

Forgiveness is...

- ✓ **Forgiveness is...** letting go of resentment, anger, and hostility toward someone who treated you unfairly, even though you are justified in having these feelings.
- ✓ **Forgiveness is...** recognizing the wrongdoer is human, and treating them decently despite what they did.
- ✓ **Forgiveness is...** a chance to amend a relationship that was damaged, if you choose to do so.
- ✓ **Forgiveness is...** a mental shift, or a change of heart, that develops over time.
- ✓ **Forgiveness is...** a process that can start at any time. You can even forgive a person who is no longer in your life.
- ✓ **Forgiveness is...** an opportunity to heal. Forgiveness can reduce symptoms of trauma, anger, anxiety, and depression. Additionally, it can increase hope and self-esteem.
- ✓ **Forgiveness is...** a personal decision that only you can make for yourself. No one can make you forgive another person.

Forgiveness is not...

- ✗ **Forgiveness is not...** condoning, approving of, or excusing what happened.
- ✗ **Forgiveness is not...** forgetting how you were wronged, or pretending like nothing happened.
- ✗ **Forgiveness is not...** an agreement to continue a relationship as it was. After forgiving someone, you can choose to resume, modify, or end the relationship.
- ✗ **Forgiveness is not...** simply saying “I forgive you” without meaning it. In fact, you can forgive without ever saying so.
- ✗ **Forgiveness is not...** something you do for the other person. Forgiveness is for you.
- ✗ **Forgiveness is not...** getting even or getting revenge. Getting even might feel good in the moment, but unlike forgiveness, it does not resolve anger and resentment.
- ✗ **Forgiveness is not...** something that can be forced. Just because you want to forgive doesn't mean that forgiveness has been achieved.