

Forgiveness Worksheet

Forgiveness Process Worksheet



Forgiveness is a change of heart (mind) toward a person that has offended you.

Forgiveness Is and Is Not

Forgiveness is:

- The decision to let go-- of the offence, the past and the hurt.
- Empathizing with the person who offended you.
- Extending grace to the offender regardless of the offender's response.

Forgiveness is not:

- A feeling, it is a decision.
- Forgetting nor condoning.
- Reconciliation of the relationship nor does it mean trust is restored.
- Conditional, requiring penance of some sort.

Four Phases of Forgiveness

Impact Phase – During this phase, identify the offender, the offence and their impact on you.

Discovery Phase – The object of this phase is to do some “time travel” fact finding to determine possible contributing factors that prompted the person to become offensive. It is also the time to determine if there are any reflex behaviors from the past on your part that may have contributed to the resulting offence.

Forgiveness Worksheet

Work Phase – Sort through the facts of the Discovery Phase with the assistance of an objective confidant if needed. The goal is to detail cause and effect creating plausible steps toward forgiveness.

Cause and Effect Flowchart:

Cause→Behavior→Reaction→Repair

You may need to work backwards to get to the right focus.

Example:

Person A withheld dessert from Person B's child. (Behavior)

Person B, when she heard of it became angry. (Reaction)

Why did person A withhold dessert? (Cause)

This is where, if possible, Person B needs to get an understanding of Person A's **Cause** that resulted in withholding dessert.

Also, Person B needs to self-examine to determine if this is a sensitive area for them always resulting in an extreme **Reaction**.

Once all these factors are sorted out, actions to **Repair** the offence should be clear.

This always works better if both parties are calmly working toward a solution.

Moving Forward Phase – During this final phase you will begin to implement the steps needed to repair the relationship and hence initiate forgiveness. This phase may take a while as well and may even have some setbacks. It is important not to give up but to adjust your path to reach an acceptable end.

Forgiveness Worksheet

Impact Phase

What was the offence? Who was the offender?

What was the impact? Circle any that apply and explain in the box below. Add any impact that is not listed.

- Painful emotions (e.g. anger, embarrassment)
- Changed behavior (e.g. avoiding certain relationships)
- Changed worldview (e.g. mistrust of a certain group of people)
- Physical harm
- Emotional or psychological harm (e.g. “gaslighting”)
- Expenditures (e.g. loss of time and money)

Forgiveness Worksheet

Discovery Phase

During this phase you will “step back” from the situation and determine if you:

- Contributed to fueling the offence
- Have ingrained behaviors that make you super sensitive in the area of the offence

Describe all of your personal factors that contributed to the fallout.

Understanding the offender does not make offensive action acceptable but it will shed light on the “why”. This forces you to see the person as more than their offence and raises the probability for forgiveness. If possible, determine if the offender was:

- Upset about something else
- Operating within behaviors he learned growing up

Describe all known factors of the offender that could have contributed to the fallout.

Forgiveness Worksheet

Work Phase

The work in this phase is to devise a plan toward forgiveness based on facts discovered during the discovery phase. Facts needed to construct a solid path to forgiveness must not be based on conjecture but may require discussion to verify contributing factors.

Construct your plan by stating the problem and then the action necessary to begin fixing the problem. To get at the correct action you may need to ask yourself 5 Whys before arriving at the most impactful action.

“5 Whys” Example:

1. Why did she deny dessert to a child?
2. Why is Person B’s child continuing to behave badly in daycare?
3. Was it an acceptable daycare practice for misbehaving children?
4. Is that how Person A’s parents disciplined her?
5. Is she open to learn a better way to correct children than denying them food?
6. Is Person B open to addressing the child’s behavioral issues?

Of course there can be more than 5 whys. The point is to dig deep enough to uncover the issue for repair.

Arrange the Action Steps in the order that makes sense. If possible, assign a timeframe in which you will accomplish the action. The action should always have a healing effect for both parties.

Problem Statement 1:
Action 1:
Problem Statement 2:
Action 2:
Problem Statement 3:
Action 3:

Forgiveness Worksheet

Moving Forward Phase

As you complete the actions in the Work Phase you will begin to feel a sense of movement forward. Although the offender may not apologize you KNOW you have looked at the situation selflessly and now can be at peace.

As you work through this, feel free to change or add actions. Moving forward comes every time you complete an action. Don't be discouraged if this phase takes awhile. Better to be slow and sure than fast and sloppy.

Incorporate check points to gage your progress.

- **Are you on task with your action items?**

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- **Have your feelings changed, even slightly toward the person?**

- **When you think of the incident, does it hurt/bother you as much as it did before?**

- **Describe how you have grown from the incident. Has your perspective changed? Are you a stronger person for choosing to forgive?**
