

Forgiveness is ...

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People, upon rationally determining that they have been unfairly treated, forgive when they willfully abandon resentment and related responses (to which they have a right), and endeavour to respond to the wrongdoer based on the moral principle of beneficence, which may include compassion, unconditional worth, generosity, and moral love (to which the wrong-doer, by nature of the harmful act or acts, has no right) (Enright & Fitzgibbon, 2000)

## Forgiveness is not ...

- Pardon, legal mercy or leniency
- Condoning or excusing
- Reconciliation (you can come together again, but still not forgive)
- Justification (you can forgive, but don't have to believe their action was fair)
- Forgetting (forgetting would leave you vulnerable to the offence again)
- Balancing scales (getting back at someone is not the same as forgiving)
- Letting time heal the wound (forgiving is active rather than passive)
- Abandoning resentment (we might let go of resentment but still not forgive)
- Possessing positive feelings (we might feel positive towards an individual, but still not forgive them)
- Saying "I forgive you" (you can forgive without using specific words)
- Making a decision to forgive (it can involve a decision, but forgiveness is a process which takes time)
- A quick fix (forgiveness takes time, and progress may fluctuate)
- Accepting what happened (we could accept the facts of an event but not forgive, accepting may be a part of forgiveness but not all acceptance is forgiveness)
- Moving on (we may decide to move on without looking back, and without forgiving)
- Accepting what happened knowing that God will punish them (this approach focuses more on justice than forgiveness)
- Saying "I have the satisfaction of not letting the person get to me"
- "Letting the other person know how much they owe me" (this is a form of revenge, and is using the mindless transgression as a weapon)