

# Forgiveness Discussion Outline

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## I. How have you been hurt?

- A. Disappointment
- B. Rejection
- C. Abandonment
- D. Ridicule
- E. Humiliation
- F. Betrayal
- G. Deception
- H. Abuse

## II. What is Forgiveness

### A. Forgiveness is not:

- 1. Forgetting
- 2. Condoning
- 3. Absolution
- 4. A form of self-sacrifice
- 5. A clear-cut, one time decision

### B. Forgiveness is:

- 1. A by-product of an ongoing healing process
- 2. An *internal* process
- 3. A sign of positive self-esteem
- 4. Letting go of the intensive emotions attached to incidents from your past
- 5. Recognizing that you no longer *need* your grudges and resentments, your hatred and self-pity
- 6. No longer wanting to punish the people who hurt you
- 7. Accepting that nothing you do to punish *them* will heal *you*
- 8. Freeing up and putting to better use the energy once consumed by holding grudges, harboring resentments, and nursing unhealed wounds
- 9. Extending love to yourself and to those that hurt you
- 10. Moving on

## III. Do you want to be in a state of well being and at peace?

## IV. Forgiveness is something you do for you

## V. Forgiveness is hard work

## VI. Why Forgive

- A. Forgiving people are less likely to be hateful, depressed, hostile, anxious, angry, and neurotic
- B. They are more likely to be happier, healthier, more agreeable, and more serene
- C. They are better able to empathize with others and to be spiritual or religious
- D. People who forgive hurts in relationships are more capable of reestablishing

closeness

- E. The inability to forgive is associated with persistent rumination or dwelling on revenge, while forgiving allows a person to move on

#### VII. Six steps to forgiveness

- A. Denial
- B. Self-Blame
- C. The Victim Stage
- D. The Indignation Stage
- E. The Survivor Stage
- F. Integration

#### VIII. Marriage (and other special relationships) and forgiveness

- A. Unconscious contract of conditional love – if the other satisfies all their needs, wants, and expectations, then he/she will satisfy the other's needs, wants, and expectations
- B. Love is unconditional – satisfy the other's needs no matter what the other does or doesn't do
- C. When we can find unconditional love in our heart, there is no room for grievances, and therefore no need for forgiveness

#### IX. Prescription for inner peace

- A. Forgive your parents totally
- B. Forgive everyone who has ever been here, who is here now, or who will be here in the future, including ourselves, totally
- C. Forgive the world totally
- D. Forgive God totally
- E. Take a leap in faith and trust in love
- F. Choose to experience peace rather than conflict
- G. Choose to experience love rather than fear and guilt
- H. Choose to be a love-finder rather than a fault-finder
- I. Choose to be a love-giver rather than a love-seeker
- J. Teach only love

#### X. References (much of the material presented was adapted from the following books)

- A. *Forgiveness – How To Make Peace With Your Past And Get On With Your Life*, by Simon and Simon
- B. *Good-Bye To Guilt – Releasing Fear Through Forgiveness* by Gerald Jampolsky
- C. *Forgiveness – The Greatest Healer Of All* by Gerald Jampolsky
- D. *Chicken Soup for the Soul: The Power of Forgiveness – 101 Stories about How to Let Go and Change Your Life*, by Newark and Anderson
- E. *The How of Happiness – A New Approach to Getting the Life You Want* by Sonja Lyubomirsky