

# Forgiveness is my **SUPERPOWER!**

Forgiveness as a superpower, is not 'magical thinking'. When I accept that I can only move-on with my life by forgiving — I go to a higher gear. I can do things I could not do before. I choose to leave the past in the past and that is powerful. Forgiveness empowers me to learn from the past; I don't wallow in it.

Because of the AA steps, I no longer need grudges, resentment, hatred, or self-pity to justify my actions or to protect myself. I get past the old idea that I need to 'even the score' or that I need to 'hurt' the people or institutions who have hurt me. Forgiveness means that I am no longer in bondage to the people and things of the past. I am in the moment, living as my most excellent self. I use the past for perspective, not as my identity.

Forgiveness is a natural result of confronting the painful past and allowing the 'sunlight of the spirit' to heal my wounds. It's an inside job! I don't have to get anyone's permission or approval to forgive and heal; it is a 100% internal process. Another great bit of news, it isn't about looking good being 'spiritual'. Forgiveness is my right and not an obligation. I forgive to become free. I forgive to improve my conscious contact with the God of my understanding. I forgive to gain the POWER to do the next right thing.

**What it looks like:** I forgive when I finally let it go. This may require tears, and a great deal of prayer and patience because when I truly forgive, a part of the old me dies. It can feel like I don't know who I am for a while. But with repetition of the principles of AA, and consistent surrender to a Higher Power I get more self-esteem. The Big Book says that we avoid retaliation and argument, "God save me from being angry. Thy will be done." Most of my retaliation and argument takes place in my head. I literally yell at people in my mind and that keeps me from being loving and kind in the moment. I lose the chance of being helpful to those I might have helped because I won't forgive some past harm. A simple truth: I heal when I take the actions to forgive.

I start my forgiveness prayer *by thanking God for His forgiveness of me*. I do this to acknowledge that I am spiritually sick too. I put out of my mind the wrongs that were done to me and focus on my right to forgive the person. Next *I ask God to give that person exactly what I want for myself. I ask that they are shown a way to get closer to Him; a way to do loving actions in their lives*. I close *by asking God to give me the power to show this person, and anyone who offends me, a kindly and tolerant manner*.

This is only my way of praying. You will choose your own words of course; it is just a small example.



# FORGIVENESS IS NOT ABOUT:

**Forgetting:** *We aren't trying to forgive and forget.* In reality, we forgive and LEARN. Once I forgive, I am better able to discern and avoid repeating what had happened to me in the past. I also learn to stop victimizing others; I stop falling into old patterns of retaliation. The "Hurt People Hurt People Syndrome" is a direct result of unforgiveness. I forgive to live free.

**Size or depth of suffering:** *Not all hurts are BIG events, but they are just as toxic to our spiritual condition.* Even 'paper-cut' resentments add up and make a difference in our lives. We may kid ourselves saying, "It wasn't that bad, or it's not important" but those small resentments can block us from the Sunlight of the Spirit.

**Absolution:** *Forgiving does not erase what they did.* Each of us remains responsible for our own actions. I don't erase another's actions by my forgiving them. The God of my understanding has both the will and the ability to forgive them, but that is between them and their Higher Power. My position is simply that this person doesn't 'owe' me anything anymore. If it's money, they are no longer indebted to me because I forgive it. If it is a dirty deed done to me, I no longer expect or need an apology. I decide to end it with forgiveness. I clear my side of the street to become open and closer to my Higher Power and the others I meet.

**Co-signing bad behavior:** *Forgiving a person in no way implies that I approve of their BAD actions.* I don't like the way they acted, but they, like me, are spiritually sick. I forgive to be forgiven. Remember, anger is like a poison. Unforgiveness makes me paralyzed and unable to be creative, loving, and helpful. I am poisoned when I am full of anger.

**Being the martyr:** *Why me? Why must I be the one to forgive?* It's not about being a martyr or saint. It is actually my superpower. I forgive to open the channel between myself and my God; myself, and my fellows. No act is more freeing than forgiveness.

**One and done:** *I cannot fix the present in the present.* Time takes time. Healing takes time. No doubt what they did was hurtful, and wrong; I may have every reason to be angry and I want to 'protect' myself from any more of this kind of harm. It is so easy to pick up an old resentment again but is that good for me and my spiritual growth. The truth? Complete relief can take time. Is there a solution? Repetition of my gratitude to my God for His forgiveness really does the trick. We are forgiven just as we forgive. It's an age-old formula that really works and keeps on working.



There are many ways to express these ideas, and this is by no means an exhaustive essay on the various ways to forgive. Our only purpose is to be helpful. Take the good and 'forgive' me for any misunderstanding I may have.