

## FORGIVENESS 3

### INTRODUCTION

Forgiveness is an enormous subject with so many ramifications and levels in which we can operate. It is essential for our wellbeing both in the world and within ourselves and ultimately it is about us, and not the other person. Unforgiveness can affect the other person when a negative relationship develops but mainly it affects us, as we dwell on the hurt and negativity. This affects our relationships, our health and especially our relationship with God.

Ok. The Grub has offended you in some way. They overstepped the accepted boundaries and caused you grief. It is eating you up that this should happen. They seem completely happy, in fact a bit smug. Your gut burns, your asthma is playing up again, the Doctor said your blood pressure was up again and you wake at night worrying about what is going to happen.

You know you have two choices. You can continue to burn and plot revenge or you can suck it up and try to reach an agreement of some sort with them. Maybe they didn't really mean to stick it up you, maybe they had a headache that day or their kid was in hospital, or the bank was foreclosing and they weren't at their best. Maybe you should cut them some slack.

You know this mess is affecting you and your family and your work and it can't go on.

You bite the bullet and suck it up. You know you should forgive for the sake of the relationship and peace... but mate...!!!!

You have to talk to them, find out why. But, what if they just show regret and apologise just to shut you and their conscience up? What if, maybe they agree that they blew it but it is all my fault? What if they go belly-up and wallow in apologies, and bend over backwards to make amends? You will then have to decide whether they were capable of knowing they had done the wrong thing. If not, you might have to suck it up and bury the hurt but it will burn inside you forever?

Or you can forgive.

You know that forgiving is an integral part of the Bible and that the real people in it struggled with this concept, some doing better than others. You know that Jesus came to earth to provide a way for us to be forgiven by God for all our stuff ups and that he actually was able to do that for us at His death. Well, I can't do that but I guess I can try. Jesus told us the story of the Prodigal Son and how the father forgave him despite all the crap he had done but that doesn't mean everyone didn't suffer the consequences of his actions. You will still have to live with the results of the stuff-up.

So, you will actually have to choose whether you forgive or not, and, really, what the other party does really has little bearing on the issue. Forgiveness is your choice.

Holy moley.. that will be so hard.... But!!!

Well, you can use the ways of the world and put in an official complaint to the establishment and let them discipline the person. They may get sacked but.... whatever. You can take legal action against them, and go through the expensive court process of solicitors and barristers and affidavits and mediation and then full-blown court. Or you could hire a hitman..... or egg his house.

Or you can use Jesus way of handling these things. He said, "Go to the person and try to talk it out". Yeah right!!!! As if!!! Talk to that Grub!! No way. What if he attacks me, blames me for the mess, lists off all my faults or gets defensive with his excuses? Worse, what if he falls on his sword and is really upset that he upset me and bursts into tears? I will have to forgive him and that means I can no longer hold a grudge against him.

Well, maybe that is not so bad. At least my blood pressure will come down and I can drink wine again when my gut settles. Beside "The Wife" is upset and the kids are fragile all the time.

And, it is what Jesus tells you, is the best thing for everyone. People are happiest when they live in peace and it would be nice to have them over for a Barbie again. The kids all get on well.

So, you suck it up, put on your red jumper and ask them for coffee at McDonalds. Nice safe ground (grounds?) and the coffee is OK. Wow,

that is a big step. What will you say? Maybe you might start thinking, “Is this worth all this anxt just because they cut me off in traffic?”

No, I am being a dope. I’ll just forget it all and move on. They were probably having a bad day. It wasn’t that important anyhow. I can just ask them why at morning tea.... Or at the barbie.

## **THE PROCESS OF FORGIVENESS**

So we have to talk to them. But how? How do I overcome this hurt, anger, indignation, bitterness, grief?

Now, I really hate it when people tell me where I have gone wrong and what I am supposed to do and then walk off and not tell me how to actually do it.

There are as many systems to achieve the peace we seek as there are recipes for pumpkin soup. But like pumpkin soup, the basic ingredients are constant..... otherwise it is not pumpkin soup. It is only the herbs, or the details, that change.

I have made a summary of a process which contains many steps countless others have documented and I have used, and still use, to seek forgiveness. I am not always successful and my perception of forgiveness may not be the same as another’s.

And I cannot maintain this state of forgiveness all the time. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is not confined to war vets like my father. It can apply to any severe hurt. The smallest thing can trigger a burst of pain or anger which must be dealt with again, and again. This is different from simmering resentment, but the same techniques work and the pain eventually diminishes and peace, both outer and inner, can be obtained again.

## UNDERSTANDING

Where to start?

Seek to understand. If we can understand why the sin was committed, it helps to come to terms with what has happened. If we understand the motive, our whole perspective of the incident can change.

Sometimes, it is hard to do this at the time of the hurt, we need to be in good place to do that. A simple “What did you mean by that?” can solve a

lot of problems, at the very start of the cascade. Another one for Aussies is “Please explain” in a whiney, (not winey), voice. And we can always go back and ask later when we have calmed down or got our head together.

This is the primary object of meeting the person face to face.

### CONTROLLING OUR EMOTIONS

It is perfectly natural to feel emotion when we have been hurt or wronged. That is part of being human.

Emotions, positive or negative, can affect our thinking enormously and can lead to quite rash decisions. Often these can up the ante and cause us to escalate the problem.

It is a well-established fact that emotions affect our bodies. Negative ones like anger, rejection and fear affect us adversely causing heart problems (heart is the centre for love), fear causes digestive issues as we don't want to “take in” what is facing us. Positive ones such as laughter and love release endorphins which are soooo beneficial.

#### Anger

Anger is the most obvious emotional reaction in a “sin” situation. This leads to short term damage. There are countless courses available teaching Anger Management.

But the Bible was there long ago.

**Pro 15:1** A soft answer turns away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger.

**Pro 15:18** A wrathful man stirs up fighting, but one slow to anger calms fighting.

**Pro 16:32** He who is slow to anger *is* better than the mighty man, and he who rules his spirit is better than he who takes a city.

Immediately after the hurt, we can actively manage our anger/hurt to gain time. We can all grit our teeth and walk away until we cool off... or fake it till you make it. But you must deal with the issues later or they will fester.

Here the old adages of our culture are so helpful.

“Count to ten, then count again”

“Sleep on it” (sleep actually allows the brain to analyse and see things in a broader light),

“A gentle answer turneth away wrath”

Pro 15:23 A person has joy in an appropriate answer—how good is a timely word.

**Pro 26:4** Do not answer a fool according to his foolishness, lest you also be like him.

Pro 26:5 Answer a fool according to his foolishness, so that he may not be wise in his own eyes.

Eleanor Roosevelt summarised it beautifully

“Anger is one letter short of danger.”

### Fear

Although we may not realise it, fear is often the basic emotion when people hurt us. Often, we are not aware that this is the real problem as we look at the more obvious aspects but fear is the basis. Fear of the future, fear of loss of belongings or money or safety or self-perspective, fear that we might have been made a mistake, fear of loss of pre-eminence, fear of rejection. The list goes on.

And again, there are countless courses available to help us overcome fear. Again, the Bible was there long before the Greeks even invented the “psy” of psychology.

The Bible says, “Fear not” 366 times. One for every day of the year, including the leap year.

The best-known ones are

**Deu 20:3** and shall say to them, Hear, O, Israel, today you go up to battle against your enemies. Do not let your hearts faint, do not fear, and do not tremble, neither be terrified before their faces.

Deu 20:4 For Jehovah your God *is* He who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

**Psa 27:1** *A Psalm of David. Jehovah is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

**2Ti 1:7** **For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.**

**Joh 14:27** *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

And my favourite.

**Mat 10:29** **Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And one of them not shall not fall on the ground without your Father knowing it.**

**Mat 10:30** **But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.**

**Mat 10:31** **Therefore do not fear, you are of more value than many sparrows.**

**Mat 28:20** **teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you. And, behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the world. Amen.**

When we feel fear, we can choose to tell ourselves that God has allowed this to happen to me so I can learn a lesson about life and draw closer to him. If there is a reason for “stuff”, it is easier to bear.

Again. Another sermon there.

### Rejection

Another reaction is a feeling of rejection

Humans are social animals. We need people around us and if something happens that separates us from our grouping, we feel lost and unsafe and not valued.

Again, there are countless courses and PhD theses on this topic but the Bible is built on the concept that we are, or can be, all part of God’s people whom he cares about and nurtures and protects.

He will never reject us.

**Psa 100:3** Know that Jehovah, He *is* God. He has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.

**Luk 15:4** What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost until he finds it?

**Luk 15:5** And when he has found *it*, he lays *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing.

**Joh 10:11** I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

#### WRITE DOWN OR TALK THROUGH YOUR FEELINGS

Putting your feelings into words can help you clarify your thoughts and come to terms with the problem. Some people send these thoughts to the offender as a letter. Not a good idea!!!! It will exacerbate the problem or embarrass you later..... or be used in evidence against you.

Talking to others is another well-known way to work through an issue. This can range from a cup of tea over the kitchen table to all out Psychiatric help. Even just talking to the mirror can help. That won't argue back.

Obviously, the best person to talk to is God. David was a master of this practice as we see in countless examples in the Psalms.

**Psa 18:6** In my distress I called on Jehovah, and I cried to my God; He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, into His ears.

**Psa 118:5** In my distress I called to the LORD; he answered me and set me free.

I mean really, why go the monkey when you can deal with the organ grinder? God knows it all from the beginning and has all the answers and cares about us more than anyone else does, or could. And mate, you can really pour out your soul to Him and He will still love you, whereas humans have all sorts of reactions, usually depending on their own situation, when they listen... if they listen.

## MEDITATE.

We all have our own ways of doing this from the classical Oom of yoga to walking around the Bay or on the beach or sitting in a rainforest. Whatever its form, the object is to calm the mind of the racing thoughts.

Computer games can be good too. I have spent 20 mins in mind numbing phone solitaire and when I have finished thought “Now, what was I worrying about again?” What a way to break the chain so you can make the decision not to dwell on the negatives.”

This concept of meditation is very big in Scripture and all the big stars did it continually in order to survive, especially David and Jesus.

The big difference between Christian meditation and this modern concept which is based on Buddhist practices which focus on me, myself... and hello!! I ain't doing so well here. Christian Meditation focuses on God and His word which is full of affirmations of His love for us, His power and His Plan. In doing so, we can tap into this amazing source of power and love and can then use this to climb out of our hole.

Interestingly, to me at least, the Hebrew word for meditation is derived from a word meaning “to murmur”. Just tell Him!!! Warts and all

There are a myriad of verses from Scripture we can use here.

**Psa 8:3 When I look at Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have established;**  
**Psa 8:4 what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man, that You visit him?**  
**Psa 8:5 For You have made him lack little from God, and have crowned him with glory and honour.**  
**Psa 8:6 You made him rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all *things* under his feet:**  
**Psa 8:7 all sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field;**  
**Psa 8:8 the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, and *all that* pass through the paths of the seas.**  
**Psa 8:9 O Jehovah, our Lord, how excellent *is* Your name in all the earth!**

Again, David's Psalm 107 is the classic example of this process He starts in the absolute turmoil of jumbled thoughts and ends in peace.

But there are countless others.

### **Let the Redeemed of the Lord Say So**

Psa 107:1 O give thanks to Jehovah, for *He is* good; for His mercy *endures* forever.

Psa 107:2 Let the redeemed of Jehovah say *so*, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy,

Psa 107:3 and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

**Psa 107:4 They wandered in the wilderness, in a desert by the way; they found no city to dwell in.**

**Psa 107:5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.**

**Psa 107:6 Then they cried to Jehovah in their distress, and He delivered them out of their troubles.**

Psa 107:7 And He guided them by the right way, so as to go to a city to live in.

**Psa 107:8** Oh that men would praise Jehovah *for* His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the sons of man!

Psa 107:9 For He satisfies the thirsty soul, and fills the hungry soul *with* good.

**Psa 107:10 Those who sit in the darkness and in the shadow of death, *being* chained in affliction and iron;**

**Psa 107:11 because they rebelled against the Words of God, and despised the advice of the Most High.**

**Psa 107:12 and He humbled their heart with labour; they fell down, and none *was* helping.**

**Psa 107:13 Then they cried to Jehovah in their distress, *and* He saved them out of their troubles.**

Psa 107:14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and broke their bands in two.

Psa 107:15 Let them praise Jehovah *for* His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the sons of man!

Psa 107:16 For He has broken the gates of bronze, and cut the bars of iron in two.

Psa 107:17 Fools are afflicted because of their rebellion, and because of their iniquities.

Psa 107:18 Their soul hates all kinds of food; and they draw near the gates of death.

**Psa 107:19 Then they cry to Jehovah in their distress, *and* He saves them out of their troubles.**

**Psa 107:20 He sent His Word and heals them, and delivers them from their pitfalls.**

Psa 107:21 Let them praise Jehovah *for* His goodness, and *for* His wonderful works to the sons of man!

Psa 107:22 And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing!

Psa 107:23 They who go down to the sea in ships, who do business in great waters;

Psa 107:24 these see the works of Jehovah and His wonders in the deep.

Psa 107:25 For He commands and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up its waves.

Psa 107:26 They mount up to the heavens, they go down again *to* the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble.

Psa 107:27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and all their wisdom is swallowed up.

Psa 107:28 And they cry to Jehovah in their trouble, and He brings them out of their troubles.

Psa 107:29 He makes the storm a calm, so that its waves are still.

Psa 107:30 And they are glad because they are quiet; so He brings them to their desired haven.

Psa 107:31 Let them praise Jehovah *for* His goodness, and *for* His wonderful works to the sons of man!

Psa 107:32 And let them exalt Him in the congregation of the people, and praise Him in the gathering of the elders.

Psa 107:33 He sets rivers to a wilderness and water-springs to thirsty ground;

Psa 107:34 a fruitful land to a salty desert, because of the wickedness of those who dwell in it.

Psa 107:35 He turns the wilderness into water-ponds, and dry ground into water-springs.

Psa 107:36 And He makes the hungry dwell there, so that they may prepare a city to live in;

Psa 107:37 and sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.

Psa 107:38 He also blesses them, so that they are multiplied greatly; and does not allow their cattle to become few.

Psa 107:39 Again, they have become few, and humbled through harshness, affliction, and sorrow.

Psa 107:40 He pours scorn on nobles, and causes them to wander in the wilderness, *where there is* no path.

Psa 107:41 But He raises up the poor from affliction and sets families like a flock.

Psa 107:42 The upright shall see and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop its mouth.

Psa 107:43 Whoever *is* wise, and will observe these *things*, they shall understand the mercies of Jehovah.

They were in the proverbial, tried everything themselves and finally called on God and had faith that He was in control and could and would help them if they trusted. Mate, sometimes it is hard to do that, especially when you have made a mistake or dumb decision.

But God never wastes anything, even manure.

Jesus had to get away and still His mind and draw near to God to survive in this world. He used to go off on His own for ages, but not running away.

We walk around the Bay. He walked on it

### REPEAT SELF-CALMING STATEMENTS.

It is popular today to repeat “Affirmations” like a mantra. These are positive summaries of our desires for ourselves. “Lord, smack him in the head”, doesn’t quite cut it. Many see them as magic spells in that what you say, is what you get, positively or negatively. I tried saying “I am going to win Lotto” fifty times a day but it hasn’t happened yet.

However, we can use affirmations as tools to guide our actions and thoughts, as self-encouragement... meant in the original meaning of the word. “to engender courage”.

Good examples are

- “Things could be worse.”
- “I am responsible for my response to this person’s actions.”
- “I can make it through this.”
- “This, too, will pass.”

The Bible has heaps of these too

**Psa 5:12** You bless those who obey you, LORD; your love protects them like a shield.

**Psa 9:13** Have mercy on me, O Jehovah; see my trouble from those who hate me, You who lift me up from the gates of death, Psa 9:14 so that I may declare all Your praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion; I will rejoice in Your salvation.

And my favourite,

**Rom 8:28** We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose.

There is a very delicate balance between repeating words like a Buddhist monk to numb the racing thoughts, and focusing on positive outcomes rather than negative ones that are promised by the King of the Universe who wrote the script. It is a life skill to learn to focus on God and Love and not the ... stuff... going on around you.

### FINDING ALTERNATIVES

#### TAKE OUT YOUR ANGER IN A CONSTRUCTIVE WAY.

Anger and hatred often lead to the desire for revenge. Negative emotions adversely affect our health, both physical and mental. There is an enormous amount of new work, now, that suggests that specific negative emotions will affect specific organs and an illness can be used as a diagnostic tool as to what thought pattern/behaviour is really troubling you deep inside. It can put you in touch with this “sin” inside you and you can then make the changes. It is uncannily accurate.... But for not now.

Remember sin is an action that hurts someone, and that someone can also be yourself.

AND if you allow these negative emotions to continue, you are letting the other person win. They are still inflicting hurt even though they may not even know it. This is especially important if we know that part of their plan was to inflict as much pain as possible. Don't “jolly-well” let them!!!!

Try finding a healthy outlet for these negative emotions.

- Exercise. It releases endorphins or feel-good hormones.
- Punching a pillow, not their head... or the wall.

- Gardening. Rip out the weeds not his throat.
- Round of golf – makes the present problem seem miniscule.
- Have a good cry.
- Yell at the universe. It doesn't care.
- Yell at God. He can take it and is amazingly patient and He will do something to help.

Or you CAN just go and pray

### TAKE POSITIVE ACTIONS THAT EXCEED THOSE OF YOUR ADVERSARY.

Use the experience to grow as a person yourself. Raise yourself above the base behaviour of the opponent. My mother used to say, “I wouldn't stoop to their behaviour”. Dad used to say, “We are above that sort of behaviour” This contains an element of pride, but who cares at this stage.

Behave well. People instinctively dislike bad behaviour. If you behave well, it will keep other people on your side and they are more likely to support you.

And it will go well in court. After all, if you behave negatively now, people may think that maybe you could have provoked the adversary. Positive behaviour denotes responsible mature people, and these people are more likely to be telling the truth.

Most importantly, you will feel better about yourself, both then and especially later, because you have not fallen to baser levels of behaviour, regardless of how you feel.

Jesus was always telling His people to forgive and do better than their adversaries

**Mat 5:39** But now I tell you: do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap your left cheek too.

**Mat 5:40** And if someone takes you to court to sue you for your shirt, let him have your coat as well.

**Mat 5:41** And if one of the occupation troops forces you to carry his pack one mile, carry it two miles.

**Mat 5:42** When someone asks you for something, give it to him; when someone wants to borrow something, lend it to him.

Mat 5:43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your friends, hate your enemies.'

Mat 5:44 But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Mat 5:45 so that you may become the children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil.

Boy, this is hard!!! Especially the shirt bit!!

When you have calmed down, write it all down, rip up the piece of paper, or burn it and feel a release. Please don't send it unless you want a bigger blue.

This a completely human way of handling these things that really works. Pen and paper were a little scarce in Biblical times so I couldn't find a reference to support this but I know it works.

**SEEK THE COMFORT OF YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY.**

Get out with mates for some positive activity. Takes your mind off your problems. Theirs are probably worse than yours and they are not letting on. Give your brain a rest.

Dump on your mates, or just be there and value "good people". You can so easily get sucked into the depression and the negative thinking of contention by feeling sorry for yourself. This doesn't achieve a thing except bind you up. Sometimes these chains can bind people for their whole lives.

Jesus used to dump on His mates often when He visited Mary and Martha in Luke 10 and again, when He took off with His disciples into the hills or went fishing.

David used Jonathan to support him

**SLEEP ON IT**

Oh, how important this one is and I have only recently come to realise what a valuable tool this is.

We usually think of this as delaying a decision until we calm down or have thought about it. And there is an old adage which says "Don't et the

sun go down on an argument”. I have compounded a blue by trying to live this one.

But the value of sleeping on a problem is immense.

Researchers suggest that unconscious thought, as in sleep, is actually an active, goal-directed thought process but on a different plane. The primary difference is that in unconscious thought, the usual biases that are a part of our conscious thinking are absent. In unconscious thought, we weigh the importance of the components that make up our decision more equally, leaving our preconceptions at the door of consciousness. This allow us to separate the issues better.

It also seems to bring up aspects of the problem which we hadn't thought of either in our confusion, emotion or hurt. These can very left field and quite revealing. Only problem is I need to write them down quickly or I forget them.

I personally think that the Holy Spirit interacts with our brain when He can get “us” out of the way. Everyone knows that God contacts humans via angels sometimes, or when people are asleep, so it is not a giant leap of logic that He can influence our thoughts while asleep.

Abraham received his revelation while asleep.

**Gen 15:12** And it happened as the sun was setting, and a deep sleep fell upon Abram. And, behold, a horror of great darkness fell upon him!

Gen 15:13 And He said to Abram, You must surely know that your seed shall be a stranger in a land not theirs, and shall serve them. And they shall afflict them four hundred years.

Gen 15:14 And also I will judge that nation whom they shall serve. And afterward they shall come out with great substance.

Gen 15:15 And you shall go to your fathers in peace. You shall be buried in a good old age.

Gen 15:16 But in the fourth generation they shall come here again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

Gen 15:17 And it happened, the sun went down, and it was dark *and* behold, a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp passed between those pieces.

Gen 15:18 In the same day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram, saying, I have given this land to your seed, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,  
Gen 15:19 the Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,  
Gen 15:20 and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the giants,  
Gen 15:21 and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

### As did Jacob

**Gen 28:11** And he came on a certain place, and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took of the stones of that place, and placed *them* at his head. And he lay down in that place to sleep.

Gen 28:12 And he dreamed. And behold! A ladder was set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven! And behold! The angels of God *were* ascending and descending on it!

Gen 28:13 And behold! Jehovah stood above it, and said, I *am* Jehovah, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac! The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your seed.

Gen 28:14 And your seed shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in you and in your Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Gen 28:15 And, behold, I *am* with you, and will keep you in every *place* where you go, and will bring you again into this land. For I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken of to you.

Gen 28:16 And Jacob awakened from his sleep. And he said, Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I did not know.

Gen 28:17 And he was afraid, and said, How fearful *is* this place! This *is* nothing but the house of God, and this *is* the gate of Heaven!

Gen 28:18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone which he had put at his head, and set it *as* a memorial pillar, and poured oil on the top of it.

Gen 28:19 And he called the name of that place The House of God. But the name of that city *was* Luz at first.

Joseph

Many kings. Pharaoh, the butler, the cupbearer,

**Dan 2:1** And in the second year of the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, with which his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him.

Joseph, Mary's husband

**Mat 1:20** And as he thought upon these things, behold, the angel of *the* Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take to you Mary *as* your wife. For that in her is fathered of *the* Holy Spirit.

While many of these are actual prophecies from The Lord, when you wake after “sleeping on it” it can feel like a revelation.

I will deliberately put off an important decision, or confusion, until I have slept on it. Mate, it can make a difference.

LET TIME PASS.

Time is a great healer.

As time passes, things are put into perspective. Usually, your rational brain will rise above the emotions and you will be able see more clearly what is important in your life, and what your options are. There are all sorts of strategies to learn to do this.

Again, my Mom used to say “Act in haste. Repent at your leisure”.

This may also happen to your opponent as they work through their issues and maybe they will repent or make some move of reconciliation.

God gave Israel so much time to repent, hoping they would change their ways but they didn't and eventually got zapped.

However, the other side of this coin is that we can put off dealing with an issue until it becomes either too deeply entrenched in negativity or too embarrassing. Life is always a balance.

Thank God we have the Holy Spirit to guide us... If we listen.

## HUMILITY

Really what we are looking at is humility.

Dr Google's definition is "the quality of having a modest or low view of one's importance."

I prefer this Hebrew definition.

"Humility is not being a *nebbish* -- meek, unassertive, pitiful, downcast loser. Humility is knowing exactly what your talents and capabilities are, what really happened, whose fault it was... **but choosing to acquiesce to take the path of peace and concern for the wellbeing of others.**

True humility is a positive and inspiring thing. Fake humility is nauseating.

Humility is an inward attitude where we choose not to put our own interests first and this can occur on so many different levels.

Humility is essential for our relationship with God and obtaining forgiveness for our sins. It is essential for any reconciliation. It is best if both parties practice this but we can do it alone.

Jesus was the archetype of humility. In His whole life, He was living humility, putting our needs and those of the Father, before His own. Even to death. I mean, He was the King of the Universe and could have zapped all those idiots at any time He wanted. But He chose not to.

**Mat 18:1 At that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Who is the greater in the kingdom of Heaven?**

**Mat 18:2 And Jesus called a little child to Him and set him in their midst,**

**Mat 18:3 and said, Truly I say to you, Unless you are converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.**

**Mat 18:4 Therefore whoever shall humble himself like this little child, this one is the greater in the kingdom of Heaven.**

Humility brings its own rewards, too, in the earthly plane, as God will bless those who practice it. Often, we don't recognise these blessings as coming from God and claim it as good luck or the works of our own hands but those who know Him can see His hand in these events.

**Pro 15:33** The fear of Jehovah *is* the beging of wisdom, and before honour *is* humility.

**Pro 22:4** By humility *and* the fear of Jehovah *are* riches and honour and life.

**Pro 29:23** A man's pride shall bring him low; but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

**Jas 4:6** But He gives more grace. Therefore He says, God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble.

And we are told that we can “put on” humility. It is something we choose to do.

**Pet 5:5** Likewise, younger ones, be subject to older ones, and all being subject to one another. **Put on humility.** For God resists proud ones, but He gives grace to the humble.

Make the choice, just like you choose a shirt for the day. Choose humility

### BEING HUMBLE

Being humble is the act of humility. We chose to act in a humble way and put our needs, self, thoughts and words below the needs of others. This is not an act of going belly-up but one of wisdom. We choose a wiser path that will allow the other person some room to work through their hurts. Sometimes we need to let them win a few points in order to keep negotiations going.

This is an act of strength, not weakness.

Mind you, we CAN do “humble” to the point of Uriah Heap and wallow in self-pity because we have to give all the ground. This involves a lot of signing and head hanging. True humility is dignity and concession but also standing for the big issues.

Hard to get the balance

### WHY

The answer lies in understanding the true difference between animals and people What separates us from animals is our ability to choose, and our exercising of that choice.

Our humanness tells us what we need to do, while our mind (and religion) tells us what we should do. Therefore, the more things we do simply because of habit and without thinking, the less free will we're exercising, which makes us more like animals.

Conversely, the more restraint we exercise, the more freedom we're expressing, because we weren't slaves to our nature or circumstances. What makes being a Christian so special is that we have so many 'choices' of how we act, and each of those positive choices make us less like animals and more like God.

You know, deciding to do something is just as important as actually doing it, because then we think about why we do it, and the source, reason, and meaning of it all become part of the action. The decision to act is often the hardest part.

Doesn't make it easier to do though.

### ARROGANCE- SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

Obviously, arrogance is the opposite of humility. Arrogant people see themselves as above the ordinary masses for whatever reason. It may be social status, educational status, hierarchy in an organisation, peer group, position in a queue. Whatever.

Arrogant people are self-righteous. They are right about themselves.

Arrogance is expressed in "I am right", "I have a right, entitlement, due etc, even obligation, duty responsibility", "This is me!!! Hello"

They are never wrong, or if they do acknowledge some weakness, they make excuses or blame others or circumstances and then tell you how great they are.... Well, they may not tell you but they think they are.

Arrogance always starts with "I", although it may be couched in subtler terms. We all know that forgiveness cannot even begin while we are talking "I"

And God hates arrogance and pride. Arrogance is pride in action and God tells us that they will be brought down, somehow.

Personified Wisdom (God) is speaking here

**Pro 8:13** The fear of Jehovah *is* to hate evil; I (wisdom)hate pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the wicked mouth.

Pro 8:14 Counsel and sound wisdom *are* mine; I *am* understanding; I have strength.

What of Moab?

**Jer 48:29** We have heard the pride of Moab (he is exceedingly proud), his loftiness, and his pride, and his arrogance, and his elevated heart.

Jer 48:42 And Moab shall be destroyed from *being* a people, because he has magnified *himself* against Jehovah.

Where is Moab now? It has been absorbed into Jordan. Their language has gone, they have not been seen in history since Cyrus the Great in the 550's BC

**1Sa 2:3** Talk no more so very proudly. Remove arrogance out of your mouth, for Jehovah is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed.

1Sa 2:4 The bows of the mighty *are* broken

**Pro 8:13** The fear of Jehovah *is* to hate evil; I hate pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the wicked mouth.

**Pro 16:18** Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

“Pride cometh before a fall” is direct quote from the Bible and a saying we all know. Pride or arrogance can only lead to trouble, maybe not immediately, but Karma, and justice, are bitches.

No matter what the problem is, we contribute in some way, or we are perceived to have contributed in some way. An apology or forgiveness can help enormously.

**Humility does not mean thinking less of yourself.**

**It means thinking of yourself less.**

-- C.S. Lewis

## **FORGIVENESS – HOW**

So how on earth can we do this? What is the process that we can follow to make this happen?

The bottom line is that unless you forgive, the agony **INSIDE YOU**, will go on. Often this continues even after one party dies, like it did with my Mum. In that case the unforgiveness morphed from my mother to the siblings. Sometimes this unforgiveness can pass onto future generations.

So how do we do this? Guidelines are always helpful but here they are intended as just that, guidelines to guide you. The course and manner is yours to choose and will depend on the circumstances.

Deciding to do something is just as important as doing it, because then we think about why we do it, and the source, reason, and meaning of it all become part of the action. This can sometimes be harder than actually doing it and the place in the process where we get the most Brownie Points.

Our family has seen how the court system operates and believe me, you **DO NOT** want to get caught up in that. It is confronting, tedious, petty, dragged out and **EXPENSIVE**. Resolution can take years and so there is no closure. You are hung up by your wrists till it is over.

## **JESUS WAY**

Now, this is where Jesus has it all sewn up, long before the Psychologists discovered the value of “talking about it”.

### **STAGE 1 - TALK TO YOUR BROTHER**

[Mat 18:15](#) "If your brother sins against you, go to him and show him his fault. But do it privately, just between yourselves. If he listens to you, you have won your brother back."

Pity Christians haven't done this it over the centuries, or even use it today.

When I first read this concept in Scripture, I was so challenged. Surely, He cannot mean me!!! Me actually do this. It was totally counter to all the values I had grown up with. But a Christian lady hit me around the head with the concept that if we are Christians, we are supposed to live as Jesus did, or said. Eventually, I found the faith and courage to try it.

I cannot remember the incident (a good sign of forgiveness) but absolutely terrified and surrounded by prayer, I bit the bullet and made the coffee appointment with the person who had “mortally wounded me”. Neutral territory. People around so she couldn’t spack out. My shout, so in a small way, I had the “upper hand”, red clothes to make me a little more dominant. Any trick we can use to help us do this really hard thing, is fair game, short of ambushing them.

When I explained how her actions had affected me, she looked blank for a moment, then she remembered and looked amazed. “Oh” she said “I had no idea you felt like that. I didn’t mean that. Oh, you poor thing. No wonder you are upset. I meant so and so”. I felt so relieved... and quite embarrassed. She apologised. I apologised and we parted, closer friends and better Christians. We were able to laugh about it and then both of us used it to help teach others how approaching someone in love can avoid so much more pain.

Later, thinking about the process, I was astounded at how effective His way was ... duhrh... both by the resolution of the problem but also in helping me work out how I really felt about the issue. It helped me put the issue into perspective and then find the words. This, in itself, is amazingly cathartic. You are, then, only dealing with words, not a whole gambit of emotions and thoughts tumbling over each other. You have to decide what is worth fighting over, decide whether the issue is important enough to subject both of you to this process.

But more than that, the process made me look at flaws and weaknesses in my soul, my thought process, my nature, my deep reasons for the way I had reacted. This gave me wisdom which helped me not make that mistake again.

I went away exhilarated on so many levels. I had done the right thing. The record had been set straight. Negativity has been eliminated; in fact, there had been real growth on both our parts. I was confronted that the septic thought process that I thought was how everyone thought, because that was the ethos of our home as children, the time when our values are formed, need not be the normal. Wow!!! Not all people think the same!!

It also gave me a totally different perspective on the Biblical processes, a new major understanding of concepts that I had not been confronted with

and it became a major learning curve for me. Jesus actually did mean us to “do” some of these things!!!! And it worked!!!!

Now I do it any time I have an issue that is important enough in my life to deal with. This is actually the major benefit of this process. It forces you to decide if the issue is important enough to put you both through the process. Either way, you can then move onto forgiveness.

Now, I pray heaps and then make an appointment, rock in in whatever clothes I am wearing that day, still use coffee as a bridge, and do it, hopefully in love. But it is still not easy. It takes a pretty big challenge that I can’t work through to get me into my red gear now.

### MAN’S WAY

If you are at the legal action stage, there may be legal reasons why meeting one on one is not possible or wise. You may consider taking that risk. You may learn his point of view. There could have been a simple acceptable reason for the action that you have not seen, or influence him to think differently, but to be brutally honest, if you are at the court stage, talking to them will probably achieve little except allow you to say you tried everything.

### HOW TO DO IT

Obviously, organise the meeting.

You can text or write but this is so open to misinterpretation, and often these people can be actively seeking more ways to attack, and written words, so open to misinterpretation, can be used in court then the intent is your word against theirs.

If they won’t meet you, you are off the hook. You have stepped out in faith and fairness and so you can move on up the forgiveness chain.

A simple “What is your problem?” is a good starting place. The critical thing is how you say it though.

“What is your problem?” - “You stupid” ..... - in ya face, loud voice.  
“What is your problem?” - “Oh for heaven’s sake!! - slight irritation.  
“What is your problem?” - Come and tell me -- impersonal neutral tone  
“What is your problem?” - Oh come here” soft caring tone, touching hand or shoulder.

It is really hard to do this face to face but is usually worth it.

## PROPS

It is Ok, in fact very wise, to use all the psychological techniques developed in this modern world to deal with conflict. There are so many new ones that Donnah does that blow my mind. The object is to get the person to a place where dialogue can take place and resolution can occur, forgiveness and reconciliation, or at least peace. They are largely based on meeting the person where THEY are and working from there.

I like the Sandwich Approach. Give them something positive (get them on side), hit them with the issue, obviously as lovingly as possible, then more praise. They initially feel Ok, then the problem, then more praise so they are left with a good taste in mouth.

Use unthreatening or non-accusatory statements, like “I feel so and so when you do so and so”. “I need to know why you...”, “Can you tell me why you said so and so?” etc. You never go in with a “YOU do this” “You duded me!! “You, you , you!!!”

This is the hardest part. It takes a lot of wisdom, courage and self-control, but especially humility, to challenge someone in a way that they are less likely to get all defensive and/or attack you. I mean you really do want to tear their eyes out, but hey... In fact, often it is an almost an impossibility to find anything nice to say to make the sandwich, but God can always find something.

## OUTCOME

Have a definite outcome in mind. You may want total reconciliation of all levels, emotional, spiritual, legal, physical, maybe for it all to “just go away”. This needs to be clear in your mind so that you know when to walk away and when to pray harder.

You may cop a great torrent of abuse of all the wrongs you have ever done, or been blamed for, or that they have even imagined you have done; you may hear all the reasons why they are entitled to act as they did, listen to their sob story going back to Mummy taking the dummy away. You may just need to suck all this up and listen while they dump. This experience can range from a totally appalling revelation which will totally change your perspective of the person to being in a comedy skit.

There are so many ramifications as to how this meeting will go from total acquiescence from the other party in tears of repentance... or maybe that will be you.... to outright violent attack, maybe even physical.

Whichever way it goes it is essential to go in with the positive outlook of hope.

## HOPE

Obviously, we set out in hope. We are doing the right thing as Christians because we are doing it His way, and on a worldly level we are trying to reduce negativity and hurt so the stress will all just “go away”.

Without hope it is pretty pointless.

**Rom 5:5** This hope does not disappoint us, for God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us.

**Rom 15:13** May God, the source of hope, fill you with all joy and peace by means of your faith in him, so that your hope will continue to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**1Co 9:10** Didn't he really mean us when he said that? Of course, that was written for us. Anyone who ploughs and anyone who reaps should do their work in the hope of getting a share of the crop.

**Ecc 9:4** But anyone who is alive in the world of the living has some hope; a live dog is better off than a dead lion.

## BE COMPASSIONATE

Recognize that you are not there to control your adversary

But this not about him, it is about you and your inner peace. Just let it go.

Try to see it their way, even if only in theory. We all know he is a twit.

And ain't this hard!!! Mate they don't deserve it ...but....

If you put yourself in their shoes, you may be able to understand their situation better and so relate to them more easily and find a solution to the impasse. You may disagree but you can understand.

Remember you are supposed to be seeking peace and positivity, not anger and negativity.

You may find out that there are extenuating circumstances you don't know about; they have issues and hurts; they may be going through a tough time and hit out at you because they feel you are safe. They may feel that they are not in a position to hit out at the real source of their stress. They probably not even aware of this process.

Keep reminding ourselves that forgiveness is up to us and ultimately, we are the ones who will receive the greatest benefit if we can forgive and move on.

And as Christians, compassion and forgiveness are the basis of our whole thought framework and being... well they should be.

**Php 2:1** Your life in Christ makes you strong, and his love comforts you. You have fellowship with the Spirit, and you have kindness and compassion for one another.

**Col 3:12** You are the people of God; he loved you and chose you for his own. So then, you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

**Jas 3:17** But the wisdom from above is pure first of all; it is also peaceful, gentle, and friendly; it is full of compassion and produces a harvest of good deeds; it is free from prejudice and hypocrisy.

I mean, really, isn't that why you came to Christ, to seek forgiveness for your sins, for the hurts you had caused Him and others and they to you? It is incumbent on us, our Christian duty to be compassionate to others, to love others.

#### SOFT AND GENTLE SPEECH

**Pro 15:1** A gentle answer quiets anger, but a harsh one stirs it up.

I like the old KJV English of this "a Gentle answer turneth away wrath."

Calm and gentle speech reduces the stress on both parties. It is awfully difficult to keep shouting at someone who is just copping it, especially if

the object of the other party is to cause conflict. And ain't it hard to keep your mouth shut or speak quietly when they are ranting and talking rubbish.

**Col 4:5** Be wise in the way you act toward those who are not believers, making good use of every opportunity you have.

**Col 4:6** Your speech should always be pleasant and interesting, and you should know how to give the right answer to everyone.

**Pro 26:4** Don't answer a fool according to his foolishness, or you will be just like him.

**Pro 17:27** Whoever controls what he says is knowledgeable; anyone who has a calm spirit is a man of understanding.

**Pro 17:28** Even a fool is thought to be wise when he remains silent; he is thought to be prudent when he keeps his mouth shut.

And for us too. If we can keep calm and speak calmly we are less likely to say something that will stir them up, hurt them more or make the situation worse, something we will regret later.

As the psychologists say, "Listen three times and speak once." You may learn stuff you never knew that will help you understand and make it easier for you to forgive. I mean if we know that someone intended no harm, or is hitting out at us because we are a safe target, or is simply a dope or even mentally ill, then we know how to act to get reconciliation or make the situation "go away" and avoid future issues.

And you will have peace of mind, have done the right thing, been caring of others, not looked a dope yourself, been creative in your approach, exhausted all the possibilities, worked within Jesus parameters, removed negativity, actually taken control and avoided conflict

## CONCLUSION

So again, forgiveness is based on

- Someone stepping outside an accepted boundary, or "sin". This can be The Big 10 or the road rules.
- It is not really about "them". It is really about us and our wellbeing
- Can be enormous benefit to the other person if they let it.

- It is not necessarily based on repentance by the other person.
- Repentance comes in three levels: regret, because of the effect on you, remorse, the effect on the other person BUT, and true repentance where they accept responsibility for their actions.
- Forgiveness comes in several levels; exoneration where the person can't be held responsible, forbearance when you suck it up negatively and release which is true forgiveness.
- Of course, there are worldly solutions to deal with conflict and these can be quite successful but...
- Or we can forgive and move on.
- The Biblical story of The Prodigal Son is the definitive statement on Christ's standards of forgiveness. This went to amazing levels of love but they all still had to live by the consequences of his actions for the rest of his life. I just can't do Jesus standards to this level.
- Jesus was the definitive role model for how to forgive.
- He actually did it for us so we could have the relationship with the Father we need for complete life.
- He also left clear guidelines as to how we were to manage these situations. We have only covered the first step, the most important one.

➤ Speak to the person themselves

The next steps are

- Take a witness or two
  - Go to the Church
  - Finally use the courts
  - Walk away from them
- Forgiveness is hard but we can use strategies from all areas of modern life to help and the advantages we all gain are monumental.

Forgiveness is a concept alien to our basic human nature which is programmed for fight or flight when "threatened" for obvious reasons, but maturity and love rise above anger and retaliation and seek understanding and cooperation.

So, forgiveness is an enormous, magical concept with so many levels to explore, aspects to consider, choices to make, decisions to put into practice and benefits to reap. It is multidimensional in that, how we handle forgiveness, affects us, the other party and those around us.

But it goes so much deeper than that. How....or if we forgive ,WILL affect our relationship with Christ, ourselves, the person, our family, our friends, our business or place of work, our society and believe it or not, the whole world. This is no small stuff.

It can even effect our eternal life. Hard as this is Christ says

**Mat 6:12 and forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors.**

**Mat 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Mat 6:14 For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you;**

**Mat 6:15 but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

And ain't this hard.