



Forgiveness as Part of Healing

By Teri Claassen MSW, LCSW, LCAC

Forgiveness: An Important Part of the Healing Process

Forgiveness is an extremely scary process for many. Oftentimes people don't know how to do it, nor do they realize the powerful healing that can come as a result of it. Here are 8 things to remember when entering into forgiveness and healing.

Forgiveness is a process. It is about you letting go of the wound someone has inflicted on you. This might not be something you do only one time about a specific wound. You may need to do it multiple times and every time you feel the pain of the wound. The process may include you getting out your pain and anger in a healthy way, such as writing this person a letter saying everything you wish you could say to them and don't send it. Letting go of the pain gives you freedom and the ability to genuinely wish the person who hurt you well.

It is for you not them. Remember that you do not forgive someone so **they** can feel better. You forgive someone so **you** can feel better. When you forgive, you are making a choice to start feeling better; thus, not forgiving is choosing to not feel better. I heard someone say once that, "Not forgiving is like drinking poison and expecting someone else to die."

The alternative to forgiveness is resentment. Resentment can be very ugly. It is toxic when you carry it around inside and it grows into something usually more painful than the original wound itself. Be careful of this. Resentment is a relationship killer!

Forgiving someone is giving up hope you can change the past. It often means coming to a place of acceptance that the pain happened and it was hurtful. Forgiving takes you out of your denial.

You don't have to wait for them to say "I'm sorry" to forgive. Many people think that they have to be "asked for forgiveness" to receive it. The reality is you may never hear "I'm sorry" from someone who hurt you. They may never see that they did anything wrong, let alone ask for forgiveness. Waiting for them to make the first move will many times cause you to stay stuck and not get past the pain of the wound.

Forgiving is recognizing someone's humanness. We are all human, which makes us imperfect and capable of hurting other people. Just because someone hurts people doesn't mean it was intentional. Recognizing someone's humanness doesn't make it okay that they hurt you, but it can help you accept that pain is a hard part of relationships and caring about people.

Forgiving someone is not saying you are okay with what they did.

Many people worry that forgiving someone sends the message that they are condoning a person's behavior. It is not about making a moral judgment, but about you being free from holding onto the pain. They will suffer natural consequences for their actions. It is not necessary for you to be the "punisher" of their actions.

Forgiving someone does not mean you have to be friends with them.

Some people are not emotionally safe for you to be around. Forgiving them does not mean you have to let them back into your world.

As you embark on the journey of forgiveness, remember this quote by Lewis Smedes: "To forgive is to set a prisoner free and to discover that the prisoner was you."

Pain is a part of life's journey; therefore, forgiveness will be too. Whether your wounds are the result of a cheating spouse, an abuser, a hurtful word, or abandonment from a friend, forgiveness is a vital part of your healing process.



Contact Renewed Horizon today if you need more information or to set up an appointment to begin your forgiveness journey.

About Renewed Horizon

Renewed Horizon is a Christian counseling practice that serves individuals, couples, families, and teens to address difficulties in life. It is a place to find guidance, healing, and hope when life feels hopeless and unimaginable.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” ~ II Corinthians 5:17



Teri Claassen received her Bachelor’s Degree from Anderson University with a double major in Psychology and Family Science. She completed her graduate studies at Indiana University where she received her Masters in Social Work.

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