the situation and/or the people involved. Awareness that this could be a permanent change for you.

3. Decision

Gaining an accurate understanding of what forgiveness is, and making a decision to commit to forgiving on the basis of this understanding. Understanding this does not mean we condone the act, nor does it mean we need to have reconciliation with the person/people.

4. Work

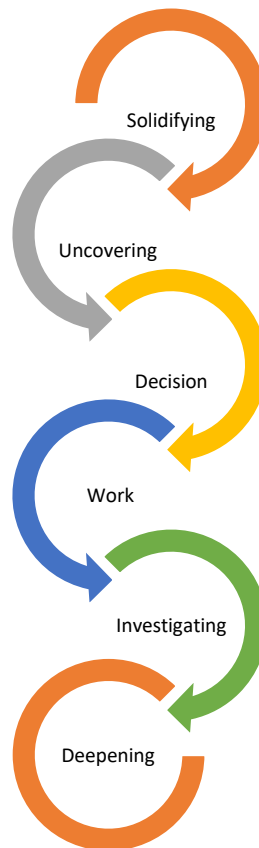
Gaining a deeper understanding of the offender and beginning to view the offender in a new light (reframing), resulting in positive change in affect about the offender, about the self, and about the relationship. Showing empathy and compassion (understanding that they may not deserve this compassion, but also realizing this is not about the other person/people, this is for you. Bearing the pain involved in change. Giving the moral gift of forgiveness.

5. Investigating

Reflecting on how far you have come and acknowledging what you have peeled away is an important part of your healing journey. Healing and forgiving occur simultaneously and dedicating a moment when you acknowledge this is a way to celebrate your win of getting this far. We have been conditioned to not focus on our strengths and accomplishments, create a safe space in your forgiveness journey to reduce the limitation we can create in our minds regarding how brave we are to have come this far.

6. Deepening

Finding meaning in the suffering (post-suffering growth). Consideration of times when we have needed other's forgiveness. Knowing that we're not alone. Becoming aware that forgiveness allows us to feel more connected with others and to experience decreased negative emotion towards, the person/people, the world and ourselves.



Consider the law of “sowing and reaping” and then write your thoughts below.

What will I reap if I choose to forgive?

What will I reap if I don't choose to forgive?

Strategies & Tips to Move Through the Forgiveness Process More Gracefully

1. Implement Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) to help keep the central nervous system stable. You may find that when attempting to forgive you will activate the fight-flight-freeze response. Signs of this may be, heart-racing, uncontrollable crying, waves of intense anger, nausea, feeling shaky or tingles. These are all possible signs of your sympathetic nervous system being activated and re-traumatizing may be taking place. EFT or tapping on specific acupressure points of the body can help to reduce these sensations and result in a more stabilize & grounded feeling when moving through forgiveness (for visual guides regarding tapping please see____)
2. Cultivating a breathing practice so that you heighten, deepen and strengthen the mind & body connection is essential to your healing. Breathing power is highly underestimated.
3. We all store our emotions in different parts of our body. For one person it might be tightness in the neck & shoulders, for another individual it might be a stiff lower back. Subconsciously we may hold our emotions regarding how we have been wronged in different parts of our body. Releasing unpleasant bodily tension is essential as we do this important work as if we feel unwell it can become a barrier to doing the work. If unsure as to how to do complete a Muscle Relaxation Process please click here to be gently guided____
4. Journal with the intention to capture the action of mindset shift. This means incorporate cognitive behavior therapy concepts within your journaling. We at times may journey to vent, to capture what we are

grateful for, but the journaling I invite you to try is to capture your cognitive shifts and those that connect the dots to your core beliefs & the injustice/wrong doing which you experienced. This strategy may require some guidance and if unfamiliar it is encouraged to seek a clinician or speak to your family doctor about making a referral to a clinician who can reach you the CBT concepts.

Remember Self-Care is the Best Care & Your Time Is N.O.W

Disclaimer: Resource content regarding the stages of forgiveness incorporates some of the work developed by Enright and Fitzgibbons