

THE 8-STEP PROCESS OF FORGIVING YOURSELF*

DIRECTIONS FOR THE PROCESS OF FORGIVENESS

First and foremost, you are **not** to do this exercise on your own. You must do this with an accountability partner who can assist you as you walk through this painful journey. Before you begin, pray to God that He will reveal to you names and events in your life in relation to the sins you have committed against others and how this caused them personal injury physically, spiritually, emotionally, and mentally. Complete this entire exercise in writing and **do not** do this as a verbal exercise, because you will forget important details that will lead to your healing. It is important to write down your answers in detail, because this will increase your sense of self-awareness, help you to see the problems that you have caused by your actions and the actions of others, and it will help you to plan how you may avoid future problems. Complete each column from left to right entirely, and **do not** skip over any of the steps in this healing process. Finally, after completing the process of forgiveness, confess your sins to God, yourself, and your accountability partner, and have your accountability partner lay hands on you and pray for you as this is necessary for your healing (see James 5:13-16; 1 John 1:9).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Name of person you hurt	List the details of what you did to that person	In what ways did this harm them physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually, etc.?	Did they contribute to the problem in any way?	Understand why you did what you did = compassion (What is your personal history?)	Grieve	Prayer for forgiveness for yourself	Reconciliation

* David G. Myers. *Psychology Through the Eyes of Faith*. Harper Collins. New York, N.Y. 2003. Pgs. 142-143.

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1. **Name of person you hurt:** We must get out of denial and stop pretending that we have not hurt others. If we are troubled that we have hurt others, we must acknowledge that hurt.
2. **List the details of how you have hurt others:** We must list the details of what of how we have hurt others. While this may cause you pain now there is freedom at the end of this process. Denial of past memories does not lead to physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental healing but only prolonged suffering.
3. **How have others suffered because of the wrongs you committed against them?** List the physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental ways you or others have suffered because of you hurting them.
4. **How did you and they contribute to the problem?** List your contribution to the problem in detail. Be honest about what you have done. If you fail to do so, then you will continue to suffer the physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental consequences of your denial. If they contributed to the problem, do not use this as an excuse for your bad behavior. You must accept responsibility for your wrongdoing without exception.
5. **Understand why you did what you did:** To understand the thoughts, feelings, actions, and attitudes of ourselves, we must take into consideration our personal background, history, and life experiences. Did you come from a troubled home? Were you abused as a child? Where did you learn these types of behaviors that contributed to the problem? This helps you to understand why you did what you did. This is not to excuse yourself for bad behavior, but it leads you to have compassion for yourself, and compassion leads to forgiveness. This also helps you to increase your sense of self-awareness, helps you to see the problems that you have caused by your actions, and it will help you to plan how you may avoid future problems.
6. **Grieve:** We must allow ourselves to grieve over the wrongs we have committed against others. It is not unusual for us to experience feelings of sadness, anger, frustration, and many other emotions but we must allow ourselves to go through the grieving process as this leads to healing.
7. **Repent & Pray for Forgiveness:** "Lord, I ask for your forgiveness for my unforgiveness towards myself. I choose to forgive myself for the sins I have committed against others, and I genuinely repent from my heart. I also ask for Your blessing upon me in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Just as you have forgiven me so I must also forgive myself and I do so in the power of your Holy Spirit in me, with me, and through me. Thank you for your love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness. In the name of your precious Son Jesus Christ I ask and pray these things. Amen."
8. **Experiencing Forgiveness.** When we choose to forgive and go through the forgiveness process, we experience positive attitudes, less depression, less anxiousness, high self-esteem, hope, calmness, joy, and good health (physically, spiritually, emotionally, & mentally).¹⁷ After completing this process have you experienced these improvements in your life? When you have completed this process run your journal regarding each individual through the paper shredder.

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