

# FORGIVENESS

FORGIVE OTHERS AND YOURSELF

*A workbook designed to help you forgive  
everything that needs to be forgiven*

# About Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a choice and not forgiving does not bring us any benefit. Even if the situation happened a long time ago it will continue to affect our lives until we forgive. Unfortunately, it is not something that we can put in a box and leave in the past, it needs to be worked on.

# UNDERSTANDING FORGIVENESS

There is a wrong idea about what it means to forgive, and that wrong idea makes the process of forgiveness even more difficult. Sometimes we are trying to forgive the wrong thing and other times we are trying to do it in a way that makes it impossible to forgive. So, before we start the process of forgiveness, let's understand what is and what is not, after all.

## WHAT IT IS

Forgiveness is something we do for ourselves and not something we do for the person who wronged us. By not forgiving, we are punishing ourselves for the rest of our lives for something that someone else has done, and that is so unhealthy. To forgive is to give ourselves a gift. The gift of freedom, mental, emotional and spiritual freedom.

## WHAT IS NOT

To forgive is not to excuse the other person's behavior. Just because we forgive someone doesn't mean that we are saying that their actions were correct. Accepting that a certain situation happened and is part of our life is not the same as accepting what the other person did as correct.

## WHY IT'S DIFFICULT

Forgiveness is giving up the hope that the past could be any different. It is no longer wishing that the situation had been different from the way it really was. It is simply accepting the way things happened. And that's why it's so difficult because it involves death and grief. Whatever happened, it has to be grieved.

## WHO DO YOU NEED TO FORGIVE?

Write the names of all the people you need to forgive. It doesn't matter if it is due to something small or big. It doesn't matter if it's due to something that happened recently or a long time ago. If you feel you need to forgive, write that person's name.

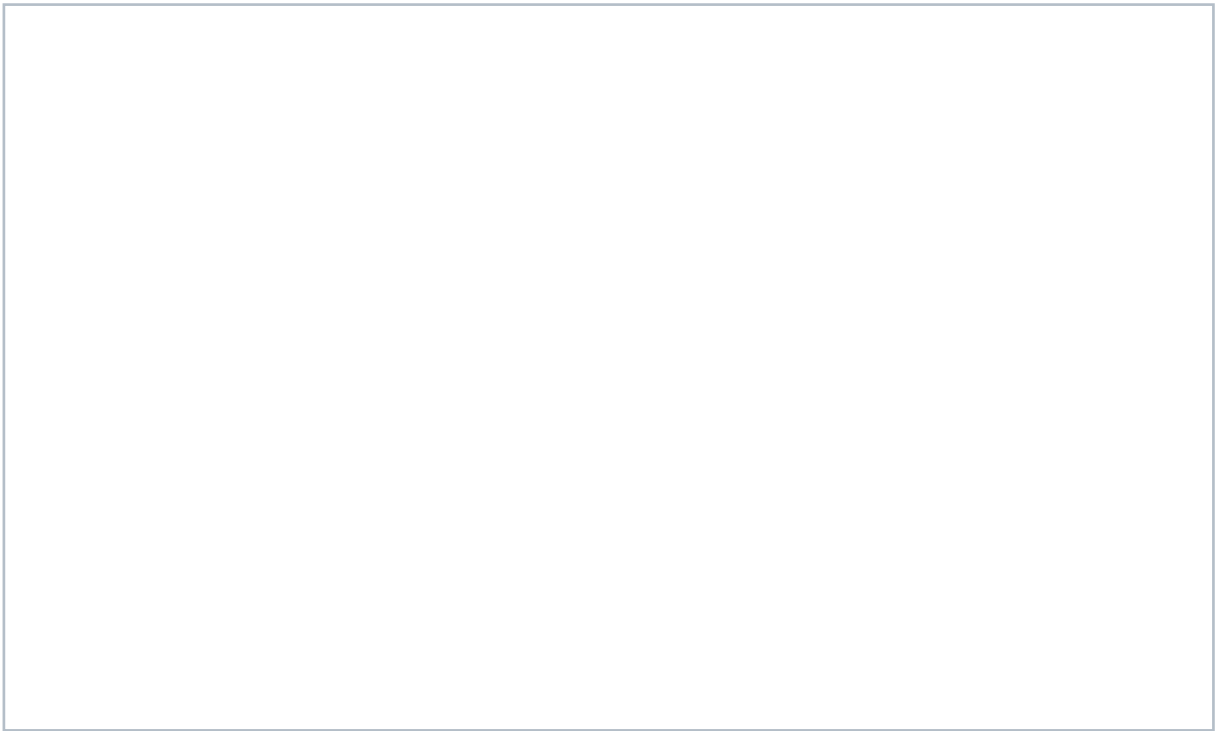
# **Forgiving Others**

Those experiences happened, yes, but they are not your life, they are not your essence. They are just events that have happened and that need healing. Nothing will erase them, but you can choose to forgive and get rid of the negative emotional side effects. Choose one of the people whose name you wrote before and begin the process of forgiveness.

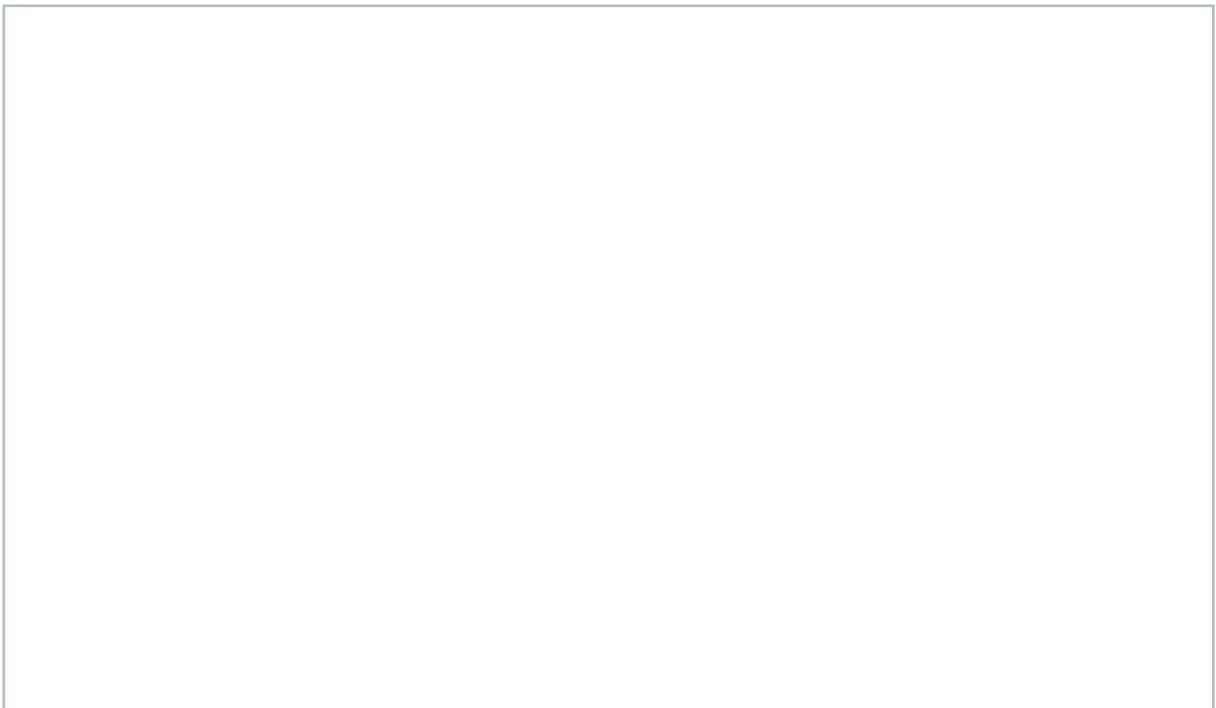
# TELL THE STORY

Start by describing what happened but try to remove yourself from the main role. Don't blame yourself for what happened. What someone did to you has nothing to do with you, it has to do with them. Recalling brings up the fear, anger, and hurt associated with the situation. Remember to take some time to let the feelings be felt, we have to feel to heal.

WHO HURT ME AND WHAT HAPPENED?



HOW DID THIS PERSON MAKE ME FEEL? WHY WAS THIS EXPERIENCE PAINFUL FOR ME?



# LOOK WITHIN

Understand how this experience is affecting you. Not only the experience itself but the fact that you have not yet forgiven the other person. Sense the weight of not forgiving. Pay attention to the story you are telling yourself and avoid falling into the trap of telling yourself a self-destructive story. Realize why it's so difficult for you to forgive this person by reflecting on what you would like to have happened. Although it's not easy to give up on the ideal reality, you will be one step closer just by knowing why it's so difficult for you to forgive.

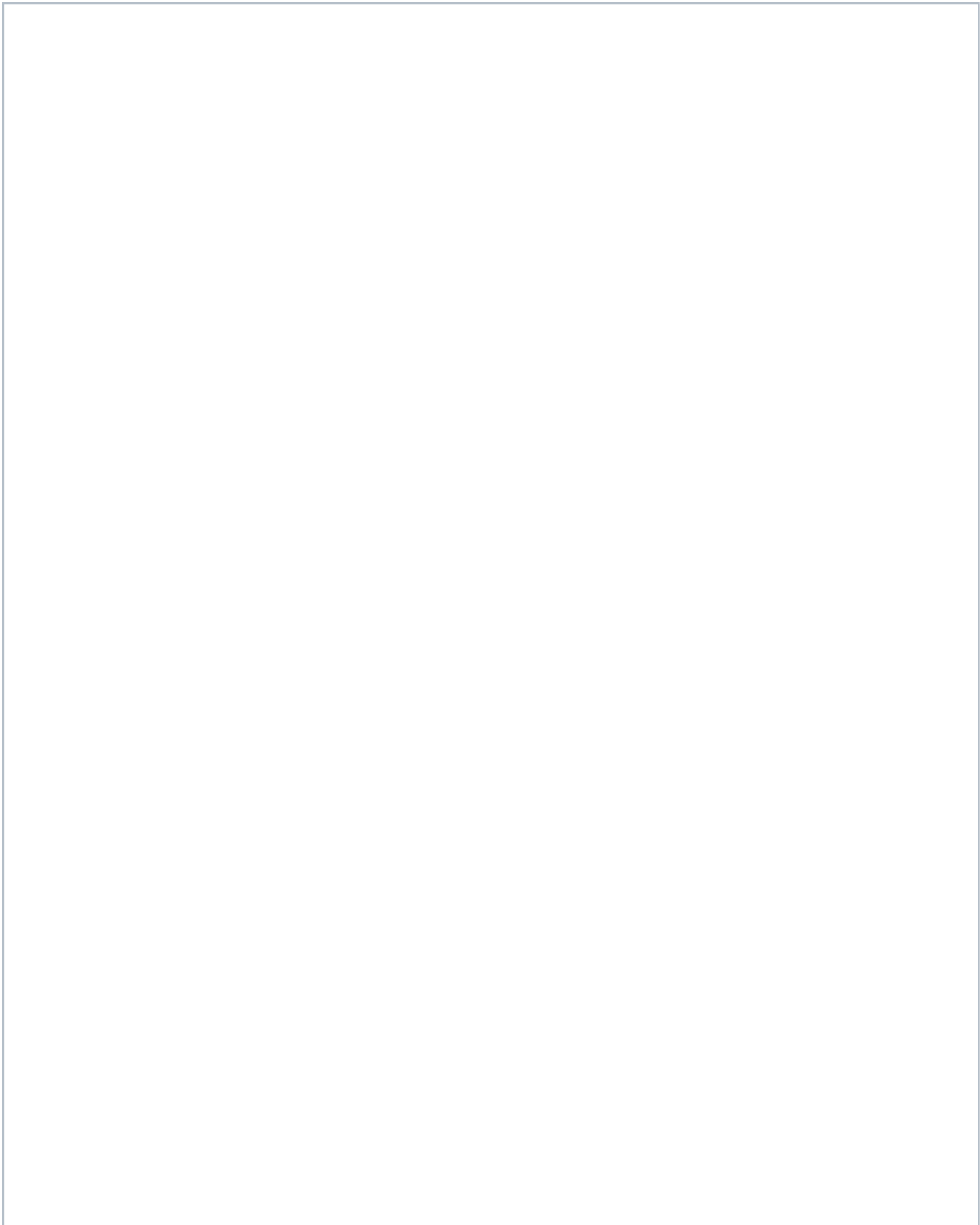
HOW HAS THIS EXPERIENCE SHAPED ME? HOW IS RESENTMENT AFFECTING MY LIFE?

WHAT STORY AM I TELLING MYSELF? IS IT A SELF-DESTRUCTIVE STORY?

WHAT WOULD I LIKE TO HAVE HAPPENED? WHAT WOULD BE THE IDEAL REALITY?

# PRACTICE EMPATHY

Try to see the other person's side. Imagine what might have caused the other person to behave that way. Was the person acting out of fear or pain? What could the person's state of mind be? Looking for these answers doesn't mean seeing the other person's attitude as correct. But it helps us to see beyond our own perspective and make more sense of the situation. You will find possible scenarios on the next page. Now, is this easy to do? Not at all. But both empathy and compassion can be practiced and can help us in so many other situations in life.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the lower two-thirds of the page. It is intended for the user to write or draw their thoughts and scenarios related to the text above.

# POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

Just because someone did something with good intentions or simply didn't think about the hurt they'd cause, doesn't make them right. Once again, this is not about seeing the other person's attitude as correct, but it can be so powerful to think:

"MAYBE THAT PERSON IS DEALING WITH CHILDHOOD TRAUMA"

"MAYBE THAT PERSON WAS ACTING OUT OF IGNORANCE"

"MAYBE THAT PERSON IS STRUGGLING DUE TO A DIVORCE"

"MAYBE THAT PERSON LACKS SELF-CONFIDENCE"

"MAYBE THAT PERSON WAS IN A HURRY TO TAKE A FAMILY MEMBER TO THE HOSPITAL"

"MAYBE THAT PERSON IS UNDER A LOT OF PRESSURE AT WORK RIGHT NOW"

"MAYBE THAT PERSON IS LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY AND HAS A HUNGRY CHILD AT HOME"

"MAYBE THAT PERSON WAS DIAGNOSED WITH A CHRONIC DISEASE"

"MAYBE THAT PERSON IS HAVING A HARD TIME BECAUSE OF THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE"

"MAYBE THAT PERSON HAS AN ILL CHILD"

"MAYBE THAT PERSON SUFFERS FROM INSOMNIA AND HASN'T SLEPT WELL IN A LONG TIME"

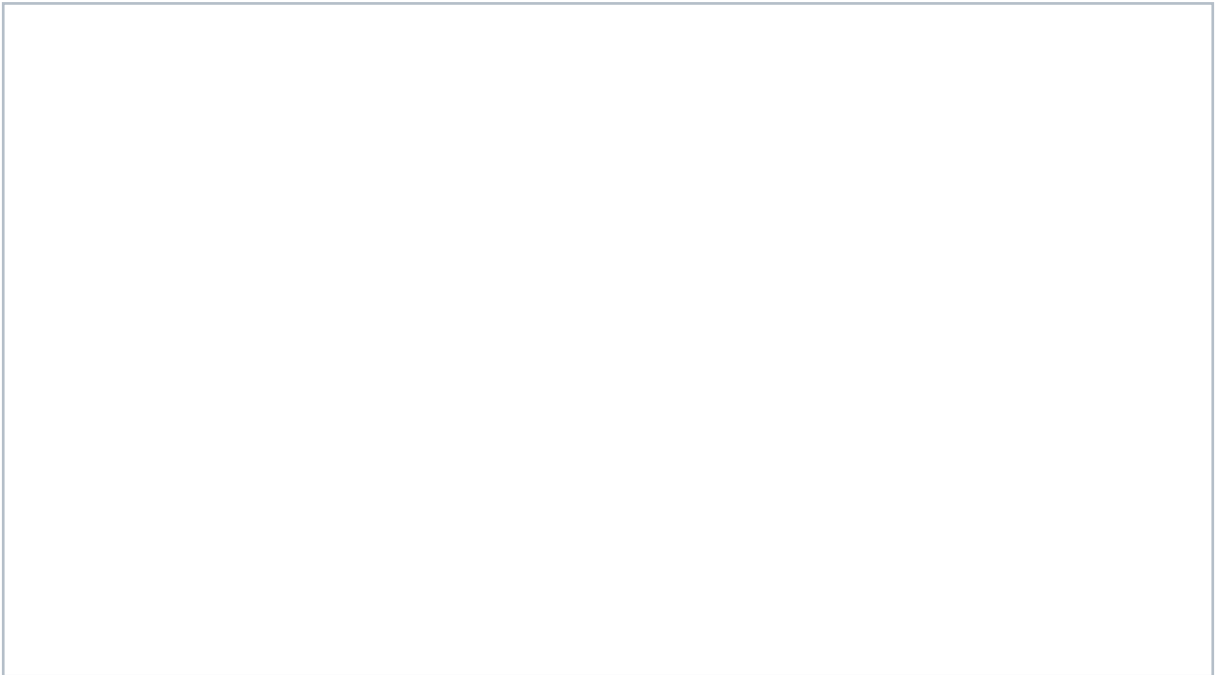
"MAYBE THAT PERSON WAS ACTING OUT OF LOVE FOR SOMEONE ELSE"



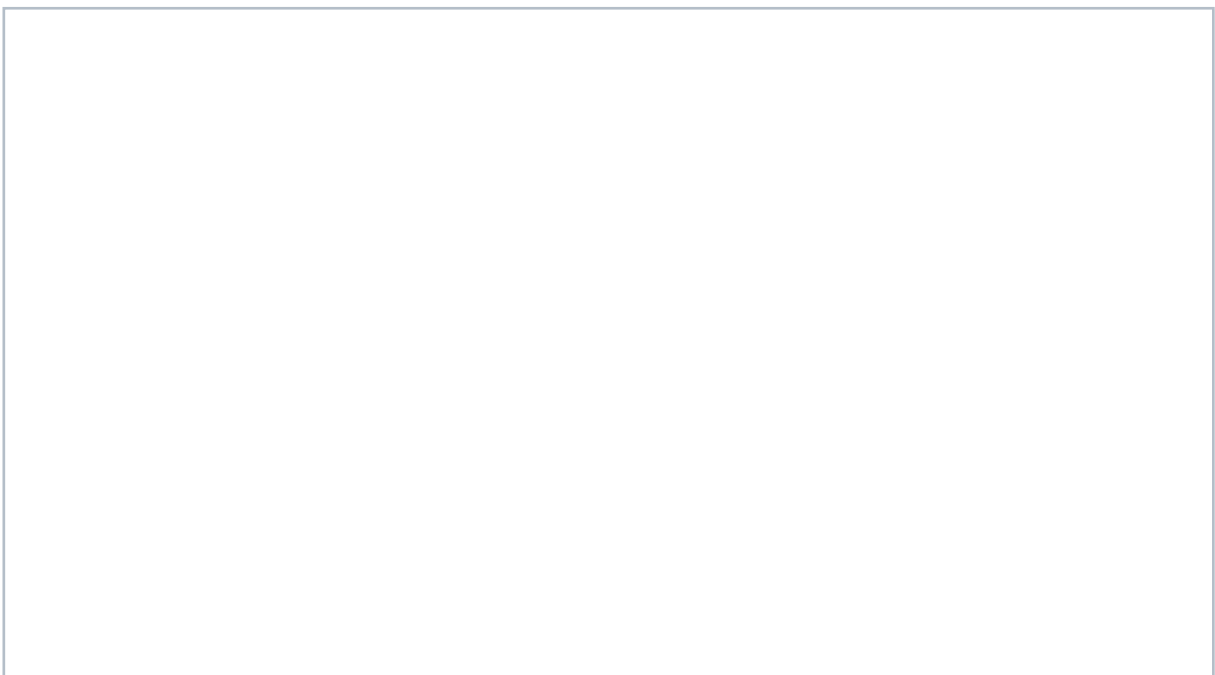
# SEARCH FOR THE LESSON

Learn from what happened and recognize that what has happened to you is an opportunity to grow. Avoid forgiving and forgetting. We learn from the good and the bad. Forgetting the wrongs or pretending they didn't happen robs us of wisdom. Forgive to let go of your anger but don't forget what happened. If each time we look back we focus on the lesson, we will begin to look at the situation with gratitude for what we have learned and for the person we have become.

WHAT DID I LEARN FROM THIS EXPERIENCE?



WHAT CAN I CHANGE ABOUT MYSELF TO MAKE SURE THIS DOESN'T HAPPEN TO ME AGAIN?



# DECIDE TO FORGIVE

First, you need to be very specific about what exactly you are forgiving because you cannot forgive something that has not happened to you. We cannot forgive someone for beating up a person we love, for example. We can only forgive the sadness and anger that person made us feel. Then, decide what you are going to do about your relationship with the person who hurt you: reconcile or release. Just so you know, both options are valid.

WHAT EXACTLY DO I NEED TO FORGIVE?

WILL I RECONCILE THE RELATIONSHIP, OR RELEASE IT?

WHAT NOT TO DO:

1

**DON'T WAIT FOR AN APOLOGY**

Don't wait for the other person to apologize. Many times, the other person is not even considering doing it. Do your work. You don't need the other person's apology to heal.

2

**DON'T HOLD ONTO HATE**

You can't move forward to live a happy life if you hold onto hate. Hate doesn't make you feel better or help you heal your pain.

3

**DON'T SEEK REVENGE**

Revenge doesn't do anyone any good. Thinking of revenge will only consume you and keep you stuck in the past. Taking revenge is self-destructive.

# FREE YOURSELF

Write a letter to the person who hurt you. Write the most emotionally raw letter you can. Describe exactly how you felt, why you are angry and how it affected your life. Spare no details. Then, write about your choice to forgive and how your life will be free of resentment. Keep this letter to yourself. The other person doesn't even need to know that you wrote it. Keep it as a reminder of your decision to forgive.

# **Forgiving Ourselves**

The path to forgiveness is not an easy one, especially when the person we are trying to forgive is ourselves. But with a little bit of compassion, we can do it and move on from feeling guilty. Fill in the next two pages whenever you feel guilty about your behavior towards another person.

# FEELING GUILTY

Recognize that what you did wasn't okay and try to understand the pain you caused. Acknowledge that you made a mistake and learn from what happened. Mistakes make us wiser. They help us become a better version of ourselves and adopt a new mindset for the future.

I FEEL GUILTY BECAUSE...

WHAT I DID WAS WRONG BECAUSE...

I BELIEVE I MADE THE OTHER PERSON FEEL...

I LEARNED FROM THIS EXPERIENCE THAT...

IN THE FUTURE, I WILL...

# LET GO OF GUILT

Accept that this situation does not make you a bad person and practice self-compassion. Everyone makes mistakes. You were just doing the best you could with what you knew at the time. Write a letter of forgiveness to yourself and release any guilt you feel. Grant yourself love and kindness by accepting your imperfect self. If you feel you should apologize to the other person, do so. The other person may not forgive you and that's their right. Respect it and keep doing your inner work.

I FORGIVE MYSELF...

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing a letter of forgiveness to oneself. The box is positioned below the text 'I FORGIVE MYSELF...' and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

# SELF-FORGIVENESS AFFIRMATIONS

Words can wound or words can heal. When positive affirmations are repeated over and over again, they begin to take charge of our thoughts, slowly changing our pattern of thinking and ultimately changing our lives. This includes self-forgiveness affirmations. Choose your favorite and repeat it daily.

"I FORGIVE MYSELF  
FOR ANY REGRETS  
THAT I HAVE BEEN  
HOLDING"

"I ALLOW MYSELF TO  
BE FORGIVEN"

"I SET MYSELF FREE  
AND I LET GO OF ALL  
SELF-JUDGMENT AND  
SHAME"

"I APPROACH MYSELF  
WITH PATIENCE AND  
UNDERSTANDING"

"I ALLOW MYSELF  
TO BE AT PEACE  
WITH THIS"

"I MOVE BEYOND MY  
MISTAKES AND  
FOCUS ON LIVING IN  
THE NOW"

"I ACKNOWLEDGE  
MY FAULTS AND  
FORGIVE MYSELF  
COMPLETELY"

"I AM DONE  
BEATING MYSELF  
UP FOR WHAT HAS  
HAPPENED IN  
THE PAST"

"I ACTED IN THE  
BEST WAY I WAS  
CAPABLE OF AT  
THAT MOMENT"

"I AM GRATEFUL  
FOR WHAT I LEARNED  
FROM THIS MISTAKE"

"I ACCEPT THIS  
SITUATION AS PART  
OF MY STORY"

"SELF-HATRED DOES  
NOT SERVE ME"

# Moving On To Joy

Forgiveness is a process that takes time, regardless of whether we are trying to forgive others or ourselves. It will not happen overnight, and it is quite possible that we will start ruminating about the situation out of the blue even after we have decided to forgive. So, what can we do in those moments?



# CHANGE YOUR FOCUS

When you start ruminating about it, try to switch your focus and remember better times. Look for positive things that happened to you in the past and the people who were always there and list some of them below. This change of focus helps us stop the rumination process and feel better in the moment. This is not about denying the negative emotion but choosing not to feed it and move on.


# FIND A NEW USE FOR YOUR ENERGY

Being sad, upset and angry with others or with ourselves consumes a lot of energy and time. That's time that we can spend doing something that makes us feel happy. It might even be keeping us from meeting new and exciting people. Put those negative feelings aside and find a new use for your energy. Try something new, go somewhere different, learn a new skill, invest in yourself or simply do something that you love. List your ideas below and choose one to start. It's time to leave those past experiences in the past and make new happy memories.


THE FIRST THING I'M GOING TO TRY