



FORGIVENESS-PT 2

The Buddha says “Holding onto anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one getting burned.” Forgiving people tend to be happier, healthier, and more empathetic. They walk around a little lighter because they have let go of all of that anger or resentment. **Today, you’re going to be writing a letter (on a plain piece of paper or in your journal) to a person or to a situation that you need to get clear with and forgive.** This isn’t a letter that is about venting your frustrations or giving them a piece of your mind, this is all about clearing the negativity YOU are holding onto from a responsible place, for the sake of getting CLEAR. **Recognize that forgiveness doesn’t mean you are CONDONING the actions of others, it means you are making space within your heart for the love and joy you are calling in.** Know that anyone who does harm to another is ultimately hurt, and doesn’t have the wherewithal to express it appropriately. They are often acting out what was done to them, sometimes without even being conscious of it.

Here’s how you could structure your letter:

1. **Start positively about how you feel about the person or situation. (EVERYONE can find a positive, because if we need to forgive someone or something, it means we once had stake in them and had good feelings involved.)** **Ex: Dear Dad, first off, I love you so much. Although I don’t express it as much as I’d like to, I want you to know that, you did a great job with my sister and I.**
2. **Write a few sentences on WHY you are writing the letter; why getting clear of the negativity and resentment is important to you. Why are you absolutely DONE with carrying around the burden of what happened? How are you feeling about it? What are those feelings doing to you?** **Ex: I’m writing you to clear the air with you because I’m really sad that we feel so disconnected. I’m sick of feeling uncomfortable around you, when I know that we could be so much closer. I’m tired of avoiding your calls and attempts to connect. I want unity in our family. I want to feel close to you. I want to have the father I never felt like I had.**

3. State that you're ready to forgive them and include what happened OBJECTIVELY, and as short as possible. Avoid getting into the "story" about it that you've been telling yourself; just state what occurred in as few words as possible. (The abuse, the cheating, the lies, the deceit, etc). **Ex: I'm ready to forgive you for the abuse.**
4. Write a few sentences on how you could understand HOW or WHY they did that from a space of true compassion. Put yourself in THEIR shoes. Own up to the role you played in it by either helping to create it, or allowing the situation, or your feelings about it, fester. **Ex: Now that I have a son, I realize that you did the best you could, and were only repeating what you learned from your Dad. I get how hard parenting is, and I see how hurt you must've been. I'm sorry you were dealing with something that I couldn't understand at the time.**
5. Take responsibility for your role in it. **Ex: And because I didn't understand it, I resented you all these years for it. I was afraid of you. I felt like you never loved me, and I recognize that story I carried pushed you further and further away. I made you wrong for everything you ever did, and never gave you the space to show up any differently from the story I held you in.**
6. Offer the opportunity to communicate with them about this, lovingly. **Ex: I'm here for you if you are willing to talk about this with me. I want to understand what you were going through and how it's affected you over the years.**
7. Close your letter with what you desire, deep down, from the situation. **All I want is for you and I to have clarity in our lives with each other. We may never have a close relationship, but I want us to both be in peace about it. I love you no matter what.**

YOUR STEP OF GREATNESS: We wanted you to write this letter to see what's possible for you in terms of forgiveness. **YOU DON'T NEED TO SEND THIS**, but, if you feel as if your letter is 100% from a space of responsibility and love, and you feel like this is something you want to send, do it. Just be sure you read it over and ensure that there are no "buttons" that you push, no victim mode (YOU did this to ME) and ALL love. If you don't feel ready to send it, no worries. Our intention with this exercise is simply to show you what true forgiveness takes.