

A Process for Forgiveness

When you have become curious about forgiveness, find a quiet place to be alone, or with a partner, in order to move through this process. Rather than using a keyboard, write your responses on paper with a pen or pencil.

Explore the event, people and consequences involved

- Acknowledge the hurt you have experienced because of the incident
- Acknowledge the intent of the person, entity or event involved
- Acknowledge the impact on your life because of this experience
- Write down the names of all people, the places involved, and the consequences of the original event as well as all subsequent consequences that came as a result of the event.

Explore how the unforgiveness has impacted you

- Describe all feelings you have that are related to the unforgiveness
- Observe how much time and energy is devoted to ongoing resentment and anger. Be aware of how these feelings keep you intimately connected to the person or events involved, vs being connected through the power of divine love.
- Be mindful of what will be lost if forgiveness occurs (this could involve feelings or values that are important to you, a sense of identity, worldview, or purpose)
- Be mindful of how your mental and emotional energy could be used if forgiveness occurs (how much time do you spend thinking about this experience? What would you think about or do if you could spend less time and energy on this matter?)

Explore the bigger picture

- Consider the need for forgiveness in the world. Are there incidents in the news - or more personally - with someone you love, that would be or have been helped by forgiveness?
- Think of times when forgiveness made a difference in your life – either in giving it or receiving it
- Invite God the Creator to deepen your empathy for the broken places in our world.

Explore the act of forgiveness

- Invite Jesus to deepen your awareness of where forgiveness needs to happen in your life.
- Invite the Spirit to help you make sense of the power of forgiveness and to help you let go of that which needs to be released.
- Give thanks to God for the gift of freedom that will fill in the space where unforgiveness used to be.

Forgiveness is a spiritual practice that can be learned and developed over time. Some matters that need our forgiveness work may take more practice than others. Having been thoughtful and explored your situation and the possibility of forgiveness, practice it with simple words:

- I forgive name for.....
- I forgive myself for....
- I forgive a circumstance for....

As you dwell in the emotional and spiritual space of forgiveness, notice what may have changed and what remains the same.

- Do you feel physically or emotionally different?

- What insights have emerged?
- What are you thinking about, feeling or able to do differently because of forgiveness?
- Have you discovered new places in your life where you need to forgive that you did not know about before?
- What is being empowered in your life?

Offer thanks to God for the gift of grace and for the practice of forgiveness that we learn through following Jesus. May the Spirit strengthen and guide us into all truth and freedom.