

Living with Forgiveness 101 – Lesson 3

10 Helpful Tools and Concepts to Aid in YOUR Forgiveness Journey

1. We all make mistakes. We are human. We are all human beings, not perfection beings. We are here to learn lessons and part of learning lessons is to make mistakes. The key is to learn from them!



2. The truth sets you free. Because we've all made mistakes, and we compare ourselves against our ideas of what other people expect of us, we sometimes are not fully honest. Being super honest about the reality of a situation makes it possible for us to grow and change. We will get into this more in the next lesson.

3. No one wants the past to follow them forever. No one wants to be known their whole life for the mistakes they've made. Don't hold others to that level either. Punishing and making someone suffer forever for something they did in the past doesn't help us on the path to healing, nor does it change the past.

Without being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to a single deed from which we could never recover; we would remain the victims of its consequences forever....

~ Hannah Arendt



4. **Have Compassion.** Can you find compassion for the situation or the people involved? Maybe it's just about having compassion for yourself and what you suffered in the situation. I find that self-compassion is one of the most difficult skills for many people. (We will talk much more about this in the longer course)

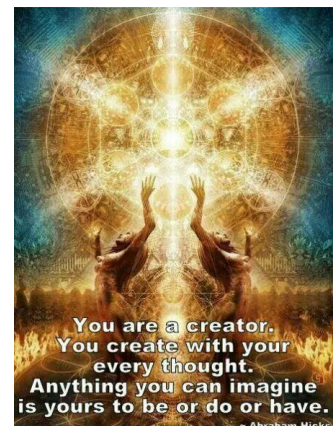
Can you think of a time where you really beat yourself up? What was that about? What did it take to get over it? Where did those thoughts come from? How can you avoid them in the future?

5. **Forgiveness goes beyond you.** Remember the video of the serial killer? When everyone was screaming at him for his horrendous actions? It looked like he felt nothing. I can't say what he did or didn't feel. BUT I do think it's obvious when the man who stood up forgave him, Ridgeway did show emotion.

The man clearly did not forgive Ridgeway for Ridgeway himself, yet, there was something that was transmitted between the two of them, and even between us who watch or witness this video years later. What is that transmittal? There is some kind of connection when someone opens his/her heart and becomes vulnerable and real.

6. **Stay open to more flexible thinking.** While the truth may hurt, the reality is that we all have different perspectives, and thus different truths. Stay open to seeing things differently as the truth is always somewhere in between 2 perspectives.

Being flexible helps others come forward to tell their truth. When you change your focus from hurt, sadness, anger, retaliation to gratefulness, understanding, acceptance, you start feeling more lightness, peace and joy in your life.



Look at the photo below. Do you see the little girl or the old woman? How often has something looked as though it is one way and you realize later it's something else?





It's just perception!

We all have the ability to turn hardships or tragedies into blessings. If you follow these steps and build your forgiveness muscles, I believe that no matter what you've been through, you too can live a joyous life.

7. Forgiveness takes practice. Like any skill, the more you practice the better you become. Forgiveness creates more self-confidence because people who forgive learn to take control of their feelings and emotions, they choose to let things go. People who forgive know they can be hurt and can recover from that hurt.

8. An alternative spiritual perspective on being/feeling hurt:

No one else hurts you. They simply act and then YOU get to choose how you would like to respond. Do you feel hurt, angry or something else? Also, can you see how their actions were a gift for you, to heal something in yourself, or to grow and learn from it?

9. Relationships with others can be healing more than you think: It's often said we marry one of our parents...the one we have the most trouble with! It is also often said we marry the same person over and over again. Have you ever wondered why? It's usually because there is something unhealed within us that we need to heal. So, when you're beating yourself up for the same thing, or getting angry or frustrated about the same things, realize the current relationship is TRIGGERING SOME PAST PATTERN OR HURT THAT NEEDS TO BE HEALED.

10. Ultimately it's only a thought: Everything we believe, everything we hold true, it is ultimately nothing more than just a thought. We can change our thoughts and our beliefs. So rather than look at something as devastating, we can choose to see the gifts and lessons in the situation. As though that person came in and did this wonderful thing for us.



Please think of a time when someone hurt you or did something that you felt really destroyed your life. How long did it take to pass? What were your thoughts immediately after it happened and what were your thoughts a year later? How did they change? The situation was the same, but your mindset might very well be different.

This Too Shall Pass

