

I'M SORRY

The Power of Forgiveness



Copyright © 2015

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?	6
MAIN POINTS OF CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?	10
THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS	11
HEAL AND BECOME STRONGER	12
MAIN POINTS OF CHAPTER 2: THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS	15
WHY IT IS SO HARD TO FORGIVE	16
MAIN POINTS OF CHAPTER 3: WHY IT IS SO HARD TO FORGIVE?	18
STEPS TO TRUE FORGIVENESS	19
WHAT IF YOU CAN'T FORGIVE?	21
WHY REVENGE WON'T WORK	23
MAIN POINTS OF CHAPTER 4: STEPS TO TRUE FORGIVENESS	25
FORGIVENESS IS A GIFT TO YOURSELF	26
NON-FORGIVENESS CAN COST YOU DEARLY	26

Introduction

When you let a state of forgiveness into your mindset, you're giving yourself a gift of the ages. You're announcing to yourself that you will no longer let the chains of anger and resentment tie you down and keep you from enjoying life.

You're giving your mind and body the chance to heal from the trauma you've experienced and free yourself to experience new things with gusto rather than dread that you'll get hurt again.

This guide will lead you through the process of forgiveness, first explaining what forgiveness really is – and what it isn't. Forgiveness isn't condoning actions of another or even reconciling with the person. What it is, is letting go of the pain you're feeling and not letting that person continue to hurt you.

When you can't forgive, you're letting the pain define who you are. You're the person who suffers endlessly from a traumatic event you've experienced. By harboring that pain, you're letting the other person control your life – and no one wants that to happen.

“Chapter 2: The Power of Forgiveness” discusses the energy and happiness that can enter your life with the power of forgiveness. Sometimes it's confusing to watch media reports of those who have had heinous acts committed against them – and forgiving the perpetrator.

The answer is that the person who was hurt chose to release the anger they feel and not let it continue filling his mind and heart. It's not condoning the act or accepting the person back into your life.

Some of the benefits of forgiveness include lowering your blood pressure, boosting your immune system, lifting you out of depression and improving your

mental health and well-being. You'll learn about more benefits and how to move toward getting to the point that you can enjoy them.

Chapter 3: Why It is So Hard to Forgive provides a series of steps to take to begin and complete the process of forgiveness. Some reasons it may be difficult to begin the process are also discussed.

But, remaining in a toxic state of anger and resentment can keep you in a toxic bubble where it's impossible to realize the freedom that can come from forgiveness. Some of the steps to forgiveness include:

- Deciding on the relationship you want with the person who hurt you.
- Changing your thought patterns from negative to positive.
- Observe the situation from the outside looking in.
- Practice stress reduction techniques.
- Ritualize the forgiveness practice until it's lifted from your mind.

Remember, you're not excusing the act that was perpetrated against you – but you're letting it go from your thoughts and mind so you can have a better life and a clearer mind.

Chapter 4: Forgiveness Is a Gift to Yourself summarizes the guide and offers some closing thoughts about working through the forgiveness process, even though you think you get stuck and think you can't move on.

When you forgive, it's a gift to yourself that empowers and makes you strong – mentally and physically. Let this guide be the beginning of a new life for you, without the confusion and distress that pain has brought – by learning forgiveness.

What is Forgiveness?

The loose definition of forgiveness is, “the action or process of forgiving or being forgiven.” But, the process of forgiveness is so much more than that. Sometimes people have to work through their pain for months or years to have closure and get on with their lives.

Almost every religion in the world teaches forgiveness. Today, psychologists and medical research have also determined that forgiveness of a wrong perpetrated against you can positively change your health and mental well-being. If for nothing else, that makes forgiveness worth pursuing.

Research about forgiveness and its effect on body and mind has blossomed in the past years. It began as a concept of some religions and now it’s known as a potent force in improving our own well-being. Dozens of inspirational books and many motivational speakers include forgiveness in their lists of “must dos” to achieve happiness and success.

In reality, you’re not condoning the action by forgiving – but shifting the thinking process to letting go of the powerful hold that revenge and anger has on your thoughts and actions.

Any type of grief requires forgiveness to reach closure. It’s a natural process of acknowledging the pain and loss and replacing all negative thoughts with positive ones.

You don’t need to reconcile with the person to forgive. The process of forgiveness is for you and you alone. It’s releasing the power that someone has on you and getting on with your life without the nagging thoughts of revenge and anger so raw that it changes and defines you.

You also don't have to forget the wrong that was done to you in order to forgive. You just need to decide how you're going to think about the transgression in the future and how you'll let it affect your life, if at all.

Forgiveness is also not denying the wrong or suppressing your feelings. In fact, forgiveness involves vividly remembering the transgression without feelings of revenge or anger. Those feelings only do harm to you, not the person who wronged you.

Justice isn't reached with forgiveness, although when the person apologizes, it's easier to forgive. In many cases justice involves punishment or compensation for the action. You should pursue justice whether or not you forgive the person and even if you think justice is served, you don't have to forgive.

Forgiveness is never about excusing or condoning the action. When an injustice is done to you, you don't need to deny it or think your feelings are wrong. You must protect yourself from future harm and take steps that will ensure your well-being.

The choice to forgive is yours. This guide is formulated to help you make that choice and to help you understand what forgiveness can mean to your mental and physical health and to your future relationships.

Forgiveness is Not Letting the Pain Define Who You Are

The act of forgiveness is a gift to yourself. You're giving yourself permission to enjoy life anyway – in spite of the hurt you've experienced. The mental clutter and confusion that comes from harboring the pain deep inside can end up controlling you – and control is the last thing we want to give to the person who has wronged you.

You'll likely always have the memory of the pain, but not letting it control you or define you is key to getting on with your life. Without forgiveness, you'll hold on to the anger and resentment and you're the one who suffers most.

Holding on to pain can also change the course of your life. It's a difficult thing – forgiveness, but once you begin the journey, the emotional baggage you've been hanging on to will fall to the side of the road and you'll realize how much it's been holding you back.

One thing that makes forgiving someone so difficult is how you may define it. You may deeply believe that you have to condone the action or turn the other cheek and simply pretend the horrific act didn't happen. If so, it's time to rethink how you view forgiveness. Think about some of the following ways that forgiveness can help you get on with your life:

- Forgiveness helps you move on from the hurt and heartache to happier times.
- You'll be choosing peace and happiness rather than anger when you choose to forgive.
- Provides energy that was previously used to hold on to resentment and anger.
- Forgiveness lets you turn away negative thoughts that have previously plagued your mind and soul.
- You're given a blank slate in which you can write your own future.

When you let the pain of past transgressions keep you from moving on with your life in a positive way, you remain chained to the past. Those old hurts will hang on forever and are sure to change the path of your life. Forgiveness gives you the freedom you need to leave the hurtful past just where it needs to be – in the past – and leaves you with clarity and happiness for the future.

Forgiveness is one of the most healing powers we can bestow on ourselves. It's spoken of and a part of every major religion in the world and is at the heart of psychological studies that address our well-being.

When you forgive, strange, yet positive things happen in your mind and body. Your mind will be more clear and free from thoughts that keep you from things you should be doing. Your body will feel like you've lifted a fifty pound weight from your shoulders – and your self-esteem will sky rocket.

When you choose not to forgive, you're likely blaming what happened against you for everything going wrong in your life. It's just the excuse you need to wallow in self-doubt and self-pity – because sometimes that seems easier than the process of forgiving.

Old grudges and holding on to pain can keep you trapped in a poisonous concoction that has the power to ruin your life. Learn more about how the power of forgiveness can work in your life in the next chapter, "The Power of Forgiveness."

Main Points of Chapter 1: What is Forgiveness?

Don't think that forgiveness means that you have to condone or excuse another person for their transgressions against you. The definition of forgiveness is the letting go, mentally, of the pain that was caused – not giving the person permission to keep on hurting you. Some main points of Chapter 1, "What is Forgiveness" include:

- Harboring the pain of old wounds can harm your psyche and your body. It's a poison that keeps you from getting on with your life.
- Symbolic forgiveness rituals can help with the forgiveness process. The act of writing your feelings on paper and then burning the paper is an example of symbolic forgiveness.
- When you forgive, you're refusing to let the pain of the past define you.
- The emotional baggage of old hurts can be like a ton of weight on your shoulders. Forgiveness can lift that weight and set you free again.
- Forgiveness provides you with a clean slate on which you can write your future.
- With the newfound freedom that forgiveness brings, you can look to the future instead of dwelling on the old, hurtful past.
- Forgiveness is preached in almost every religion in the world and even science is touting its power to heal.

Forgiveness is a very difficult process, but if you choose to take it, you'll be inviting a very different dynamic into your mind and body – and one which will have a positive impact on your life.

The Power of Forgiveness

The power of forgiveness is an awesome force that can totally change your life and how you view it, but you must first stop viewing forgiveness as an act of condoning, compassion and empathy toward the person who hurt you. Forgiveness can empower you to leave the hurt behind.

You've likely watched media reports about heinous acts against a person and then watched that person forgive the perpetrator. You wonder how forgiveness was possible – especially if a life was lost, innocence ruined or a crime against humanity was perpetrated.

Yet, those who forgive their transgressors live much freer and happier lives than those who harbor resentment and anger for the rest of their lives. Some things are so awful, you'll never be able to forget they happened, but true forgiveness helps you release them from your mind and heart.

There are ways you can forgive someone without condoning or feeling compassion for they've done. Remember the act of forgiveness is for you – to heal and be able to live life to the fullest. Here are a few ways the power of forgiveness can help you heal and move on:

- **Improved health** – Anger and resentment wreaks harm on the body and mind. When you take steps to forgive, you're releasing the negative energy that has been such a part of your life and making room for positive energy.
- **Become happier** – When you forgive, you're better able to feel and experience the happiness you deserve rather than dwelling on the past that makes you unhappy. A happy person tends to experience less stress in his life.

- **Relationships become stronger** – Spouses tend to have closer and more meaningful relationships when forgiveness is present in a marriage. This doesn't mean that you should always "forgive" and accept repeated abuse. That makes for a less satisfied relationship and too much stress for you.
- **Boosts kindness and positive relationships** – When you become a forgiving person, you'll also become more charitable towards others. Since forgiveness is often thought of as a magnanimous act, you'll see yourself as a more compassionate person.
- **Puts commitment back in your life** – People we're close to are bound to hurt us sometimes, but forgiveness can restore the compassion and trust you feel for this person and strengthen your relationship and save it from dissolving.

Prisoners of war often have difficulty forgiving those who injured or kept them prisoners in horrid conditions including torture and mental degradation. Research has found that those who can truly forgive their former captors suffer less from depression and stress and have more zest for life.

Heal and Become Stronger

It's especially difficult to forgive when someone you love hurts you deeply, but releasing the power it holds over you can help you move forward and either repair the relationship or move forward without it.

In the years of your life, someone is bound to hurt you with either words or actions. These acts by others can sabotage your life if you let them by bringing bitterness and feelings of revenge into your thought process. They're wounds that may reopen from time to time unless you let them go for good.

Physically and mentally, holding on to grudges can zap your energy and make you the loser. With forgiveness you can release the grip anger and resentment holds and focus more positively on your physical, spiritual and emotional well-being. Some of the physical and mental benefits of forgiveness have been proven in medical research. Here are a few of them:

- **Lowers blood pressure.** The anxiety that comes from holding on to past hurts can make your blood pressure soar and leave you more susceptible to stroke and heart disease.
- **Increases spiritual well-being.** Being magnanimous by forgiving helps you realize yourself as a kinder and more spiritual individual. It's like rising to a higher plane of being.
- **Boosts your immune system.** When you're happy and stop holding on to past hurts, your brain produces endorphins and other well-being chemicals which play a huge part in keeping your immune system healthy.
- **Helps you release stress and hostility.** Stress and anger lead to some of the worst health problems you can get, including cancer. When you forgive, you automatically release stress and anger and can be yourself.
- **Better heart health.** Have you ever noticed that when you're hurt or upset about something, your heart actually hurts? Your negative thoughts affect your heart more than you realize.
- **Less depression.** Many people today have to take medications to function without feelings of depression. Depression fuels hopelessness and keeps you from enjoying life as you should.

- **Improved self-esteem.** When you view yourself as a basically good and forgiving person, your self-esteem is bound to rise. Holding onto past grudges makes you look at yourself more critically.

The healing powers of forgiveness can permeate every part of your life – including your important relationships. Forgiveness can clear a path so that relationships can heal and also helps you gain clarity about other areas of your life, such as work.

Main Points of Chapter 2: The Power of Forgiveness

Forgiveness may be difficult to come by and to profess to others, but the healing benefits are numerous. The healing powers that forgiveness holds can transform your life from feelings of revenge and anger to happiness and joy. The physical benefits can be many. Among them are lowered blood pressure and less stress and anxiety. Chapter 2: The Power of Forgiveness includes the following main points:

- Live a happier and stress free life when you forgive your transgressors. People who have forgiven perpetrators of heinous crimes against them report feeling like a burden has been lifted from their minds and shoulders.
- Physical benefits of forgiveness are many. Decreased blood pressure, boost in the immune system and better heart health are just a few of the many good things about forgiveness.
- Forgiving people are happy people. Bring happiness back into your life with the healing power of forgiveness and leave constant feelings of revenge and anger behind.
- Improve relationships. Any relationship that has suffered past transgressions can be improved by forgiving the person. That means your letting go of the old hurt and making room for building and repairing the relationship.
- Commitment to others in your life. Compassion and trust clear the path for you to fully commit to others in your life with whom you have relationships. Without forgiveness, compassion and trust don't exist.

Mentally and physically, non-forgiveness can wreak havoc on you in ways you don't even know. Forgiveness can restore your energy and give you a new lease on life.

Why It is So Hard to Forgive

When someone you care for – or even a stranger – does something to harm you, it can be difficult to forgive him. That’s especially true if the transgressor won’t admit their actions or show remorse. You may think you’ll never be able to truly forgive the person.

It’s hard to work through the anger, resentment and negative thoughts of revenge. You have the freedom to choose who you want to forgive and who you won’t forgive. Just be sure you don’t remain in a toxic trap of your own making by not knowing the difference between forgiveness and acceptance.

You may never forgive the harm that was done to you, but you may be able to accept that it happened and go on. It’s difficult to honor your emotions and work through to a type of acceptance, but here are some tips you may want to heed:

- **Decide on the type of relationship you want with the perpetrator.** If a spouse has hurt you, keeping the marriage together may be a higher priority than if the perpetrator was a criminal or someone you didn’t know well.
- **Change your thought patterns.** If you dwell on the negative, you’ll reap a life of negativity. Stop letting the injury be mind-consuming by using methods such as meditation and relaxation – and take care of yourself.
- **Stop thinking “revenge”** – Focus on the resolution (if one exists) and think about that. If you don’t think you see any resolution, it’s time to put the thoughts aside and replace them with positive thoughts of the present and the future.

- **Did you contribute to the transgression?** You may need some deep thinking or even therapy to realize what part you played (if any) in the harm you feel was done to you. If your thinking leads you to conclude that you were partly responsible for what happened, it's easier to accept and forgive the other person.

Don't remain trapped in an abusive or mentally harmful situation. Take the steps you need to get on with your life and leave the abusive person behind. Staying will only bring emotional and physical stress.

It's difficult to turn a situation around and try to observe it from the outside looking in, but that simple act can be very revealing. How would a dis-interested, third-party person see the situation?

Main Points of Chapter 3: Why It is So Hard to Forgive?

Chapter 3: Why It is So Hard to Forgive?, outlines and explains why the state of forgiveness is so difficult to reach. The anger and resentment can take over your entire life, cause mental, physical and spiritual problems and become the focus of your existence. Read on to see the condensed, main points of Chapter 3: Why It is So Hard to Forgive.

- You may never forgive the actions against you, but you can make peace with it by acceptance and go on with your life.
- Revenge thinking is toxic to the mind and body. It's time to replace those thoughts with positive ones.
- Did you play a part in the harm that was done against you? This is difficult to think about, but if you come to the conclusion that you did have something to do with the outcome, it's easier to forgive the other person.
- Unless you change your thought patterns, you'll live a life of negativity and the injury will consume your mind during your waking hours.
- Forgiveness doesn't come easy or quickly. It takes a commitment to see the process through and come out healed on the other side.
- Acknowledge your hurt and give it voice and feelings. Express your emotions in a healthy manner – writing, meditation and other methods.
- Attempt to understand the mind of the perpetrator. Think about the person's background in terms of relationships and past experiences. Can you feel empathy for him/her?
- Empower yourself. A hurt or wrong can take away your powers to cope and enjoy life to the fullest. Empower yourself by going through the steps of forgiveness.

Don't stop working on yourself. Forgiveness takes time and effort and most of all a commitment to the process.

Steps to True Forgiveness

Rarely does someone who has been hurt wake up one morning and realized they've forgiven the perpetrator. Forgiveness, just like every worthwhile cause in your life takes a commitment from you that you'll see the process through to realize the changes you want to make.

You may want to contemplate why you need to forgive before you make the commitment. Reflection on the situation, your reaction to it and how it's affecting your life is important. And, you must stop seeing yourself as a helpless victim.

Make a decision to actively forgive (let go of the old hurts) and tell yourself that you'll forgive as soon as you're ready – and not a moment before. Here are some steps to take when you've made the commitment to the process of forgiveness:

1. **Acknowledge the hurt.** Understand that the transgression happened and that you're hurt by it. Feel the inner pain that you've harbored since the situation and express those emotions in a way that doesn't hurt or attack anyone.
2. **Forgive yourself.** Most people acknowledge they had some role in what happened to them – especially in relationships. Understand that role and commit to building the relationship (if salvageable). Make a commitment to do what you have to do to go on with your life.
3. **Try to understand the perpetrator.** There are so many reasons why people do bad things. Look at the situation from the perpetrator's point of view and replace the anger you feel with compassion and empathy.
4. **Decide if you want to stay in the relationship.** If you're in an abusive relationship that hasn't gotten better, it's time to leave. Take care of

yourself in these situations and be sure you're safe.

5. **Write a story of what happened to hurt you.** It helps to use expressive words and write down the actual situation. Even if you haven't forgiven and moved on yet, include that scenario at the end of the story.
6. **Analyze your thoughts.** Chances are, your present hurt isn't coming from the situation, but from your thought formulation about what happened. Know that you control your thoughts and practice to replace the hurtful ones with happy, positive ones.
7. **Practice stress reduction techniques.** Many methods (such as Yoga) of stress reduction exist to help you overcome the feelings of anxiety and stress of what happened to you. These techniques can calm your body and mind and help to put you in a state of forgiveness.
8. **Use your energy wisely.** Rather than wasting your energy on negative thoughts and actions of the past, look for ways to make yourself happy and achieve positive goals that you've set for yourself.
9. **Have gratitude.** Being thankful for what you have is a good way to replace the negative feelings and thoughts with positive ones. Some victims claim that a gratitude journal which they write in every day helps them move forward.
10. **Empower yourself.** Realize that a life well-lived is the best revenge possible and concentrate on empowering yourself to take back control of your thoughts and actions so that you're the one who benefits.

It's your choice. Forgive or hang on to the hurt and trap yourself in a quicksand of toxic waste. Holding inside feelings of hate, distrust and anger can ruin your life

and the lives of those around you.

When you power through the steps of forgiveness, you're not excusing the person or the act, but you're accepting that it happened and will always be a part of you, but that it won't define you.

Acceptance of the situation can make the following positive changes in your life:

- Helps you stand up for your values.
- Helps you forgive yourself for things you might have done to hurt someone else.
- Gives you clarity that isn't possible when you harbor emotional poison.

When you accept that a deed was done that hurt you deeply, you can offer forgiveness as a gift to yourself. It will reduce the hurt, bring peace into your life and permit you to be happy. It's a choice.

What if You Can't Forgive?

Forgiveness takes time and patience and most of all, a commitment to let go of the hurt and get on with your life. But, what if you just can't find enough compassion and understanding about the situation to let go?

When someone you trust and love hurts you, you may feel sad, angry or develop confusion about the situations and even question yourself and if you were "good enough" to have a relationship with the person. If these grudges continue to permeate your mind, you'll end up with hostility that can take root in every part of your life.

Those who can't forgive have trouble being happy. They allow negative and vengeful thoughts shove out the positive thoughts of happiness and joy they may be experiencing and relive the past over and over again.

Whether you realize it or not, you're keeping the hurt alive in your mind and not realizing the benefits you would have if you forgave and let it go. If you don't cultivate forgiveness in your life, you may risk some of the following scenarios.

- **Depression and anxiety** – Constant anxiety and depression can wreak havoc in every aspect of your life. It keeps you from enjoying life to the fullest and worse, it can turn good relationships into bad.
- **Bitterness and anger** – Even though you may not realize it, harboring hurt feelings can bring bitterness and anger into everything you experience, including new relationships.
- **No ambition** – Negative thoughts can prevent you from thinking your life has purpose or meaning and you may have trouble meeting previous goals you've set for yourself.
- **No enjoyment of the present moment** – It would be a shame if you kept negative thoughts of a past situation alive in your mind and let it ruin the present moment for you. Take time to think about all you're missing because you just can't let go of the past.
- **Lose valuable and strong relationships** – Your connectedness with others is bound to suffer if you harbor negative thoughts. Think about how blessed your life is with these people in it and commit to changing your thoughts to positive ones by working through the process of forgiveness.

Spend time thinking and meditating about what forgiveness can mean in your life. The peace, joy and healing that can come from this process takes the power away from the person who hurt you and gives it back to you.

Why Revenge Won't Work

You may harbor feelings of getting revenge on someone who has hurt you deeply – or you may even want revenge on yourself for something you did that was wrong and hurtful. There are no short cuts to finding the compassion to let go of these thoughts of revenge.

The beginning of forgiveness is feeling the anger toward the person who has wronged you. After you're subjected to the feelings that anger brings to your body and mind, you realize you've put yourself on the same level as the perpetrator.

With help, you'll eventually realize that those angry feelings have made you stressful – and they may be causing health problems you don't even know about. Revenge is a very predictable feeling when you're hurt – strike back – and hurt the person who did this to you.

If you're going to be healthy and have a clear mind, you've eventually got to reach the state of acceptance and forgiveness rather than the destructive, negative thought pattern that's taking control.

Sometimes, all you can hope for is “karma” to right the wrong that has been done against you. Living the best life you're capable of could also be a good form of revenge and it's much better for your own success and well-being.

Here are some sample scenarios where you can take the high road rather than seeking revenge:

1. **Someone takes credit for your hard work.** Do as much as you can to let others know what happened and then take steps needed to stop

sharing ideas with him/her. Forgive the person in question and know that he or she has some sort of insecurity that led to this.

2. **A relative is demanding and wants to monopolize your time.** Stand up for yourself and set guidelines. You can better forgive if you try to understand his feelings about a situation he might be in – aging, being alone and much more.
3. **Inconsiderate friends or co-workers.** Everyone has bad days. If the person isn't normally inconsiderate, just let it go. Don't make whatever happened into a big dramatic scene and just go about your own business.
4. **Abuse – now or from childhood.** It's so difficult to have compassion for physical and mental abusers and even more difficult if the person who abused is someone you loved and trusted. Abusers are broken people, but you don't have to let them back into your life if you work through the abuse you've suffered, accept that it happened and banish the thoughts.

Forgiveness is a restorative device that can be used to transform anger and thoughts of revenge into liberation from the negativity. You'll be able to finally move forward with the knowledge that you've worked through your negative thoughts and look forward to the positive life ahead.

Remember that with forgiveness, you're not excusing the transgressor's responsibility for this or her actions. Nor should it be justified or minimized. But, forgiveness provides you with a peace that helps you continue on the path of happiness and productivity.

Main Points of Chapter 4: Steps to True Forgiveness

After you've decided to take the path of forgiveness, you may feel lost and clueless about what to do next. Chapter 4: Steps to True Forgiveness is designed to help you work through the roadblocks of emotions and reality to find a way to forgive and get your life back on track.

- Forgiveness can be a long and arduous path, but is worthwhile if it can release you from the anger and anxiety that makes your life miserable.
- First, you have to make a decision to forgive – but make it in your own time, not because someone else tells you it's time.
- Some steps you'll be taking to the state of true forgiveness, or release from pain include forgiving yourself if you had a role in the hurtful situation and empowering yourself by vowing to live a good life in the future.
- You may have feelings that you can never forgive. Realize that it takes time and patience, especially if the hurt was caused by someone you trusted or loved.
- Thoughts of revenge never work to finally reach true forgiveness. There are no short cuts to finding the compassion to let go of your feelings of revenge. In fact, the first step to true forgiveness is feeling anger toward the person who hurt you.
- It may be difficult to take the high road – especially if someone you work with took credit for work you did or you suffered abuse in a relationship or in childhood.
- Analyze your thoughts and actions so you can better understand how they're destructive and taking control of your life.

Many times all we can hope for is karma to get true revenge and to rid yourself of the hurt you're feeling. It's best in the meantime, to take control of your feelings and your life and not let another person rule your thought patterns.

Forgiveness Is a Gift to Yourself

Finally, know that forgiveness isn't for the perpetrator – it's for you. It's a gift you give yourself so that you can get on with the life you were destined to live before the hurtful even took place.

This guide to forgiveness has provided the tools you need to begin and follow through with the process of forgiveness. When you first decided to read this guide, you began the forgiveness process. Now, it's time to put it into practice in your thoughts and actions.

Don't stop now. When you become stuck in the process, read the guide again – and again – and reach out for other methods if you have trouble staying on track. Writing about the situation and then burning the paper or putting it in a bottle and releasing it to the sea are ritualistic methods of letting go that work for some. Yoga and other gentle mind and body exercises are also wonderful methods of releasing the feelings of anger that may crowd your thoughts.

Others need more. You may need one-on-one therapy if the anger and resentment is affecting your life to the point that you're beginning to experience mental and physical problems.

Non-Forgiveness Can Cost You Dearly

Many mental and physical maladies can come from harboring pain and resentment, including high blood pressure and depression and gives a distinct boost to your immune system. A conscious choice to release the hurt with forgiveness can free you to go on to better things in life.

With forgiveness comes insight and humility. When you truly forgive, you'll feel much better about yourself and your life. Your self-esteem will improve and you'll

trust yourself more to make good decisions.

When you've been hurt by someone you love, it's especially important that you first care for and about yourself. The immediate impact of hurt can cause you to halt in your tracks and it may take a super-human effort to drag yourself around and do what you must do.

Eventually, you're going to have to pull yourself up by the bootstraps and get going with life again. Anger and resentment only causes you to give up the peace and serenity that comes from dwelling on past events. It can be especially difficult to forgive if the other person doesn't apologize or make amends in some way.

The older you get, the more harm that anger can do to your body and soul. Mark Twain said: "Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured."

Twain was right in his assessment of anger and the problems it causes. Think of how you feel when experiencing anger and resentment. Anxiety may cause an upset stomach, muscles become tight and ache and you can't think of anything but how you're doing to get revenge. The more you think of the pain, the worse it becomes.

The price you pay for those feelings is enormous and includes cardiovascular problems, high blood pressure, immune system degeneration, depression, sleep loss and even sexual dysfunction.

You have to ask yourself if hanging on to the hurt and resentment is doing more good than harm and decide whether you can emotionally quell these feelings. Thoughts of anger, hostility and bitterness can be replaced with positive thoughts that might consist of compassion or sympathy, both for yourself and the other person.

In choosing the positive way to deal with negative feelings, you'll be replacing the negative thoughts immediately, as they occur, with positive thoughts that are healthy and crucial to your recovery and well-being.

Some things you should remember from reading this guide include learning the true definition of forgiveness and why you should practice it in your own life. When you let hurt and anger define you, you dwell on the incident constantly and don't give yourself a chance to be as happy or fulfilled as you could be. Choose forgiveness and get on with your life.