

# Failure 201—The 4 Steps to Forgiveness

## Forgiveness doesn't

- happen first
- happen fast
- happen easily
- mean forgetting
- mean excusing
- mean trusting
- make you weak
- mean reconciliation

"To forgive, one must remember the past, put it into perspective, and move beyond it. Without remembrance, no wound can be transcended."

## The 4 Steps To Forgiveness

### 1. Identify the Injury and Its Impact

- "To forgive someone, you will need to know what you are forgiving."
- What is the impact of the injury? What has it cost you? How has it affected you?
- If you receive a physical injury you want to know:
  - How did it happen?
  - How bad is it?
  - Can I do anything about it?
  - Will long will it last?
  - How will it affect me long term?
- "The more you understand the illness, the better able you will be to treat it."

- The importance of talking it out:
  - Talk it out with the one who hurt you
  - Talk it out with someone else
  - Talk it out with a professional when it is too overwhelming

## **2. Make the Injury Your Own**

- You give up trying to pretend that nothing happened.
- Realize that what's happened can't be undone.
- Come to terms with the fact that life is now different.
- Don't compare yourself to others. Often times, lots of people have been hurt in their own way. They have to work through their stuff in their own time.
- Minimization
  - "It wasn't that bad."
  - "Other people have been hurt worse."
  - "I'm just over reacting."
  - "I just need to be stronger."
- Let the injury become part of your story. It helps you look forward instead of backwards.
  - "I wish this had never happened."
  - "This should never have happened in the first place."

## **3. Identify the Responsible Party**

- "If no one is responsible for the injury then there is no one to forgive for it."
- Why is it hard to place responsibility on others?
- "We think if we blame someone, we somehow consider ourselves better than that person."
- Responsibility is confused with motivation
- Rationalization/Justification
  - "They didn't mean to hurt me."

- "They didn't know what to do."
- "They tried their best."
- "They were hurt as well."
- When we can't blame the person who injured us we usually blame ourselves.
- "A person of low self-esteem is more likely to blame themselves for a failure than a person of high self-esteem."
- Children have a hard time blaming their parents for wrong-doing until they are adults.
- "Ideas like intentionality or wrongness may be too hard for children to grasp."

#### **4. Start Balancing the Accounts**

- The purpose is to move forward towards strength, not more information.
- Nothing more needs to be known. Now something needs to be done.
- Time to consider the injury over.
- Time for boundaries
- Time for consequences
- Unhealthy activity is mirroring the injury
  - People who are abandoned abandon others
  - People who were lied to lie to others
- Private Accusation Letter writing

#### **Choosing to Forgive—Balancing the Personal Accounts**

- Make the choice to release the injurer from debt.
- Make the choice to cut the bonds that connect you to the injurer.
- Make the choice to look ahead, not back.
- Choosing to expect that no debt can be repaid
- "To release another from debt does not mean that they were right and you were wrong. It only means that, even though you were right and they hurt you, you do

not want or need them to pay you back."

- "To do away with a debt is to forsake any remaining idea that the injurer has resources that you want. Even if the injurer is better off than we are, when you choose to forgive in your heart, you want nothing from the person who hurt you—an apology, a promise, a loan, or a plane trip. You are strong within yourself. You need nothing from your injurer and wish no harm. You are even. These things you choose. They do not just happen. But while choice brings responsibility, the new freedom in your life is well worth it."
- "Forgiveness is freeing up and putting to better use the energy once consumed by holding grudges, harboring resentments, and nursing unhealed wounds." Sidney and Suzanne Simon
- "Forgive your enemies, but never forget their names." John F. Kennedy

## How Do We Forgive Ourselves

- Realize that what's happened can't be undone.
- Take responsibility for your past actions—acknowledging and hurting over the pain caused.
- Pay the appropriate consequences—remember the condemnation vs. conviction piece
- Trust (let go of control) that those you hurt are responsible for their own reactions and they will heal.
- Understand that I no longer owe that person anything—I am incapable of repaying the debt. When they don't expect payment, then we should remind them of debt
- What have you learned from your mistake and applied that to the way you live now. Did you find value in the experience.
- Don't expect the relationship to be the same

## Helpful hints

- Work on being effective instead of efficient.

- "Efficiency is doing things right. Effectiveness is doing the right things." Drucker
- Is it more important to win the fight or save the relationship?

## It Is Well—Horatio Spafford

- This hymn was written after traumatic events in Spafford's life.
- The first was the death of their only son from Scarlet Fever in 1870.
- Second was the 1871 Great Chicago Fire which ruined him financially (he had been a successful lawyer and had invested significantly in property in the area of Chicago which was decimated by the great fire).
- His business interests were further hit by the economic downturn of 1873 at which time he had planned to travel to Europe with his family on the SS Ville du Havre.
- In a late change of plan, he sent the family ahead while he was delayed on business concerning zoning problems following the Great Chicago Fire.
- While crossing the Atlantic, the ship sank rapidly after a collision with a sea vessel, the Loch Earn, and all four of Spafford's daughters died.
- His wife Anna survived and sent him the now famous telegram, "Saved alone ...".
- Shortly afterwards, as Spafford traveled to meet his grieving wife, he was inspired to write these words as his ship passed near where his daughters had died.
- The Spaffords later had three more children.
- In 1881, the Spaffords, including baby Bertha and newborn Grace, set sail for Israel.
- The Spaffords moved to Jerusalem and helped found a group called the American Colony; its mission was to serve the poor.

## It Is Well—Lyrics

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

*Refrain:*

It is well with my soul,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!—  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:  
If Jordan above me shall roll,  
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life  
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.

But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,  
The sky, not the grave, is our goal;  
Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!  
Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,  
Even so, it is well with my soul.