

RECONCILIATION TOOLKIT

Forgiveness Brings Change



MarriageHelper

This lesson is shorter than the last one, since the last one might take a week or two to complete.

In this lesson, you will do an assessment to track how your forgiveness process is going for you.

LESSON HIGHLIGHTS

VIDEO 1: The Forgiveness Assessment

- Uncovering phase - bringing anger into the open makes healing possible (done in lesson 1)
- Do this assessment again and track progress
- Decision phase - realization the change needs to happen in order to heal
- Work phase - doesn't excuse offender, but seeks to understand
- Deepening phase - brings emotional relief in the process of forgiving

VIDEO 2: Action Steps

- Go through the following exercise
- Track progress from week 1

THE UNCOVERING PHASE

Understanding your anger begins to make healing possible.

If you have been hurt and feel anger because of that hurt, uncovering helps you begin to

- explore the injustice you experienced,
- assess the amount of your anger,
- understand any ways in which harboring your anger may be causing your more pain or harm.

Think of the person that caused you the most pain.

Circle YES or NO for whether you have experienced each statement.

If you mark YES, then rate the next part of that statement with the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all			Mixed			Completely

YES NO I admitted to myself that the person(s) hurt me.

___ I have accepted that this happened and have moved on.

YES NO I allowed myself to feel all the anger, resentment, etc. toward the person(s) who hurt me.

___ Those emotions have now subsided.

YES NO I admitted to myself that I felt shamed or humiliated by what the person(s) did. (if applicable to your situation)

___ I now have grown past those feelings.

YES NO I lost my energy because of the hurt or resentment I felt. Sometimes I felt that my feelings were consumed by what happened.

___ I have grown past that and gotten my energy back. I can enjoy life.

THE UNCOVERING PHASE

YES NO I thought over and over about what happened.

____ I no longer obsess about it. My thoughts are under control.

YES NO I compared my unfortunate state with my offender's more fortunate state. I felt that my offender didn't hurt like I hurt, or didn't have the negative consequences I faced.

____ I accepted the fact that my offender(s) will not hurt as I have hurt .

YES NO I realized that I may have been permanently changed by the event.

____ I know I am now a different person in some ways and accept that.

YES NO I began to adjust to the fact that life isn't always fair and things that happen to me will not always be fair.

____ I accept this as a part of life and no longer feel sorry for myself.

How have your answers changed from lesson 1?

THE DECISION PHASE

Continuing from the last phase, think of the person that caused you the most pain.

Circle YES or NO for whether you have experienced each statement.

If you mark YES, then rate the next part of that statement with the 1-7 scale.

YES NO I realized that my old ways of handling this problem were not working, that I wasn't feeling any better, and that I would need a new insight or change of heart in viewing the offender, the situation, or even the world in general.

____ I have had this change of heart about the offender and the situation.

YES NO I considered forgiveness as an option.

____ I decided that forgiving was the best option for me to pursue.

YES NO I committed to forgive the person(s) who hurt me, even if I wasn't sure I knew how to forgive, or even what forgiveness really means.

____ I have made that commitment and am following through with it.

THE WORK PHASE

Continuing from the last phase, think of the person that caused you the most pain.

Circle YES or NO for whether you have experienced each statement.

If you mark YES, then rate the next part of that statement with the 1-7 scale.

YES NO I attempted to view my offender in the context of his or her own life experience and background, including childhood, current stress or pressure, and other matters that may have affected his or her actions.

____ I have come to understand how my offender's life has affected him/her, and that helped me understand why s/he did those hurtful things.

YES NO I began to develop empathy toward the offender.

____ I have come to view him/her as a flawed human, not some evil creature.

YES NO I began to develop compassion for my offender.

____ I have felt the urge to be kind to him or her even though they hurt me.

YES NO Though I wished that I didn't hurt, I accepted that I did, took the pain as my own, and tried not to transfer it back to my offender or others.

____ I have embraced my hurt, quit blaming it on others, dealt with it, and no longer allow it to cause me to act negatively toward anyone.

THE DEEPENING PHASE

YES NO I found a new positive meaning to the suffering I endured.

____ The meaning I found helped make me sense of the whole incident.

YES NO I realized I needed to be forgiven by others for my past actions.

____ I thought about how I have been forgiven and what it meant to me. That led me to understand and appreciate the need that my offender(s) have for me to forgive them.

YES NO I realized that I can get support from others. I am not alone.

____ I know I'm not the only person who has ever been hurt. I have people in my life who love and care about me. They are there for me in good times and bad. I am never alone.

YES NO I developed a new purpose in life as a result of the experience.

____ Not only have I healed from my hurt, I have learned from it and used my experience to make my life better. The experience has helped me make the lives of people I care about better.

YES NO I became aware of decreased negative feelings toward the offender, increased positive feelings toward him or her, and my own internal emotional release.

____ I no longer am bound by hurt, anger, bitterness, or resentment. I hold no animosity toward those who hurt me. I know that I would help him/her if the opportunity arose. I have freedom from every bad thing involved in the hurt done me.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

For your own well-being, use the phases above as your map to healing and wholeness.

Actively work on each statement – in order – until you can honestly rate each of them...

- YES
- 7

When you achieve that, you will have:

- Peace
- Wisdom
- Meaning

From your answers, how do you feel about where you are on the path to forgiveness? What else do you need to do to forgive, be forgiven, or accept forgiveness?

AHA MOMENTS

Space for you to write down what you learned, big takeaways, or AHA moments from this lesson.