

# THE 8-STEP PROCESS OF FORGIVING OTHERS\*

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## 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 who hurt you	List the details of what they did to you	In what ways did this harm you physically, emotionally, mentally, & spiritually, etc.?	Did you contribute to the problem in any way?	Understand why they did what they did = compassion (What is their personal history?)	Grieve – after you have grieved shred the documents	Prayer for forgiveness for the person who hurt you	Experiencing Forgiveness: List how your life has improved after completing this process.

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\* 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 who hurt you:** You must get out of denial and stop pretending that others have not hurt you. If others have hurt you, then you must acknowledge that hurt.
2. **List the details of how others have hurt you, or how you have hurt others:** You must list the details of what has happened to you. 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 you suffered because of those who hurt you?** List the physical, spiritual, emotional, mental, sexual, financial ways you have suffered because of them hurting you.
4. **How did they or you contribute to the problem?** For those of us who have been physically, spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and sexually abused as a child, you have no responsibility and you did not in any way contribute to the problem. The sole responsibility lies with the abusive person, not you. In situations other than these, 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.
5. **Understand why they did what they did, or why you did what you did:** To understand the thoughts, feelings, actions, and attitudes of others and ourselves, we must take into consideration their personal background, history, and life experiences. Did they come from a troubled home? Were they abused as a child? Where did they learn these types of behaviors that contributed to the problem? This helps us to understand why they did what they did. This is not to excuse their bad behavior, but it leads us to have understanding, and understanding leads to compassion, and compassion leads to forgiveness. This also helps us to increase our sense of self-awareness, helps us to see the problems that they have caused by their actions, and it will help us to plan how we may avoid future problems.
6. **Grieve:** We must allow ourselves to grieve over the wrongs committed against us. 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, and I genuinely repent from my heart. I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for the sins they committed against me. I also ask that you bless them 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 them 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, good health (physically, spiritually, emotionally, & mentally).<sup>19</sup> 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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