



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

“The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.”

—Mahatma Gandhi

SEEKING AND GRANTING FORGIVENESS

All couples eventually experience times of conflict, hurt, and letting each other down. Sometimes the offense is as minor as forgetting a date or failing to run an errand. For some couples, the offense might involve a major betrayal such as infidelity, addiction, or abuse. Either way, taking time to seek and grant forgiveness can play a powerful role in healing and restoring the relationship.

Forgiveness is the decision or choice to give up the right for vengeance, retribution, and negative thoughts toward an offender in order to be free from anger and resentment. This process promotes healing and restoration of inner peace, and it can allow reconciliation to take place in the relationship.

It is also important to be clear about what forgiveness is not. Forgiveness is not forgetting, condoning, or perpetuating injustice. Since it is sometimes unsafe or impossible, forgiveness does not always involve reconciliation. Forgiveness is not always quick; it is a process that can take time to unfold. Don't rush your partner if they need to spend days or weeks working through the process of granting forgiveness.

Six Steps for Seeking Forgiveness:

1. Admit what you did was wrong or hurtful.
2. Try to understand/empathize with the pain you have caused.
3. Take responsibility for your actions and make restitution if necessary.
4. Assure your partner you will not do it again.
5. Apologize and ask for forgiveness.
6. Forgive yourself.

Six Steps for Granting Forgiveness:

1. Acknowledge your pain and anger. Allow yourself to feel disrespected.
2. Be specific about your future expectations and limits.
3. Give up your right to “get even,” but insist on being treated better in the future.
4. Let go of blame, resentment, and negativity toward your partner.
5. Communicate your act of forgiveness to your partner.
6. Work toward reconciliation (when safe).

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