

## Six steps in Forgiveness

We all make mistakes and do things we should not. It is the human condition and can't be avoided. We forgive when we are ready, in our own way, for our own peace of mind and health. Forgiveness is a process and it takes time. We begin with the intention of forgiving when we are ready.



Every thought and action is the product of a universe of invisible causes stretching back through time and outward across the planet. For example, I did not design the brain I have, it is a tricky brain. I have inherited my temperament from my parents and grandparents and my actions are shaped by untold interacting elements of my environment—early childhood history, other people in our present, diet, culture, current stressful events and so on. Therefore, I have limited knowledge and control over precisely what I say and do from one moment to the next. This is the same for everyone. I can try to understand some factors leading to my mistakes or the mistakes of others. Under a lot of stress, we become emotional and at times irrational. It is the same for all of us. It is human to make mistakes.

Forgiveness does not mean accepting someone's else bad behaviour or resuming a relationship with a person that is abusive and causing harm. We need to protect ourselves before we can think of forgiving.

## 6 steps for forgiveness

1. Opening to the pain- validating the suffering
2. Self-compassion- allowing oneself to empathise for the pain, no matter what was the cause and conditions leading to it.
3. Wisdom- beginning to recognize that the situation was not entirely personal, but was the consequence of many interdependent causes and conditions
4. Intention to forgive- I make the decision that I wish to forgive, to let it go.  
*May I begin to forgive this person for what they have done wittingly or unwittingly, to have caused me harm/pain*  
*May I begin to forgive myself for what I have done wittingly or unwittingly, to have caused this person harm/pain*
5. Responsibility to protect- I make a commitment to not repeat the same mistake again and to stay out of harm's way to the best of our ability.
6. Compassion for ourselves and others. We understand and have compassion for the unkillable and limited behaviours that we or others may have engaged in.

When I am ready in my own time, after validating the hurt, I can offer forgiveness by saying something like:

*"May I begin to forgive you for what you have done wittingly or unwittingly, to have caused me harm"*

*"May I begin to forgive myself for what I have done wittingly or unwittingly to have caused this person or myself harm."*

Resolving to protect myself and not to make the same mistakes at least to the best of my ability and to learn as best as I can to correct my ways to improve to do better next time a similar situation happened.

For more on ways to forgive yourself and others, you can visit the following two links:

<https://www.wikihow.com/Forgive-Someone>

<http://www.wikihow.com/Forgive>

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Modified approach from the Mindful Self Compassion Program by K. Neff and C. Germer

Websites: [www.mindfulpath.com.au](http://www.mindfulpath.com.au)

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