

"Forgiveness"

The act of forgiving others and myself for all the harm done is a choice. "Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a permanent attitude." - Martin Luther King, Jr. The freedom to choose my attitude in any given state of circumstances is to choose my own way. The decision I make to forgive others seems easier to me than to forgive myself. Rumination may be a key cognitive process that deters forgiveness. If I obsess in my mind about the pain and resentment of the harm caused to me or the harm I've caused then I can harbor unforgiveness, which negatively impacts my mind, body and spirit. Forgiveness is not forgetting, condoning, or excusing the harm done. Forgiveness is simply the start of the healing process. I need to practice it frequently in order to get that attitude. Forgiveness is not for those who do the harm, but for the benefit of myself. Forgiveness takes time and is an active process.

Forgiving myself is a much harder process for me; as I work through the steps, I know I was hurting inside and my actions toward others were sometimes harmful. I don't have to live my hurt and pain anymore. Forgiveness is a journey with no quick fix. I can truly love myself as I forgive others and self. This journey of cognitive restructuring (changing my self-talk), changing my belief system, changing thinking errors, and righting wrong attitudes has taught me to be comfortable in my own skin and healthier in mind, body, and spirit. So is Forgiveness a character strength? Yes, it's a way of life that involves love of self and others. You must be Brave to Forgive.

Edward H
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Thank You FOR READING!

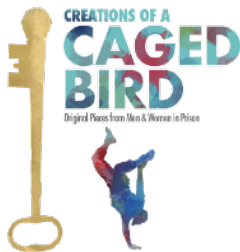
Below are some questions to reflect on from this piece. Feel free to also use one as a conversation starter with a fellow reader, or even a loved one on the outside!

Think about the important work of “changing my self-talk” as a way of getting closer to true forgiveness. Are you aware of things you think or say to yourself that hold you back, or make it hard to forgive yourself and others? When you hear yourself thinking or saying such things, how might you stop, think, and try to change the outcome? How might you shift the things you think, and the stories you tell, about yourself in order to put yourself in a more loving and forgiving place?

We'd love to hear what you thought of the piece, or if you've had any meaningful conversations as a result. Or perhaps you'd like to share an expression of your own (visual art or creative writing). You are always welcome to write to us at Shining Light at P.O. Box 267, Annville, PA 17003.

**Note: We will not be able to provide a response to your letter or receipt of your submission, but know that we value your feedback and contributions and will take them seriously.*

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