

LETTING GO OF PAST GRIEVANCES

Step One: Begin with an intention to forgive.

Write down the name of the person whom you intend to forgive.

Step Two: Acknowledge the pain caused by the grievance.

(The goal is not to forgive and forget, but rather “remember fully and forgive”.)

Describe the grievance. What were the circumstances? (Be as specific as possible.)

How did you feel at the time? Where in your body did you feel it?

What have you done to take care of yourself?

If you are forgiving someone else, list the ways you have attempted to empower yourself. If you are forgiving yourself, list the ways you have attempted to make amends.

How do you feel emotionally, physically, and spiritually, when you think about the grievance today?

Step Three: Evaluate the gains and losses that comes with forgiveness.

If I forgive, what would I gain?

If I forgive, what would I give up?

Step Four: Assess your attitudes and beliefs around forgiveness.

(You may not be responsible for what happened-but you are responsible for your long-term attitude.)

Underline any statements that have the most significance for you:

If I forgive, it doesn't mean I am...

condoning or absolving the hurtful behavior.
forgetting.
being a victim or losing power.
surrendering my right to justice.
required to reconcile with the offender.
getting the other person to do something different.
refusing to make amends.

If I forgive, it means I am...

recognizing I have a choice about my perceptions and my thoughts.
choosing peace of mind.
freeing myself from the past and choosing to live in the present moment.
choosing empowerment over victim-hood.
choosing to connect to my spiritual loving self.

STEP FIVE: Practice Letting Go Exercises.

- 1. Practice empathy:** Forgiveness is the recognition that people who harm others are expressing their own unresolved pain.
- 2. Meditation/prayer:** Asking God or a Higher Power for help can be a shortcut in the forgiveness process.
- 3. Visualization:** Visualize the person you have decided to forgive. Imagine that an energy cord connects you. Affirm, "I am calling my energy back." Then unplug the cord.
- 4. Journal Writing:** Express your feelings to the person you are forgiving (or asking to forgive) by writing a letter (that you may or may not send).
- 5. Affirmation:** Write a daily affirmation that states your decision to forgive.
- 6. Monitor your Thoughts:** Listen to your inner self-talk to ensure that it reflects the true meaning of forgiveness. Ask yourself, "would I rather be right or would I rather be happy?"
- 7. Practice Patience:** Remember that forgiveness is an ongoing process; it's rarely completed on the first attempt.

