

Forgiveness — Part 1

by Geoff Brandenburg

“To err is human, to forgive is divine.”

“...forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who have trespassed against us...”

We have all heard this. We all know that forgiveness is one of the most important qualities to cultivate within ourselves—to be able to release negativity, move on and live our lives. Yet in striving to heal and master our lives, true and complete forgiveness toward those who have wronged us and toward ourselves for self-wounding is one of the most crucial and yet still one of the most elusive of all spiritual and emotional goals.

Why do I say this, that true forgiveness is elusive? From the simple observation that I have needed to introduce so many clients into the realisation that their forgiveness toward another or themselves is really only partially complete. Our education into the skills of real forgiveness in the last few generations has been deeply lacking in a full understanding of what is damaged when we are wronged or when we wrong ourselves, and what is required to fully heal ourselves—which is the real foundation of forgiveness.

Quite often what I find is that people have “mentally forgiven”—they’ve adopted a mental attitude of acceptance toward a person, event or situation that is a good and essential first step, yet still really minimizes the situation and avoids the full emotional confrontation with the complexity of the real damage. This is very common in cases of people needing to forgive their parents.

Many times, the people that we need to forgive are either unconfontable or simply too wounded or unconscious in themselves to fully grasp their own violations, and present us with a very difficult situation to resolve. Like a brick wall that we cannot seemingly get around, we are often left carrying a complex pain inside that needs the release of that other person grasping the impact of their behavior, and to be accountable to us for it. Yet lacking that resolution, and presented with the seeming injustice of being left “with the short end of the stick”, what do we do?

The mental work of seeing the karmas, identifying the dysfunctional patterns, and constructively rationalizing the value of this wounding for our higher good is all a necessary first step in gaining objectivity, but how do we **really** reach that inner place of mastery where we don’t take another’s behavior personally? How do we neutralize the inner charge that lingers, often resurfacing to disprove the mental forgiveness which we have attempted? How do we reach freedom from this pain without sinking into resignation, giving up on any hope that we can lighten that heavy place in our hearts?

The approach I use is called Reparenting. It is based on the idea that we must show up for ourselves 100%, and in working to achieve this living autonomy, develop the inner confidence to eventually be able to empathize with those who have wronged us. By learning to forgive ourselves for our own “unlovable needs” and by taking action on those needs consistently and successfully—learning to live our dream without compromise—we can grow a place in our hearts that can afford to forgive. The inner abundance that Reparenting creates is something that can only be felt to be known, and from this inner freedom, forgiveness arises spontaneously, naturally and completely.

This Reparenting technique is an approach I created myself out of my Integrative Breathwork practice, though I believe there are many others doing similar work with the same name all around the world. The basic premises of my approach are:

1. The spiritual and emotional freedom to know that we can meet our own needs through healthy spiritual and emotional practice—free from unhealthy dependencies—will naturally and gently awaken the inner place in which forgiveness flows naturally.
2. One must take full responsibility for Deep Listening to the inner wounding that lingers, and take active steps to change one's life conditions to rebalance that wounding in the here and now.
3. Ultimately, one must stretch from deep, deep within to create an Act of Power which transforms the body, emotions, heart and mind to know that who we really are is love, creativity and light.

Through the primal repatterning that takes place in the Reparenting approach, the deep impact of old wrongs is transformed into the ability to live, and ultimately to forgive.

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