

Recalling Forgiveness

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Duration: 15 minutes

Frequency: As needed

Level of Difficulty: Moderate

Overview: Choosing to forgive can be one of the most challenging decisions we can make. There are indeed many barriers to forgiveness, including misconceptions about what it means to forgive, as well as not having properly grieved before preparing to forgive. If you find yourself feeling stuck and struggling to move towards a place of forgiveness, it can often be helpful to reflect on instances in which we have been on the receiving end of forgiveness—by doing so, we can begin breaking down our own barriers to forgiveness, and also gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the benefits of forgiveness.

Instructions: Take a moment and reflect on a time in which you hurt someone you cared about, whether intentionally or accidentally. Perhaps you said something harsh to a loved one, or maybe it was a time when you acted insensitively towards a friend. *Call to mind one of these situations, and write about it:*

Next, reflect on the other person's decision to forgive you. Consider what it was like for you to be on the receiving end of their forgiveness, and how their decision to forgive you impacted your life moving forward. Close your eyes if it helps, and really take a moment to fully explore this experience of receiving forgiveness. *When you're ready, use the questions to explore this experience more fully.*

Person who forgave me:

How did they convey their forgiveness to me?

How did their forgiveness affect me?

How might their decision to forgive have affected them?

Did my relationship with this person change following their decision to forgive me? If so, how?

What can I learn from their decision to forgive me?

How and why it works: Research shows that one of the most effective ways we can move towards a decision to forgive can occur when we reflect on times when we've been on the receiving end of forgiveness. This practice helps us to get in touch with the feelings we've experienced from being forgiven, which can help facilitate our own movement towards letting go of resentments.

Notes/Impressions:
