

FORGIVENESS (YouTube: Prager U Forgiveness)

Dr. Stephen Marmer, UCLA Medical School

Purpose: Acknowledging reality of pain, make possible grace, restoration, peace

Objective: Finding a way to forgive without giving up our principles.

Result: Help to heal wounds & remove residue of hurts, anger, resentment, retaliation.

Rudy Tomjanovich, NBA 4-time All-Star, concerning the person who injured him and terminated his NBA career: Unforgiveness is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. It does far more damage to us and those who love us, than to those who have hurt us. Only those who walk the path of freedom will find out.

Three categories of forgiveness:

- 1 - Exoneration** - full restoration, such as following an accident, or an infraction by a child with limited understanding of the hurt they inflicted, or following a genuine apology where the person takes full responsibility without excuses, asks forgiveness, and repents (not knowingly repeat the action). Forgive and move on.
- 2 - Forbearance** - Inauthentic or incomplete apology, some element of blame in their apology or excuse. Consider whether you actually do bear some responsibility, but dismiss grudges, revengefulness, and looping the events. Forgive and keep a watchful eye; Trust and verify.
- 3 - Release** - (most challenging, after abuse, significant cheating, betrayal)
Remove the venom, do not waste time killing the snake. Redefine your life in terms other than the hurt done to you. Do not allow offender to live rent-free in your mind, reliving the original incident forever. Get help to be liberated from the tyranny of living in a hurtful past; to let go of the belief that the past could have been different.
=> does NOT require that there be any contact with the offender
=> does NOT imply condoning or excusing the hurt done, does not imply "It's okay."
=> does NOT protect one's safety if physically at risk of being harmed further

Four steps to forgiveness:

- 1 - Stabilize; turn your brain ON.** Breathe calmly and be fully present.
- 2 - Reframe the experience.** (May need support to do this.) Bad choices were on the part of the offender, not you. It happened to you, but it's about the offender's actions. Victims are simply available to the abuser.
- 3 - Responsibility.** How you feel is never wrong, take full responsibility for your feelings, and choose to respond responsibly.
- 4 - Integrate; Write a new story,** a HERO's story, one of resilience. Put the villains in the place that they only illuminate that you are a hero. David without Goliath is just a kid throwing rocks.

RESOLVING CONFLICT - FIVE APOLOGY LANGUAGES

Dr. Gary Chapman

Introduces five elements of apology for the one who wishes to be forgiven, and for recognizing alternate "apology languages" in ourselves and others:

Expressing regret

Accepting responsibility

Making restitution

Genuinely repenting

Requesting forgiveness

Clues to Apologies you might find to be acceptable

1 - Last time you apologized, what did you do or say?

(gives clues to what YOU consider to be appropriate apology)

2 - What hurts me most deeply in the present situation?

(ie, they won't even admit they are wrong)

3 - What could they say or do to fully apologize

(gives clues to what you will accept as a proper apology)

Responses to apologies:

Be kind, Forgive each other (just as you have been forgiven in the past)

1 - Pardon - I'm not going to make you pay for this for the next 20 years

2 - Remove the barrier, restore acceptance, allows the person back in our lives so our relationship can grow.

Forgiveness does NOT:

~ **destroy our memory** of painful events and wrongs done

~ **remove all painful emotions** that may return with the memories

~ **remove all the consequences** of the wrongdoing

~ **restore trust**, but opens the door to the possibility that trust can someday be restored. Invite verification over time.

Forgiveness is a choice to respond to an wrong done in order to get a desired result of personal peace. If there were no pain, forgiveness would not be necessary. Forgiveness of self is sometimes the primary issue.

Is there any place for the concept of forgiveness? (Doesn't need an answer.)

Consider lessening the weight of the anger: What does it feel like to set it down? Or

How is it serving you to hang on to it?

Anger may be less hurtful than sadness.

Sudden death may involve more complicated hurts than natural death.