

Healthy Thoughts: Forgiveness

Provided by ERH Parish Health Ministry

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“Yes if you forgive others for their sins, then your father in heaven will also forgive you your sins” (Matthew 6:14)

Forgiveness is a beautiful word that has a softness and healing quality to it. To be forgiven by someone that we have hurt can help us shed the heavy burden of guilt, and bring us back into the sunlight of inner peace.

However, to forgive is not easy, especially when we have been hurt by someone we love. It takes tremendous strength to set aside what may be justifiable anger. Yet, when we make the choice and allow ourselves to put aside the anger and forgive those who have hurt us, we actually benefit, as well.

Making the conscious decision to let go of pain is the beginning of healing. Forgiving is one of the most difficult choices we can make, but also one of the most spiritually rewarding. Research shows that a person who forgives benefits as much and perhaps *more* than those who are forgiven.

Expressing true forgiveness can be empowering because it helps us to stop feeling like a victim. Our level of anger and hostility will decrease, while our capacity to love and trust will increase. Forgiveness is not something that must be asked for or earned by another; forgiveness is actually a gift you give to yourself.

When you are ready to let go of the anger and forgive, it will be helpful to do so internally, whether or not you intend on telling the one who wronged you. It doesn't matter if the person has passed on or if you don't have contact with them anymore. Keep in your mind the person you want to forgive and sincerely wish for them what you would want for yourself. Do this as long as and as many times as it takes.

Forgiveness is a part of being good to yourself, as well. As you make the decision to forgive someone that has hurt you, you will learn that *true* peace of mind can only come to us when we learn to forgive others and ourselves.



Parish Health Ministry

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