

Six Steps for Forgiving Others

Taken from Sharon's book: *Your Scars are Beautiful to God*

Nothing will make us more bitter than an unforgiving spirit. And nothing dissolves bitterness quicker than a decision to forgive and let go of the offense or disappointment. We cannot be bitter and get better at the same time. If you want to live fully and free, forgiveness is the only way.

Forgiveness is not...

- Saying that what the person did was not wrong
- Absolving the person from responsibility for their actions
- Denying the wrong occurred
- Pretending the abuse did not happen.

Forgiveness is...

- Letting go of your need for revenge
- Cutting the person loose
- Refusing to let bitterness and hatred rule your life
- Leaving the past behind by not allowing it to control your actions or emotions in the present

Forgiveness. It's hard work. So is mining for gold or unearthing hidden treasure. But in the end, the valuable jewel is worth the effort. Let me walk with you through six steps to forgiveness that might help you in the process.

1. On a piece of paper, write the name of the person who has hurt you.
2. Write down how the person hurt you (ie. rape, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, betrayal, desertion, rejection, etc.)
3. Write down how you feel about that person. Be honest. God knows how you feel.



4. Decide to forgive. Forgiveness is not a feeling but a decision of the will. God will never tell us to do something without providing the power to obey. He has told us to forgive and will give us the power to do so – but it all begins with the decision to do so.

5. Take your list to God and confess your forgiveness to Him. “Lord, I come to You today and give up my unforgiveness. I forgive ____ for _____. At this moment, I choose not to hold his/her offense against him/her but put him/her into your hands. I pray that you will heal my emotional wounds and help me to be able to help someone else with the same comfort you have given me. I cut _____ loose.”

6. As a visual exercise, destroy the list. Some have taken the list to a safe place, such as a fireplace, and burned it. Others have actually nailed the paper to a wooden cross. Still others have written the person's name of whom they forgave on a helium balloon and released it to heaven. However, you choose, give the name to God.

