

# Living with Forgiveness 101 – Lesson 1

The best place to start is with a simple question: **What is forgiveness?**

**for·give·ness** What does it mean to forgive?

Freeing yourself from the pain and hurt of the past so that you can live the life you have always wanted to live.

Religions throughout all of human history have touted this concept of forgiveness. But what I want you to know is you do NOT have to be religious or even spiritual to benefit from forgiveness.

*What were you taught, if anything, about forgiveness growing up?*

**I say forgiveness is a CHOICE.  
A choice to release and let go of anger, hurt and pain.**

Forgiveness is a great step in healing your heart and soul. It is part of a healing journey for many. It can start with one small step, or you might take a gigantic leap.

For many, it's a letting go of guilt and shame for poor past behavior.

*What are you holding onto that you would like to forgive?*

*Why are you holding on to this unforgiveness? What meaning are you giving it?*





## **Common misperceptions about what forgiveness means:**

- ▶ It lets someone off the hook
- ▶ You are weak or needy
- ▶ Their wrong should be punished
- ▶ There is right and there is wrong, and what they did is wrong, if I let this go, I will essentially be condoning their bad behavior
- ▶ You will forget what happened
- ▶ You have to stupidly trust that person again
- ▶ You have a duty to NOT let them off the hook until they've made adequate retribution
- ▶ You cannot forgive them unless they feel guilty and want forgiveness
- ▶ You will feel peace instantly

*What reason, what misperception, have you held on to that just would not let you let go of your unforgiveness?*

*How would your life change if you chose to let go of that misperception and realize it was just something you made up to give you the excuse not to let go?*



**The Truth about Forgiveness:** It has nothing to do with the other person, but everything to do with you. Forgiveness is 100% a gift for YOU to release those feelings of hurt, anger, bitterness and even guilt and shame.

- ▶ Forgiveness is about taking responsibility for your own actions and feelings
- ▶ Forgiveness allows you to release hurt and anger
- ▶ Forgiveness helps you get out of the Victim role
- ▶ You are the most important recipient of the gift of forgiveness
- ▶ Forgiveness allows you to let go of the desire to retaliate
- ▶ The "event" or the "person" no longer gets to control you
- ▶ Because forgiveness is a discipline, the more you do it, the easier it becomes and the lighter your load will be
- ▶ There is nothing too big, too awful, too horrible that cannot be forgiven.
- ▶ Forgiveness allows you to see the big picture and gets you out of your "small, fearful self"
- ▶ If you do nothing else, just changing your thoughts, from fear, anger, hatred, or hurt to forgiveness, can change your life.

*What do you now know that you did not know before about forgiveness? What is the new "truth" you'd like to take on about forgiveness and how would that change your view of your situation?*

*Forgiveness is about being courageous.  
"The weak can never forgive.  
Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."*

*"If we practice an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth,  
soon the whole world will be blind and toothless."  
Mahatma Gandhi*

