

# THE NATURE OF FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is a transformation. The key is to release suffering and thereby increase inner peace and understanding.

Forgiveness is not forgetting. In fact, you have to remember and acknowledge negative emotions and events before forgiveness can occur.

Forgiveness is not pardoning, excusing, or saying that something will be treated as acceptable behavior in the future.

Forgiveness is, first and foremost, done for the person doing the forgiving. It is paradoxical in the sense that when you forgive others you heal yourself.

Forgiveness is a path to freedom. It frees you from the control of the person who caused the harm and therefore, that person loses his or her power to cause you to feel negative emotions.

Forgiveness can break old patterns that may otherwise interfere as you try to create new relationships.

Forgiveness can take a long time and requires hard work.

Forgiveness need not require “making up” with the person who caused the harm. It is an internal process. It is primarily for you. The goal is to help you heal, to help you grow.

Thinking about forgiveness may not be enough. For many, tapping into principles described in various spiritual traditions from around the world is necessary. Meditation, interpersonal dialogues, and intense emotional work may be essential parts of the forgiveness process for many people.

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