

Ten Stepping Stones to Forgiveness and Emotional Health

1. Be open to the possibility of changing your beliefs about forgiveness.

Recognize that forgiveness is an act of strength, not weakness. Recognize that forgiveness is a gift that you give to yourself, not to the other person. Understand that forgiveness frees you from much of the negative emotion that you have too long experienced.

Choosing not to forgive is like taking a poison and expecting it to kill the other person.

2. Be willing to let go of being a victim.

Choose to believe that holding grievances and unforgiving thoughts is choosing to suffer. Find no value in self-pity.

3. Remind yourself that your anger and judgments can't change or punish someone else, but they will hurt you.

The events of the past can't hurt you now, but your thoughts about the past can cause you immense distress and suffering. Recognize that any emotional pain you feel this moment is caused by your own thoughts about what happened to you - not by what happened to you.

4. See the value of giving up, not some, but all of your judgments.

It is no coincidence that the happiest people are those who choose not to judge and know the power of forgiveness.

5. Recognize that holding on to anger will not bring you what you really want.

Ask yourself this question, "Does holding on to my justified anger really bring me peace of mind?" Anger and peace, judgment and happiness cannot exist at the same time.

6. See that there is no value in punishing yourself.

Once you truly recognize that your angry and unhappy thoughts about the past are poisoning your life, you will embrace forgiveness and know the meaning of love.

7. Believe that forgiveness means giving up all hope for a better past.

Accept your past, forgive your past, and embrace the present and future with hope. There is no law forcing you to remain a victim of the past.

8. Choose to be happy rather than right.

When we stop trying to control others and focus instead on our own thoughts, we give ourselves the gifts of freedom and peace.

9. Believe that you have the power to choose the thoughts you put into your mind.

Perhaps the greatest gift we have been given is the power to choose loving thoughts rather than angry ones. Your mind is not a dumpster that will remain unaffected by the trash you put into it. Treat it like a garden and it will blossom.

10. Be willing to make peace of mind your only goal and believe that forgiveness is the key to happiness.

Regardless of the chaos around us, we can know peace if that is our single goal. Choose not to let outside circumstances or people decide whether you will be happy. Anger, judgments and unforgiving thoughts make and suffer and releasing them brings us joy. It is truly that simple.

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