



Session Five

forgiveness

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

Mahatma Gandhi

Forgiveness - Why Bother?

Forgiveness helps you heal

Holding onto resentment can sour you and keep you from finding peace. When you can't forgive, your emotional wounds can't close and heal.

Forgiveness keeps us sober

When we insist on carrying a load of bitterness and resentment, we threaten our sobriety. It's too easy spiral down into shame and anger. We leave ourselves open to the despair that we want to drink away.



Forgiveness changes you

An unforgiving spirit produces all kinds of negative emotions in us—anger, bitterness, depression, jealousy, hate, and so forth. Any of those easily becomes a spiritual and emotional poison, eating away at our souls and turning us into unloving (and unlovable) people.

Forgiveness leads us to Emotional Sobriety

Forgiveness is a choice. When we decide to face our personal demons honestly and courageously, we grow up emotionally.

Forgiving others makes it easier to forgive ourselves

Practice makes perfect!

Forgiveness - What is It?

- A conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your forgiveness.
- Forgiveness is not condoning, pardoning or excusing the offender. It is acknowledging that although you may not be responsible for what happened, you are fully responsible for your long-term attitude.
- Forgiveness is giving up the right to get even
- Forgiveness is giving up all hope of having had a different past - Anne Lamott

People hurt each other.
It happens to everyone.
Intentionally,
unintentionally,
regretfully or not. It's a
part of what we do as
people. The beauty is
that we have the ability
to heal and forgive.

-Adi Alsaid

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FORGIVE YOURSELF,
YOU ARE NOT PERFECT.
SHOW YOURSELF GRACE,
YOU ARE STILL LEARNING.
SHOW YOURSELF
PATIENCE,
YOU ARE ON A JOURNEY.

SHANNON YVETTE TANNER

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Forgiving does not
erase the bitter past.
A healed memory is
not a deleted memory.
Instead, forgiving
what we cannot
forget creates a new
way to remember. We
change the memory
of our past into a
hope for our future.

-Lewis B. Smedes

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Forgiveness and Power

How to Forgive?

1. Revisit the pain. A 4th step inventory sheet can be helpful here. Write down who was involved, what happened, how it affected you, and what was your part, if any. Be honest. Write for your eyes only. This is where your heart can express itself. Let the pain out. Acknowledge resentment, grudges, vengeance, what you lost.
2. When you are ready, share it with someone you trust. "We are only as sick as our secrets". Dump your feelings and thoughts. Listen to yourself as you talk. Listen to your friend. Listen for the small still voice inside of you. What do you hear? Has anything changed?
3. Remember that you are not the first or the last person to live through a situation like yours. You are not unique nor is the situation. Find comfort in being ordinary.
4. Put yourself in the other's shoes. Why do you think they acted like that towards you? Do you still have a resentment or is there a bit of compassion coming through? You can have conflicted feelings. Stop blaming them for holding you back now. You have power to forgive and move on.
5. Accept what happened as an opportunity to grow in spirituality and compassion. Sharing your story might change the life of someone else. Remember the Promises - "We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it"

Power is the ability to have an effect on someone

A caring parent has the power to make a child feel safe. A loving partner has the power to make someone feel valued. A spiritually sick adult has enough power to molest a child. A vengeful friend has the power to ruin a friend's reputation through gossip.

Your power is the ability to have an effect on YOU

A woman living in active addiction has surrendered her power to drugs and alcohol. She hides from difficulties and gives up being in charge of her life. Her power starts to fade away as substances, people and circumstances make choices for her. A woman's first step to reclaiming her power is to stop using substances. As her mind starts to clear, she can see reality and choose how to respond to it. If she continues in recovery, her mind and heart will awaken, and her power will grow. She will decide for herself if recovery is right for her. If she chooses recovery, she has the power to decide what kind of recovery. Will it be a recovery of growth and healing, or will it be a "dry drunk" recovery?

The power of forgiveness

Forgiveness has the power to transform anger and hurt into healing and peace. Forgiveness has the power to overcome depression, anxiety, and rage, as well as personal conflicts. Forgiveness has the power to set yourself free so that you can move forward in your own life. What will happen if you use your power to choose the power of forgiveness?

