



# INTEGRATE TO LIVE

Restore Resilience. Cultivate Community. Impact your World

## Week 33 Transcript: Forgiveness

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This week, we talk about one of the most beautiful, and difficult, relational choices anyone could make: the choice to offer forgiveness.

Forgiveness is an act of love. It is a choice to be empowered to release ourselves from the hurt and anger we feel. It is radical self-agency as we take responsibility for ourselves and recognize we can choose to be liberated from this burden.

Forgiveness is not saying what the person did is OK or that they should not be held accountable for their actions. Oftentimes someone will apologize and we reply, "It's OK" but harbor unforgiveness in our hearts. A more appropriate response in essence, regardless of how we actually say it is, "It's not OK, it hurt. But, I choose to forgive you anyway."

Forgiveness is a process of grief. In order to truly let go, we have to let something die. It could be our expectations of how life was going to look. We might grieve the death of what we enjoyed about our relationship with that person before the betrayal.

We may have to let go of our hope that they would see things from our perspective. It could require we give up our desire that they seek our forgiveness from a place of repentance. Whatever it may be, there is a loss. And, we must grieve this loss in order to forgive.

The reason forgiveness is so important is because unforgiveness, harboring anger and resentment, leads to bitterness of soul. Nelson Mandela sagely said: "Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies." Holding on will not produce the retribution we long for. And, it will not make the wrong thing they did right.

Unforgiveness can be a prison that locks us in pain and hooks us into the Victim – Persecutor dynamic with that person. When we are able to choose to forgive, we are no longer chained to the perpetrator.

It can also be a way to mask our deep hurt. Sometimes it feels safer, or stronger, to be angry instead of touching the tender, vulnerable bruise the damage caused.



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Within this tender, vulnerable place lies our deeper fears and questions about life and love. Why me? What did I do to deserve this? Am I loveable? Does God even care? Being released from this prison of pain allows us to heal and be restored. This is why forgiveness is often the most important step in our healing journey.

Forgiveness is not forgetting. We can forgive someone and still have broken trust, it doesn't automatically make them trust-worthy. We may choose to allow them to rebuild trust with us or we may choose to let the relationship come to an end.

Forgiveness involves letting go. One of the primary things we need to part with is our idealized version of how things should be, how people should behave and how we should respond. People are imperfect and will always be in need of grace.

When we reality check our expectations, of ourselves and others, and accept our vulnerability and imperfection, we are able to forgive and let go. Accepting this reality is painful and requires us to grieve. But, it also allows us to live from our Empowered Identity and own responsibility for our lives.

If you're unsure whether or not you are holding on to unforgiveness, do the "grocery store" litmus test. Imagine running into the person in question at the grocery store, unexpectedly. Is your immediate reaction to duck behind the display of fruit or dart down the frozen food aisle? If so, it's likely you are holding something against this person that is worth exploring. Sometimes we can work through the letting go process and choose to offer forgiveness within ourselves and other times we need to have a courageous conversation with the person who has done us wrong. The principles of having a courageous conversation, as well as the action guide template, are supportive in preparing for a forgiveness and reconciliation conversation, as well.

As we do an inventory on our relationships, searching to find the connections that may be harboring unforgiveness, we often forget to consider our relationship with ourselves.



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What do you need to forgive yourself for? Practicing unconditional love and radical self-acceptance, as we courageously extend compassion and mercy toward ourselves, brings immeasurable freedom.

Let's practice learning to forgive as we release ourselves from hurt, anger, judgment and bitterness. Be sure to download the action guide to support this process and share what you are learning on our group page.