

About Forgiveness

Based on Philosophical, Traditional (Hebrew, Christian, Islamic, Confucian, and Buddhist traditions, among others), Psychological and Developmental principles. Gleaned from a large survey of readings, professional dialogue, and stories of forgiveness written by volunteers.

1. What it is:

- *Moral*
 - It is a response to an injustice (a moral wrong).
It is a turning to the "good" in the face of this wrongdoing.
- *Goodwill*
 - Merciful restraint from pursuing resentment or revenge.
Generosity or offering good things such as: attention, time, remembrances on holidays.
 - Moral Love or contributing to the betterment of the other.
- Paradoxical
 - It is the foregoing of resentment or revenge when the wrongdoer's actions deserve it and giving the gifts of mercy, generosity and love when the wrongdoer does not deserve them.
 - **As we give the gift of forgiveness we ourselves are healed.**
- Beyond duty
 - A freely chosen gift (rather than a grim obligation).
 - The overcoming of wrongdoing with good.

2. What it is not:

- Forgetting/Denial
 - Time passing/ignoring the effects of the wrongdoing.
- Condoning
 - Nothing that bad happened. It was only this one time. It won't happen again.
- Excusing
 - The person did this because.....it wasn't really their responsibility.
- Condemning
 - She/he **deserves** to know they have wronged me.
 - "Forgiving" with a sense of moral superiority.
- Seeking Justice or Compensation
 - Forgiveness is not a quid pro quo deal--it doesn't demand compensation first.

3. Important Distinction:

- Forgiveness: **One person's** moral response to another's injustice
- Reconciliation: **Two parties** coming together in mutual respect