



EXERCISE #08: FORGIVENESS

2 DO RESEARCH FORGIVENESS

- ✓ I forgive
- ✓ I'm sorry
- ✓ Thank you
- ✓ I love you

Exercise #06

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The final exercise in this 3-step assignment of 'Honouring the Old' is centred on forgiveness (Duffield-Thomas, 2013).

Now that you've spend time figuring out what values and expectations are really yours, you may experience some feelings of anger and resentment towards those who 'forced' you to live up to theirs.

You may be thinking things like:

"If they hadn't pushed me to study that sensible subject I would now be doing what I love"

OR

"I really want them to admit they did me wrong by making me pursue what was really their dream"

OR

"I can't forgive them. What they did to me was really bad and wrong"

For all I know you may be right. And some things really are unforgivable. But hanging on to anger and resentment is unhealthy too!

Just think of all that negative energy building up within you when you keep focussing on things that were done to you in the past and can't be undone.

Also chances are you will never get apologies or acknowledgement. Don't forget people, parents especially, in general only want the best for their loved ones, friends, colleagues, etc. and therefore do what they think is best.

This exercise is meant to help you let go of those feelings of anger and resentment. It is the only way to truly become free to step onto your own life's path.



It was Nelson Mandela who said:

“Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies.”

Don't drink the poison!

Instead, do this:

1. **Forgive**

QUICK NOTE

There is power in taking the objects out into nature with you and finding spots where you can physically discard each of them while going through this step of the exercise.

Now mentally, consciously take each of the objects you selected and assert to each of them

I forgive you ... dissipates any negative feelings of resentment you harboured against them

I'm sorry ... acknowledges that at some deep level you may have had your own part in this

Thank you ... for the good they brought you

I love you ... restores balance, sends love into the situation and releases you from victimhood

You don't have to spend a lot of time with each of them. Nor is it necessary to get caught up in emotions around them.

Forgiveness doesn't mean forgetting or condoning. It means setting yourself free from negativity and thus making it possible to start moving again.

2. **Check back**

After you've gone through step 1, let it rest for a couple of days and then come back to you're the values and expectations you've just discarded. Some of them will perhaps need another round of forgiving

Do the whole exercise as often as necessary to take anger and resentment out of your life.

3. **Make a list**

QUICK NOTE

Once you've gone through the exercise for the values and expectations you wanted to discard, you can use it to work through feelings of resentment and anger in other areas of your life.

Take a piece of paper and make a list of everything that has been done to you and has kept you from truly living your own life.



Start with the list of values and expectations that were put upon you as a starting point, but you don't need to stop there. You can do this for every area of your life.

Think about the bullies in school, the times you were embarrassed by others, traumatic events, teenage hurts, anything and everything.

Don't write mini-novels about them. Be brief and to the point. "When mum & dad pushed me to" or "When X bullied me"

Don't forget to include a list of things you forgive yourself for.

You may be surprised to find out how much we can punish ourselves for mistakes we made in the past or how easily we blame others for things we don't want to take responsibility for. If you don't consciously forgive yourself for these things, you may subconsciously go on thinking things like "I'm not worthy of ...", "I don't deserve to live my own life", "I'm will never be successful", etc.

For powerful stories on forgiveness in action: <http://theforgivenessproject.com/stories/>

ROOM FOR NOTES