

Do You Struggle With Forgiving Others?

Cheryl Roth
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We often qualify forgiveness, deciding that some transgressions are more easily forgiven than others. Where is your line in the sand when it comes to forgiving others and not holding a grudge? Where is God's line in the sand?

It's no small matter that Jesus included this topic in his instruction on how to pray:

"In this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And

forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen." – New Testament, Matthew 6:9

It's also interesting to note that all faith traditions deal with forgiveness in a way that informs us of its importance:

"I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins."
– Isaiah 43:25 – Judaism

"O my servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the mercy of God: for God forgives all sins: for He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful." – Qur'an 39:53 – Islam

"To forgive others is to be good to yourself" – Buddha

"All evil effects of deeds are destroyed when he who is both personal and impersonal is realized."
– Upanishad 2.2.9 – Hinduism



How difficult is it to forgive others?

Think about your own viewpoint on forgiveness. How difficult or easy is it? Do you have a limit where you think; *No, that's unforgivable*? Do you hold a grudge against people who have wronged you? When you feel hurt, do you usually want to punish the other person?

Forgiving someone becomes more difficult depending on how hurt you feel, perhaps because you trusted that person or expected something different from them. It is so easy to feel slighted,

betrayed, underappreciated, or offended.

Last week, one young man wrote a post for the [Pure Mind Online](#) website explaining how he was tempted to lose his integrity because his boss was berating him for some mistakes. He explained how his hurt feelings made him want to get revenge, turning the hurt back on his boss. To be honest, it's easy for anyone to identify with such feelings. We usually either turn our hurt outward by blaming, or inward through self-ridicule.

A Tradition of Settling Differences

"Awoojoh" is a celebration of the Yoruba people in West Africa. It is a traditional Thanksgiving feast honoring the spirits of the dead. But before the feast can be held, everyone must resolve their differences and forgive each other.

Grudges and family disputes go with us even to the grave, causing hatred and resentment to be passed on for generations. The Yoruba people believe that ancestors have some influence over the fortune and misfortune of the living. Disagreements and bitterness can become a destructive pattern if not dealt with and resolved. So, settling controversies reinforces the value of cooperation, and acknowledges the peacekeeping efforts made by past generations.

Imagine if we did that in America before our own Thanksgiving celebration, or before any holiday. Even if the society we live in doesn't value forgiveness or settling differences, individually or as a family we can adopt such a tradition.

Accommodate imperfection without becoming a victim.

"Angiqsarait" is an Inuktitut word which means, "ready to accommodate". As opposed to blaming others, this word implies that we can accept the imperfections of people and systems graciously, without allowing ourselves to become a victim. By letting go of our ego and attachment to feelings, we can adapt and find a way of cooperation.

This is a skill related to developing a parental heart. God accommodates our imperfections because we are still in a process of growth, which means our hearts are immature. We tend to overreact, get angry, lash out by judging or accusing, or we allow ourselves to wallow in self-pity.



Our daily practice:

How much do you think God expects us to forgive others? Do you think learning to forgive is an important part of spiritual growth? I guess Jesus thought so: "...And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

"I did once seriously think of embracing the Christian faith. The gentle figure of Christ, so full of forgiveness that he taught his followers not to retaliate when abused or struck, but to turn the other cheek – I thought it was a beautiful example

of the perfect man." – Mahatma Gandhi

"All major religious traditions carry basically the same message, that is love, compassion and forgiveness the important thing is they should be part of our daily lives." – Dalai Lama