

Can You Learn to Be More Forgiving?

Forgiveness is not just about saying the words. **"Our work is to move from judgment to understanding."**

- "It is an active process in which you make a conscious decision to let go of negative feelings whether the person deserves it or not."
- As you release the anger, resentment and hostility, you begin to feel empathy, compassion and sometimes even affection for the person who wronged you.

Studies have found that some people are just naturally more forgiving. Consequently, they tend to be more satisfied with their lives and to have less depression, anxiety, stress, anger and hostility.

People who hang on to grudges, however, are more likely to experience severe depression and as well as other health conditions. But that doesn't mean that they can't train themselves to act in healthier ways. And it can start now. Find something or someone to forgive in your life, and go through these steps to complete the process. As you practice this, you will get better at it and feel better for going through it. Give it a shot!

Making Forgiveness Part of Your Life

Forgiveness is a choice. "You are choosing to offer compassion and empathy to the person who wronged you." The following steps can help you develop a more forgiving attitude—and benefit from better emotional and physical health.

Reflect and remember:

Understand why someone acts the way they do. Perhaps the most important tool and first step in forgiveness is to understand "why" someone acts the way they do. That includes the events themselves, and also how you reacted, how you felt, and how the anger and hurt have affected you since.

Empathize with the other person.

For instance, if your family member treated you in a certain way that you thought was unfair, try to understand what they were going through at the time. Often times people that are going through hard times or stressful situations act in a way towards others based on how they are feeling themselves. Try to understand what the other person is or was going through.

Forgive deeply.

Simply forgiving someone because you think you have no other alternative or because you think it's the right thing to do may be enough to bring some healing. But one study found that people whose forgiveness came in part from understanding that no one is perfect were able to resume a normal relationship with the other person, even if that person never apologized. Those who only forgave in an effort to salvage the relationship wound up with a worse relationship. If possible, talk to the person (when you are calm and centered) and ask them about their own experience. "Because when we know better, we do better."

Let go of expectations.

An apology may not change your relationship with the other person or elicit an apology from them. If you don't expect either, you won't be disappointed.

Decide to forgive.

Once you make that choice, seal it with an action. If you don't feel you can talk to the person who wronged you, write about your forgiveness in a journal or even talk about it to someone else in your life whom you trust.

Forgive yourself and let go.

The act of forgiving includes forgiving yourself. Give yourself space. Be patient. True healing happens over time. Get quiet, mindful and give yourself permission to let past events and interactions go that are not serving you well or making you feel better. It will happen.

Source:

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/forgiveness-your-health-depends-on-it>