

LESSON 6

What Forgiveness Is

Now that you know that forgiveness isn't about spending time with toxic people or giving away your power, it's time to look at what forgiveness is.

Very simply, forgiveness is FREEDOM.

- Freedom from having what happened always on your mind
- Freedom the anger and fear
- Freedom from having to grit your teeth when you see them

As difficult as forgiveness can be, it lightens the load on your mind, brings peace to your heart, and frees you to move forward to the future.

REFUSING FORGIVENESS AFFECTS ALL AREAS OF YOUR LIFE

Holding onto pain and resentment has major negative effects upon you. You'll find you're easily distracted by the pain, and this limits your ability to be fully productive. You also miss the joys of life.

When you relive what happened, your body reacts as if you just experienced the pain. You feel like a victim and have difficulty accessing your inner strength.

Holding onto emotional pain weakens you. You are like the powerful elephant prevented from moving because it believes the little chain around its ankle controls its life.

LET'S EXAMINE MORE DEEPLY WHAT FORGIVENESS GIVES YOU:

1. **Forgiveness gives you the power to move into the future.** When you're hurt, no matter how badly, you can feel like you're carrying around a ball and chain. You hold it so tightly that you've forgotten how to release it. If you allow it, that wound can lock you into pain and keep you from seeing the beauty in life.

- **When you release the pain, you unchain yourself and throw away the chain and everything attached to it.**
- Your body responds with an "Ahhh" and releases energy. This allows you to make plans for the future and open your heart to reviving neglected relationships and meeting new people.

2. **No longer are you defined by your wound.**

Forgiveness allows you to be the amazing, wonderful person you are. Before you release the pain from that terrible hurt, you're defined as the one whose partner betrayed you, or whose boss falsely accused and fired you.

- Avoid being defined by what happened to you. Define yourself by overcoming what happened and being more successful and happier than anyone thought you could be.
- **When you're not focusing on the past, you'll find your path to happiness, the gift and talents you've forgotten, and the strength to look fear in the eye and go right through it.**

- The pain will have changed you, but when you release it, *you* choose to determine what happens to you, not someone else.

3. When you forgive, the other person no longer has control of you.

- When you don't forgive, the person who hurt you has control of you. They're on your mind, occupying your thoughts, sapping your energy, perhaps determining where you go, who you see and what you do... and they don't have to say a word.
- Enough of that. Choose to not let them control your thoughts and emotions. Letting it all go demonstrates that they can't control you. You control what you hold onto and what you release.

4. You get to make the powerful choice of releasing the pain and moving into freedom.

- You'll no longer be caught in victim consciousness. Victim consciousness has

you believing you are powerless, making it difficult for you to take positive steps for the future.

- You demonstrate what a powerful person you are to let something go that many people can't. **It takes great personal power to forgive.**
- No longer will you be hypervigilant, fearing similar injuries in relationships. **Your true self will shine through improving current and future relationships.**

5. **Your physical health improves.** When you forgive, there are powerful changes in the body which lead to a healthier and longer life.

- In the last few decades, biologists and medical researchers have discovered the power of the mind-body connection. They have found that holding onto emotional pain affects the body mentally, emotionally and physically.
- **The Mayo Clinic, one of the premier medical clinics in the world, identifies**

the following changes with forgiveness:

- Lower blood pressure
- Stronger immune system
- Better heart health
- Less stress, which improves digestion, sexual response, sleep, and more
- Lower risk of anxiety and depression
- Improved relationships, which is known to strengthen your immune system, increase the "feel good" chemicals in your body, and reduce stress

As you can see, forgiving someone is one of the most powerful choices you can make to improve your life physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. This makes positive changes in your relationships.

SUMMARY

Now that you know the positive effects forgiveness can have in every area of your life, the question you may be asking is, "How do I forgive?" In the next

module, you'll explore various methods which have proven to assist in forgiveness. **The key is finding the one which works for you.**

Before moving to the next lesson, please spend a few minutes right now to reflect on and anchor in what you've learned in this lesson.

REFLECTION

1. Think of someone who has hurt you and you haven't forgiven. Notice what happens to your body and how your thoughts and emotions change. Now write about what you noticed.
2. Bring to mind someone you love and feel comfortable with. Notice the changes in your body, mind, and emotions. List what you've noticed.

3. What do you want to achieve by forgiving someone?