**Unit 9 How to apologize; how to forgive**

**How to Apologize Effectively**

By Barb Nefer, eHow Contributor

http://www.ehow.com/how\_4550238\_apologize-effectively.html

If you're like most people, you learned to say "I'm sorry" almost as soon as you could talk. When you did something wrong, saying those two magic words was a requirement even if you didn't necessarily mean them. It's easy to apologize, but when you do it automatically without any thought behind what you're sorry for and how you're going to change it, it's useless. In this article, you'll learn how to acknowledge what you did wrong, accept responsibility, and most important, how to fix the damage if possible and how to prevent future incidents.

Instructions

1

When you say "I'm sorry," make sure that you spell out exactly what you did wrong. Kids are taught to say "I'm sorry" every time they misbehave, but usually they're just reciting the words without any real meaning. Do you think a child who snuck half a dozen chocolate chip cookies before dinner is really sorry? The only thing he might regret is getting caught or perhaps getting a tummy ache. You might automatically say "I'm sorry" when you bump into someone, but do you truly look at her? Do you really feel much remorse?When you're saying "I'm sorry" to your partner, you need to show that you know what you're sorry about. Make your apology specific: "I'm sorry that I promised to take you to that play and forgot to buy the tickets. Because I forgot, they were sold out by the time I finally remembered and I know how upset that made you feel."

2

Let the other person know how you'll prevent a similar problem in the future. Knowing what you did wrong is fine, but it's likely to keep happening if you don't come up with an action plan. For example, you can't turn back time to buy the sold-out tickets, but you can say, "From now on when I need to remember something important like this, I'll create an event my online calendar and set a reminder on my cell phone. That way I'll get two reminders in case one doesn't work."

3.

Try to minimize the damage. You might not be able to repair it completely, but there may be ways that you can make it up to the other person. For example, you can say, "I know we're going to miss the play while it's here in town, but it's playing at a theater in a town 120 miles away next month and the tickets haven't gone on sale yet. Why don't we set up a nice little overnight trip there. We can have a nice dinner, see the show, and spend the night at a hotel."Even if your partner doesn't want to do the new plan, it will show her that you cared enough to come up with an alternate. If she says no, ask her, "Is there something else you'd like to do or some other way that I can make this up to you?" She may have a suggestion, or she might just prefer to let it drop. Either way, you've made the offer.

4

Ask the other person if there's anything else he needs from you. It's fine to come up with a plan, but that might not be what he wants or needs in order to be able to fully forgive you. Sometimes you'll come up with an elaborate solution, when all he really needs is a hug and a promise that it will never happen again.

**Tips & Warnings**

Even when you've done everything right, the other person might not be ready to forgive you. Don't push him. Let him move to forgiveness in his own time. You can't control his feelings; you can only control how you respond to those feelings. When you know that you've apologized in the most effective way possible, let go of the frustration if your partner doesn't respond in that way that you'd hoped. Pressure will only push him further away. Eventually he'll realize that by refusing to forgive you, he's only hurting himself by prolonging his own negative feelings.

Read more: How to Apologize Effectively | eHow.com <http://www.ehow.com/how_4550238_apologize-effectively.html#ixzz1tfsJ5Pkt>

**5 Steps to an Effective Apology**

Written by Tom O Leary

<http://www.pickthebrain.com/blog/5-steps-to-an-effective-apology/>

The Japanese have a word “Gomenasai” that is roughly equivalent to the English word “sorry”. It’s used to apologize when you harm or offend someone. The word implies humility (Sorry to disturb you…Sorry for coming into your house), but it’s also used as a way to avoid guilt. Someone will say sorry just seconds before they ram the back of your legs with a shopping trolley. Another will mouth the word as they rudely cut you off with their car. Even my two year old daughter has learned to say “Gomenasai” just before she twists my nose or pokes my eye. This is how people use apologies every day, except perhaps more blatant.

How can apologies be so valuable but so misused?

Genuine apology is an unfashionable concept. With humility and one way service it’s among the least popular traits in our advanced culture. **Nonetheless, it’s a vital part of life that’s indispensable in building strong relationships.**

What then, is an apology? In its simplest form, an apology is taking responsibility for a disturbance in a relationship. These insincere apologies imply nothing about your attitude towards the disturbance you are taking responsibility for. A useful apology always acknowledges that you regret your part in the disturbance and are trying to stop or reverse its occurrence.

An apology is not just a tool to make peace. It’s not another way of saying “Get off my back”. It’s not a way of introducing harm, “sorry but I am going to have to divorce you”. It’s not a tool to manipulate others.

When should you apologize? Whenever there is a break in a relationship. No matter what the issue, there will usually be a part, even a small part, that was your responsibility. For this you should apologize. **Realizing that a disturbance is your responsibility is a giant step towards emotional maturity.**

But WHEN should you apologize? As soon as possible. Depending on the relationship this may be immediately or when you’ve cooled off after a few days. It is our responsibility to take the initiative to apologize. If you wait for the other party to come to you, you may be waiting forever. It takes boldness and integrity to make the first step. **Never let an apology swing on timidness or lack of confidence.**

A genuine apology is not a habitual apologetic mannerism. It is a deliberate effort to solve a relational problem that you have contributed to. This requires of discipline. Believe me because I know from experience.

I struggle with apologies as much as the next person. I find it’s usually the hardest when the relationship is particularly important to me, like my direct family. When I’m in the wrong, I will try anything I can think of, short of apologizing, to try and solve the problem.

Sooner or later, though, I have to swallow my pride and apologize. It should be no surprise but usually my apology contributes to healing a damaged relationship. Often the relationship ends up stronger than ever. **Apology is one of the toughest but most productive habits that I am trying to adopt.** We all need to sharpen up our apology sense.

There was, and still is, an Australian Prime Minister who refused to say sorry to the Australian Aboriginal people for crimes against them in the past. This isn’t a political article so I won’t go into details, but it appears the main reason that he wouldn’t publicly apologize on behalf of our country was that he was afraid of the backlash. He feared an apology would mean admitting guilt and that this would fuel the disturbance rather than remedy it.

This sort of attitude is all too prevalent in our society. We no longer trust each other. We realize that if we apologize, we’re admitting guilt. If we admit guilt it can be used against us. This may be true in a legal sense — I have held car insurance policies that are void if I admit guilt or apologize at the scene of a potential accident — but it is totally wrong in a relational sense.

We have to get past the paranoia that makes us believe that everyone will try to use an apology against us. There will be times when an apology is abused, but more often than not, a genuine apology will be well received and will go a long way towards solving a disturbance between two people.

How to apologize:

1. **Make it genuine** – Anyone can spot a false apology and it will do more harm than good. A genuine apology is aimed solely at taking responsibility and overcoming a disturbance. There are no hidden obligations or expectations attached.
2. **Don’t justify your actions** – If you are busy explaining why you did what you did, it will start to sound like you aren’t apologizing at all, that you aren’t ready to take responsibility. A brief explanation may help understanding, while a justification may just fuel the disturbance.
3. **Make a commitment to change** – If you can’t confirm that you mean to improve, then you aren’t committed to an apology. If you aren’t committed to changing your habit of getting home late, don’t say “Sorry I am home late”. This will be a hollow and ineffective apology. You are better off thanking the other person, “Thanks for putting up with me coming home so late. I appreciate it” and taking it from there.
4. **Phrased you apology carefully** – Make sure the other person knows why you are apologizing. “I was passing by so I thought I’d drop in and say sorry” is a lot different to “I wanted to come and apologize because I really do care about this relationship”. Don’t fake it. If you have a good reason to keep the relationship alive the other person will want to hear it.
5. **Be prepared for an awkward conclusion** – While sometimes an apology is followed straight away by a counter apology and peace and flowers and little birds carrying banners of love through the air, not everyone reacts this way. Some people will behave indifferently, some will behave coldly, and some will react in a downright hostile way. This is out of your control. You have made the step to apologize. Doing it in a productive way is the best you can do. Maybe the other person will appreciate it now, later, or never. No matter what, you have done your bit and you can relax. The rest is up to them.

**Forgiveness: Letting go of grudges and bitterness**

**When someone you care about hurts you, you can hold on to anger, resentment and thoughts of revenge — or embrace forgiveness and move forward.**

[By Mayo Clinic staff](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/AboutThisSite/AM00057)

http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/forgiveness/MH00131

Nearly everyone has been hurt by the actions or words of another. Perhaps your mother criticized your parenting skills, your colleague sabotaged a project or your partner had an affair. These wounds can leave you with lasting feelings of anger, bitterness or even vengeance — but if you don't practice forgiveness, you might be the one who pays most dearly. By embracing forgiveness, you can also embrace peace, hope, gratitude and joy. Consider how forgiveness can lead you down the path of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

**What is forgiveness?**

Generally, forgiveness is a decision to let go of resentment and thoughts of revenge. The act that hurt or offended you might always remain a part of your life, but forgiveness can lessen its grip on you and help you focus on other, positive parts of your life. Forgiveness can even lead to feelings of understanding, empathy and compassion for the one who hurt you.

Forgiveness doesn't mean that you deny the other person's responsibility for hurting you, and it doesn't minimize or justify the wrong. You can forgive the person without excusing the act. Forgiveness brings a kind of peace that helps you go on with life.

**What are the benefits of forgiving someone?**

Letting go of grudges and bitterness can make way for compassion, kindness and peace. Forgiveness can lead to:

* Healthier relationships
* Greater spiritual and psychological well-being
* Less anxiety, stress and hostility
* Lower blood pressure
* Fewer symptoms of depression
* Lower risk of alcohol and substance abuse

**Why is it so easy to hold a grudge?**

When you're hurt by someone you love and trust, you might become angry, sad or confused. If you dwell on hurtful events or situations, grudges filled with resentment, vengeance and hostility can take root. If you allow negative feelings to crowd out positive feelings, you might find yourself swallowed up by your own bitterness or sense of injustice.

**What are the effects of holding a grudge?**

If you're unforgiving, you might pay the price repeatedly by bringing anger and bitterness into every relationship and new experience. Your life might become so wrapped up in the wrong that you can't enjoy the present. You might become depressed or anxious. You might feel that your life lacks meaning or purpose, or that you're at odds with your spiritual beliefs. You might lose valuable and enriching connectedness with others.

**How do I reach a state of forgiveness?**

Forgiveness is a commitment to a process of change. To begin, you might:

* Consider the value of forgiveness and its importance in your life at a given time
* Reflect on the facts of the situation, how you've reacted, and how this combination has affected your life, health and well-being
* When you're ready, actively choose to forgive the person who's offended you
* Move away from your role as victim and release the control and power the offending person and situation have had in your life

As you let go of grudges, you'll no longer define your life by how you've been hurt. You might even find compassion and understanding.

**50 Quotes on Forgiveness**

Lewis B. Smedes - Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve

"Forgiveness is God's invention for coming to terms with a world in which, despite their best intentions, people are unfair to each other and hurt each other deeply. He began by forgiving us. And he invites us all to forgive each other."

Lewis B. Smedes - Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve

"None of us wants to admit that we hate someone...When we deny our hate we detour around the crisis of forgiveness. We suppress our spite, make adjustments, and make believe we are too good to be hateful. But the truth is that we do not dare to risk admitting the hate we feel because we do not dare to risk forgiving the person we hate."

Lewis B. Smedes - Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve

"We attach our feelings to the moment when we were hurt, endowing it with immortality. And we let it assault us every time it comes to mind. It travels with us, sleeps with us, hovers over us while we make love, and broods over us while we die. Our hate does not even have the decency to die when those we hate die--for it is a parasite sucking OUR blood, not theirs. There is only one remedy for it. [forgiveness]

Lewis B. Smedes - Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve

"You will know that forgiveness has begun when you recall those who hurt you and feel the power to wish them well."

Lewis B. Smedes - Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve

"Their pain [the injurer's pain at having injured you] and your pain create the point and counterpoint for the rhythm of reconciliation. When the beat of their pain is a response to the beat of yours, they have become truthful in their feelings...they have moved a step closer to a truthful reunion."

Lewis B. Smedes - Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve

"...Forgiving is not having to understand. Understanding may come later, in fragments, an insight here and a glimpse there, after forgiving."

Lewis B. Smedes - Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve

"You can forgive someone almost anything. But you cannot tolerate everything...We don't have to tolerate what people do just because we forgive them for doing it. Forgiving heals us personally. To tolerate everything only hurts us all in the long run."

Lewis B. Smedes - Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve

"The rule is: we cannot really forgive ourselves unless we look at the failure in our past and call it by its right name."

Lewis B. Smedes - Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve

"When we forgive evil we do not excuse it, we do not tolerate it, we do not smother it. We look the evil full in the face, call it what it is, let its horror shock and stun and enrage us, and only then do we forgive it."

Lewis B. Smedes - Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve

"If we say that monsters [people who do terrible evil] are beyond forgiving, we give them a power they should never have...they are given the power to keep their evil alive in the hearts of those who suffered most. We give them power to condemn their victims to live forever with the hurting memory of their painful pasts. We give the monsters the last word."

Lewis B. Smedes - Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve

"With a little time, and a little more insight, we begin to see both ourselves and our enemies in humbler profiles. We are not really as innocent as we felt when we were first hurt. And we do not usually have a gigantic monster to forgive; we have a weak, needy, and somewhat stupid human being. When you see your enemy and yourself in the weakness and silliness of the humanity you share, you will make the miracle of forgiving a little easier."

Lewis B. Smedes - Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve

"We forgive freely or we do not really forgive at all."

Lewis B. Smedes - Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve

"The problem with revenge is that it never gets what it wants; it never evens the score. Fairness never comes. The chain reaction set off by every act of vengeance always takes its unhindered course. It ties both the injured and the injurer to an escalator of pain...Why do family feuds go on and on?...the reason is simple: no two people, no two families, ever weigh pain on the same scale."

Lewis B. Smedes - Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve

"Gandhi was right: if we all live by 'an eye for an eye' the whole world will be blind. The only way out is forgiveness."

Sidney and Suzanne Simon - Forgiveness: How To Make Peace With Your Past And Get On With Your Life"

All the years you have waited for them to "make it up to you" and all the energy you expended trying to make them change (or make them pay) kept the old wounds from healing and gave pain from the past free rein to shape and even damage your life. And still they may not have changed. Nothing you have done has made them change. Indeed, they may never change. Inner peace is found by changing yourself, not the people who hurt you. And you change yourself for yourself, for the joy, serenity, peace of mind, understanding, compassion, laughter, and bright future that you get."

Lewis B. Smedes - The Art of Forgiving: When You Need To Forgive And Don't Know How

"When you give up vengeance, make sure you are not giving up on justice. The line between the two is faint, unsteady, and fine...Vengeance is our own pleasure of seeing someone who hurt us getting it back and then some. Justice, on the other hand, is secure when someone pays a fair penalty for wronging another even if the injured person takes no pleasure in the transaction. Vengeance is personal satisfaction. Justice is moral accounting...Human forgiveness does not do away with human justice."

Lewis B. Smedes - The Art of Forgiving: When You Need To Forgive And Don't Know How

"I have discovered that most people who tell me that they cannot forgive a person who wronged them are handicapped by a mistaken understanding of what forgiving is."

Lewis B. Smedes - The Art of Forgiving: When You Need To Forgive And Don't Know How

"God is the original, master forgiver. Each time we grope our reluctant way through the minor miracle of forgiving, we are imitating his style. I am not at all sure that any of us would have had imagination enough to see the possibilities in this way to heal the wrongs of this life had he not done it first."

Lewis B. Smedes - The Art of Forgiving: When You Need To Forgive And Don't Know How

"It takes one person to forgive, it takes two people to be reunited."

Lewis B. Smedes - The Art of Forgiving: When You Need To Forgive And Don't Know How

"A wise judge may let mercy temper justice but may not let mercy undo it."

Lewis B. Smedes - The Art of Forgiving: When You Need To Forgive And Don't Know How

"Forgiving is an affair strictly between a victim and a victimizer. Everyone else should step aside...The worst wounds I ever felt were the ones people gave to my children. Wrong my kids, you wrong me. And my hurt qualifies me to forgive you. But only for the pain you caused me when you wounded them. My children alone are qualified to forgive you for what you did to them."

Lewis B. Smedes - The Art of Forgiving: When You Need To Forgive And Don't Know How

"I am certain that people never forgive because they believe they have an obligation to do it or because someone told them to do it. Forgiveness has to come from inside as a desire of the heart. Wanting to is the steam that pushes the forgiving engine."

Lewis B. Smedes - The Art of Forgiving: When You Need To Forgive And Don't Know How

"Not even God can make something fair out of what is intrinsically unfair. Only one thing can be done. Something must break through the crust of unfairness and create a chance for a new fairness. Only forgiveness can make the breakthrough."

Lewis B. Smedes - The Art of Forgiving: When You Need To Forgive And Don't Know How

"God invented forgiving as a remedy for a past that not even he could change and not even he could forget. His way of forgiving is the model for our forgiving."

Lewis B. Smedes - The Art of Forgiving: When You Need To Forgive And Don't Know How

"I worry about fast forgivers. They tend to forgive quickly in order to avoid their pain. Or they forgive fast in order to get an advantage over the people they forgive. And their instant forgiving only makes things worse...People who have been wronged badly and wounded deeply should give themselves time and space before they forgive...There is a right moment to forgive. We cannot predict it in advance; we can only get ourselves ready for it when it arrives...Don't do it quickly, but don't wait too long...If we wait too long to forgive, our rage settles in and claims squatter's rights to our souls."

Lewis B. Smedes - The Art of Forgiving: When You Need To Forgive And Don't Know How

"Spoken forgiving, no matter how heartfelt, works best when we do not demand the response we want. I mean that when we tell people we forgive them, we must leave them free to respond to our good news however they are inclined. If the response is not what we hoped for, we can go home and enjoy our own healing in private."

Lewis B. Smedes - The Art of Forgiving: When You Need To Forgive And Don't Know How

"How many times should you forgive your household bruiser? You should not even think about forgiving him. Not yet. Not as long as he has his foot on your neck. Your problem at this point is not forgiving. Your problem is how to get out of his reach. Once you get away from him, you can think about forgiving him."

Lewis B. Smedes - The Art of Forgiving: When You Need To Forgive And Don't Know How

"Forgive a wife-slammer if you can. But you don't have to live with him. Forgive a husband who is abusing your children if you can. But only after you kick him out of the house. And if you can't get him out, get help. It's available. In the meantime, don't let him near the kids, and don't let anyone tell you that if you forgive him it means you have to stay with him. [There's an important difference between forgiving a person and tolerating their bad behavior.]"

Lewis B. Smedes - The Art of Forgiving: When You Need To Forgive And Don't Know How

"Forgiving does not usually happen at once. It is a process, sometimes a long one, especially when it comes to wounds gouged deep. And we must expect some lapses...some people seem to manage to finish off forgiving in one swoop of the heart. But when they do, you can bet they are forgiving flesh wounds. Deeper cuts take more time and can use a second coat."

Lewis B. Smedes - The Art of Forgiving: When You Need To Forgive And Don't Know How

"Forgiving does not erase the bitter past. A healed memory is not a deleted memory. Instead, forgiving what we cannot forget creates a new way to remember. We change the memory of our past into a hope for our future."

Beverly Flanigan - Forgiving The Unforgivable: Overcoming the Legacy of Intimate Wounds

"Forgiveness has nothing to do with forgetting...A wounded person cannot--indeed, should not--think that a faded memory can provide an expiation of the past. To forgive, one must remember the past, put it into perspective, and move beyond it. Without remembrance, no wound can be transcended."

Beverly Flanigan - Forgiving The Unforgivable: Overcoming the Legacy of Intimate Wounds"

A [seemingly] unforgivable injury is a profound and irreversible assault on the fundamental belief system of the person who has been injured...It is not the battering but what happens to a battered woman's beliefs as a result of the battering that makes [the injury seemingly so] unforgivable...[the most serious] injuries separate people from the very ideas they once believed were true--beliefs about themselves, the world, other people, good and bad, right and wrong, the future, and even the validity of the history they have shared with the person who hurt them...The forgiving process is one in which both morality and meaning are defined and redefined until the world again makes sense [to the person injured]."

Beverly Flanigan - Forgiving The Unforgivable: Overcoming the Legacy of Intimate Wounds

"Forgiveness is a rebirth of hope, a reorganization of thought, and a reconstruction of dreams. Once forgiving begins, dreams can be rebuilt. When forgiving is complete, meaning has been extracted from the worst of experiences and used to create a new set of moral rules and a new interpretation of life's events."

Beverly Flanigan - Forgiving The Unforgivable: Overcoming the Legacy of Intimate Wounds

"In a way, forgiving is only for the brave. It is for those people who are willing to confront their pain, accept themselves as permanently changed, and make difficult choices. Countless individuals are satisfied to go on resenting and hating people who wrong them. They stew in their own inner poisons and even contaminate those around them. Forgivers, on the other hand, are not content to be stuck in a quagmire. They reject the possibility that the rest of their lives will be determined by the unjust and injurious acts of another person."

"The Risen Christ proclaimed not that we 'have to forgive,' but rather, that at last we CAN forgive--and thereby free ourselves from consuming bitterness and the offender from our binding condemnation. This process requires genuine human anger and grief, plus--and here is the awful cost of such freedom--a humble willingness to see the offender as God sees that person, in all his or her terrible brokenness and need for God's saving power. I would never tell another, 'You have to forgive.' But my uncomfortable duty as a Christian is to confess the truth, so lethal to our self-centered human nature: 'Jesus, who suffered your sin unto his own death, calls you likewise to forgive, so that God's purposes may be accomplished in both you and your offender."

"Vengeance is having a videotape planted in your soul that cannot be turned off. It plays the painful scene over and over again inside your mind...And each time it plays you feel the clap of pain again...Forgiving turns off the videotape of pained memory Forgiving sets you free."

"To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you."

"Forgiveness is the only way to break the cycle of blame--and pain--in a relationship...It does not settle all questions of blame and justice and fairness...But it does allow relationships to start over. In that way, said Solzhenitsyn, we differ from all animals. It is not our capacity to think that makes us different, but our capacity to repent, and to forgive."

Old Chinese Proverb -

"The one who pursues revenge should dig two graves."

It is possible to have pardon without forgiveness--a murderer can be pardoned by the governor, but that does not mean the victim's family has forgiven him. And there can be forgiveness without pardon. In 1986, Michael Saward, a well-known Anglican evangelical, answered the door of his London vicarage. The three men who stood in his doorway pounded Saward over the head with a cricket bat, fracturing his skull. Then they broke into the vicarage, raped Saward's daughter, and beat up her boyfriend. The three were quickly arrested, and in a television interview shortly afterward, a badly battered Saward touched the British nation by publicly forgiving his assailants. But when the men were sentenced to prison terms of three to five years, Saward frankly criticized the sentences as too lenient."

"It is potentially dangerous if pastoral counselors insist on a client's withholding forgiveness until the other repents. We can easily imagine a devastated client who is trapped in bitterness or even hatred because of the legalistic requirement that the other must repent. The client's psychological well-being is now dependent on the other's response."

"He that cannot forgive others, breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass if he would reach heaven; for everyone has need to be forgiven."

Not to forgive is to be imprisoned by the past, by old grievances that do not permit life to proceed with new business. Not to forgive is to yield oneself to another's control...to be locked into a sequence of act and response, of outrage and revenge, tit for tat, escalating always. The present is endlessly overwhelmed and devoured by the past. Forgiveness frees the forgiver. It extracts the forgiver from someone else's nightmare."

"You can't forgive what you refuse to remember, any more than you can seek treatment for a disease whose symptoms you have yet to notice."

"Let's get one thing straight: Forgiving is not something you do for someone else. It is not even something you do because you SHOULD, according to the standards of religious belief or human decency. Forgiving is something that you do for yourself. It is one way of becoming the person you were created to be--and fulfilling God's dream of you is the only way to true wholeness and happiness. You NEED to forgive so that you can move forward with life. An unforgiven injury binds you to a time and place someone else has chosen; it holds you trapped in a past moment and in old feelings."

"Ask for divine help in your struggle to forgive. The God of the Judeo-Christian tradition has an ancient reputation for compassion and mercy. Try praying FOR your enemy. Don't just ask for a change in that person's heart or behavior; really pray FOR him or her. You may find it hard to find words for such a prayer, but words are not necessary to the God who knows your mind and heart. Just stand before God with that person at your side, and let God's love wash over both of you until it penetrates your heart."

"Forgiveness entails the authentic acceptance of our own worthiness as human beings, the understanding that mistakes are opportunities for growth, awareness and the cultivation of compassion, and the realization that the extension of love to ourselves and others is the glue that holds the universe together. Forgiveness...is not a set of behaviors, but an attitude."

"Sometimes forgiving was easy for me; sometimes forgiving was a very bold choice. Whatever kind of choice it was, it always led me to a more peaceful heart. It always left me happier and free to move on to create healthier relationships with others and with myself."

"Sometimes choices are made in the name of forgiveness while what is occurring isn't forgiveness at all. It is important not to confuse being forgiving with denying your own feelings, needs, and desires. Forgiving doesn't mean being passive and staying in a job or a relationship that clearly doesn't work for you or is abusive. It is important that you are clear about your boundaries. What is acceptable for you? If you are willing to allow unacceptable behavior again and again in the name of 'forgiveness,' you are more than likely using 'forgiveness' as an excuse not to take responsibility for taking care of yourself or as a way to avoid making changes."

"Don't allow your self-forgiveness to be contingent upon somebody else's readiness or willingness to forgive you. They may get something out of holding on to anger that they aren't ready to let go of. They may be too frightened or wounded to let go of their anger. Feeling angry may be an important part of their healing process at this time. Allow others to be where they are. Respect their right to feel the way they feel."