

Self-Forgiveness



Welcome

WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

Before we dive into this workbook, it's important to understand what forgiveness is. The definition of forgiveness is essentially the act of pardoning an offender. Forgiveness is the release of resentment or anger. Forgiveness doesn't mean reconciliation. One doesn't have to return to the same relationship or accept the same harmful behaviors from an offender.

WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

Forgiving another person is one thing, but what happens when we commit the offense ourselves? It's important to take responsibility for mistakes, but intense guilt and shame aren't a productive outcome in the long run. Self-forgiveness is not an on-off switch, but a process that happens over time through emotional work and reflection.

Self-forgiveness requires striking a balance between taking responsibility and maintaining a positive sense of self. When you successfully find this equilibrium, you reach self-forgiveness.

Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1996, p. 116) were the first to offer a concrete psychological definition of self-forgiveness as "a willingness to abandon self-resentment in the face of one's acknowledged objective wrong, while fostering compassion, generosity, and love toward oneself."

3 PILLARS OF *Forgiveness*

PILLAR 1

The release of negative emotions directed toward the self: Self-forgiveness does not mean we skip the step of feeling bad; it simply means that we work through these feelings of self-resentment and then relieve ourselves of them

PILLAR 2

Cultivating self-directed positive emotions: As well as putting our negative emotions in our rear-view mirror, self-forgiveness involves fostering benevolent thoughts and emotions toward the self in the form of self-compassion, love, and kindness.

PILLAR 3

Acknowledging and accepting responsibility:
If you were to only absolve yourself of negative emotions and shower yourself with positive emotions, this would be “pseudo-self-forgiveness” True self-forgiveness involves recognizing the “wrongness” of your actions.

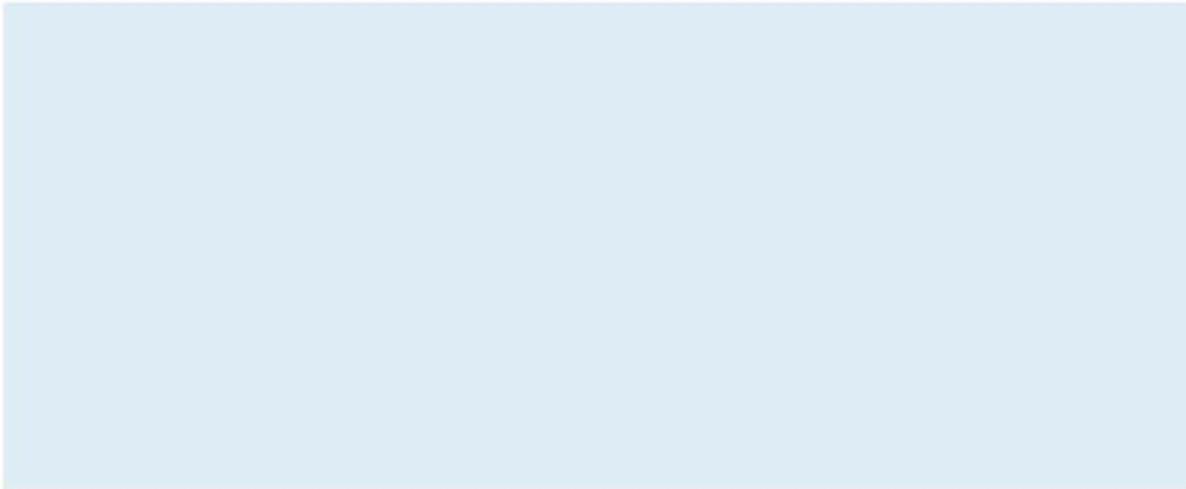
THE 4RS OF GENIUNE

Self-Forgiveness

1	<p>RESPONSIBILITY: The person seeking forgiveness takes responsibility and does not lay blame elsewhere.</p>
2	<p>REMORSE: Cornish and Wade (2015) suggest that the individual should work through difficult emotions like shame to more “offense-specific” emotions like guilt, which are more likely to motivate people to make reparations.</p>
3	<p>RESTORATION: The next step is to actively try to make things right, repair relationships, and reaffirm any moral values that were broken.</p>
4	<p>RENEWAL: This is a place of self-forgiveness, renewed self-compassion, and self-respect. Through this process, the individual achieves “moral growth.”</p>

Journal Prompts

What is your biggest regret and why?



What did it feel like to be too hard on yourself?

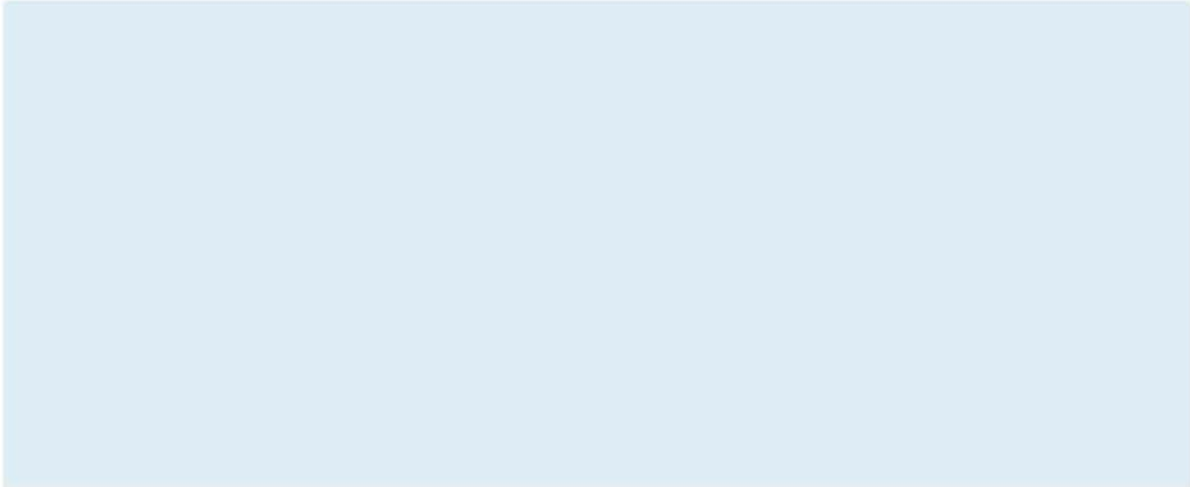


How can you be kinder to yourself?



Journal Prompts

What does forgiveness mean to you?



What would it be like if you could forgive yourself for everything that you've done wrong in your life?

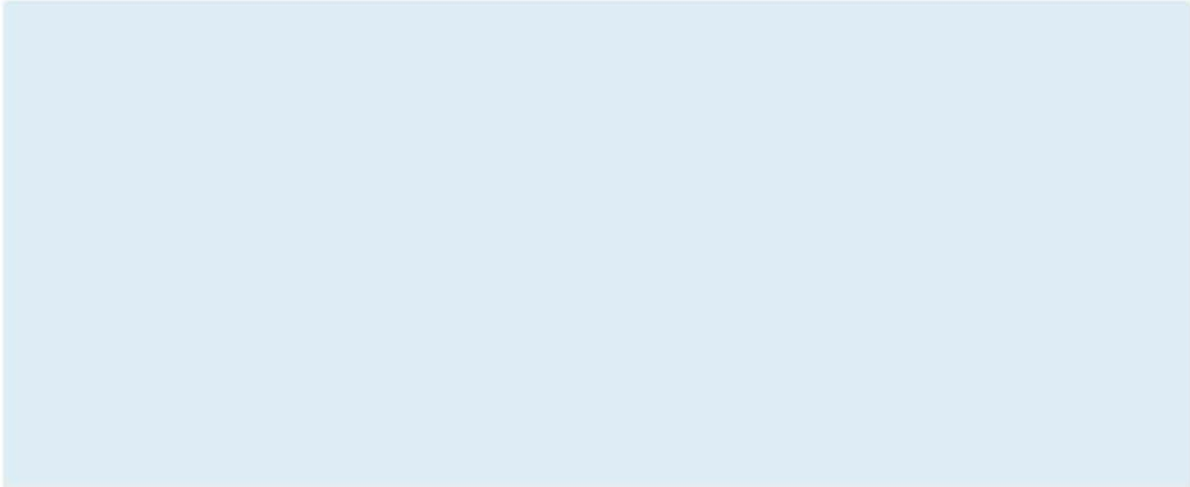


What are the things you wish to forgive yourself for?

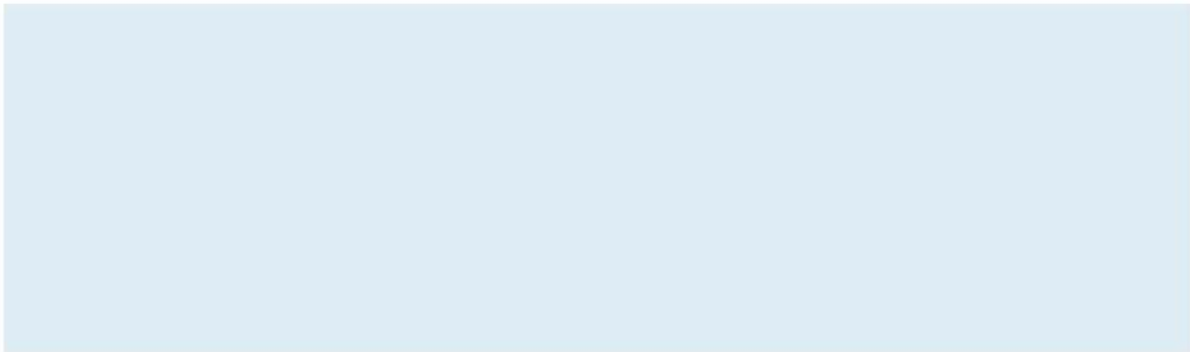


Journal Prompts

What are you ready to forgive yourself for right now?



Is there something you feel ashamed of? Write it.



What is something that went wrong in your life? What did you learn from it?

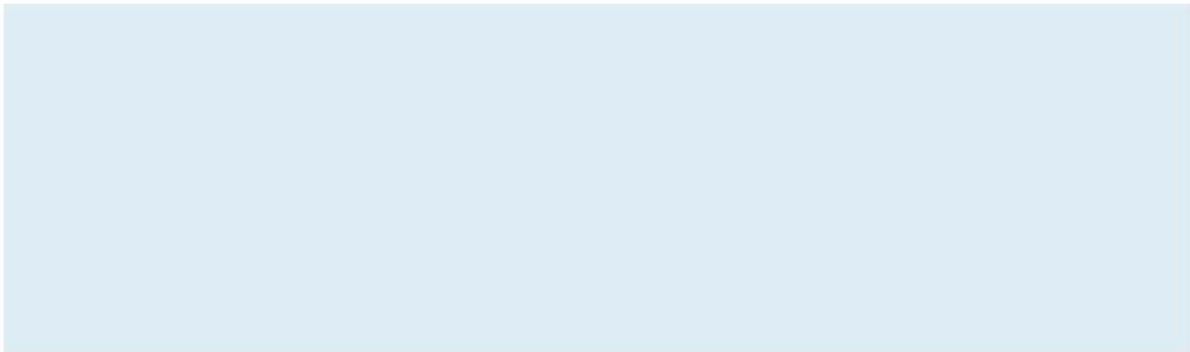


Journal Prompts

What is most challenging about self-forgiveness?



What are 3 ways you can move forward from your past mistakes?



What is something that went wrong in your life? What did you learn from it?



Journal Prompts

What are the benefits of forgiveness?

Write down at least 5 affirmations for yourself related to forgiving yourself and others.

The following are some examples:

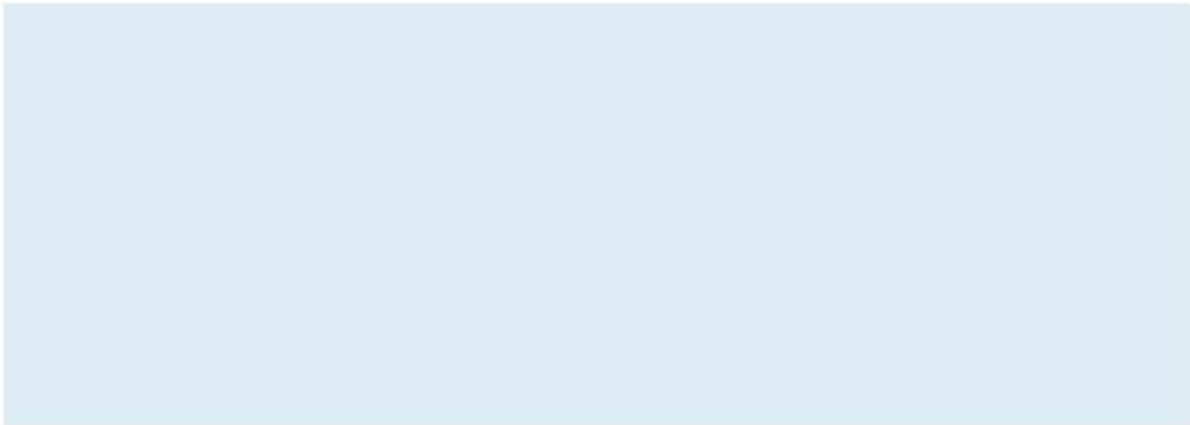
- I give up all self-criticism.
- I am free from the prison of resentment.
- I acknowledge my faults and forgive myself completely.
- Forgiveness is a gift to myself.
- I accept my past and learn from it.

Journal Prompts

How do you think you will feel after you forgive yourself?



How is holding onto this pain affecting you?



How do you know you're forgiving and not forgetting?

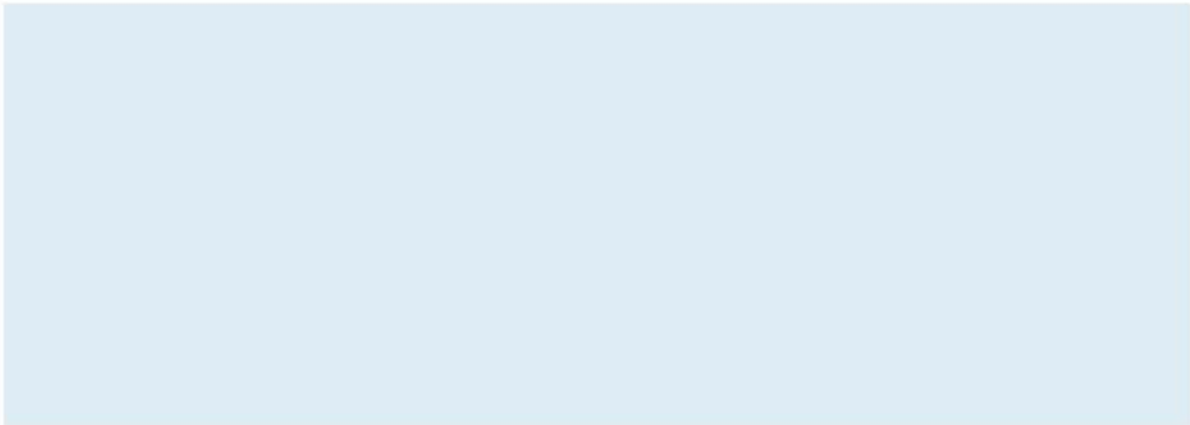


Journal Prompts

Write about why you are not your mistakes



How have you grown and changed since this mistake?



Write about a time you forgave someone, can you do the same for yourself?

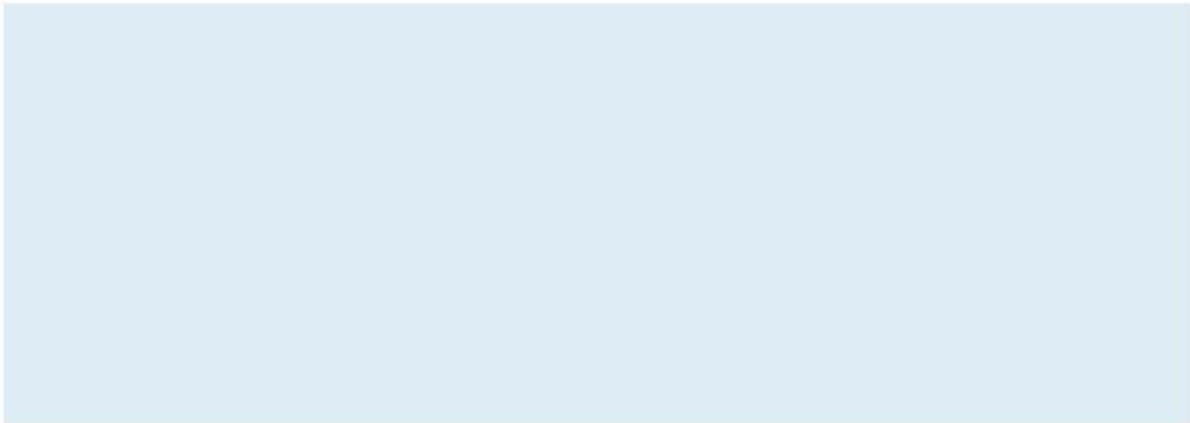


Journal Prompts

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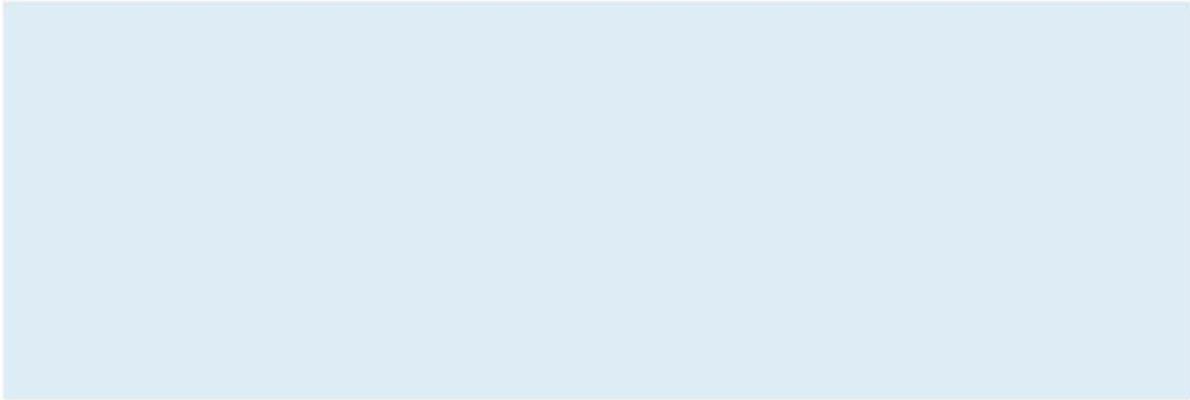


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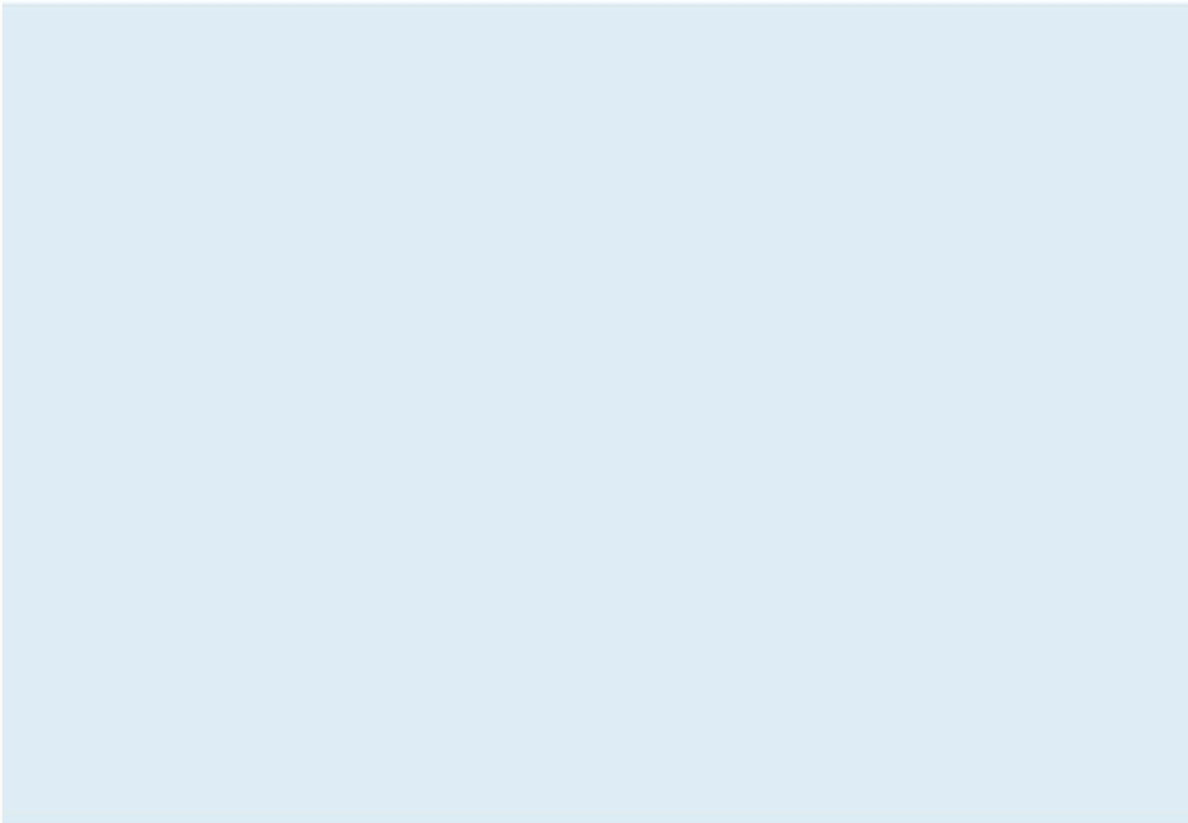


Journal Prompts

Reflect on a time when you received forgiveness from someone else. How did it feel, and how can you apply this feeling to forgive yourself?

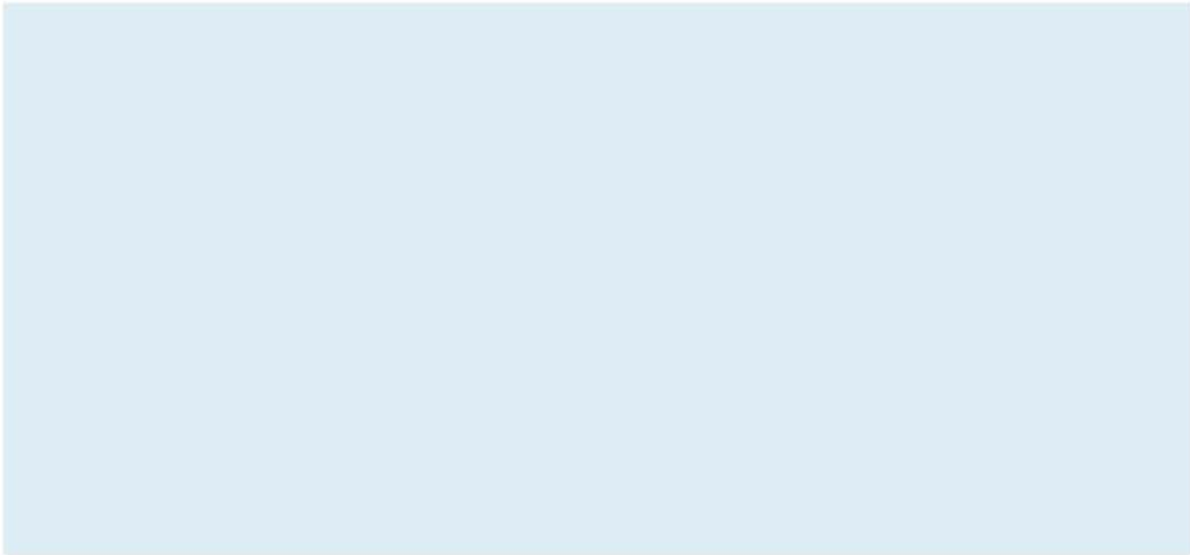


Write about a time when you overcame a difficult challenge. How can you apply the same resilience to forgive yourself?

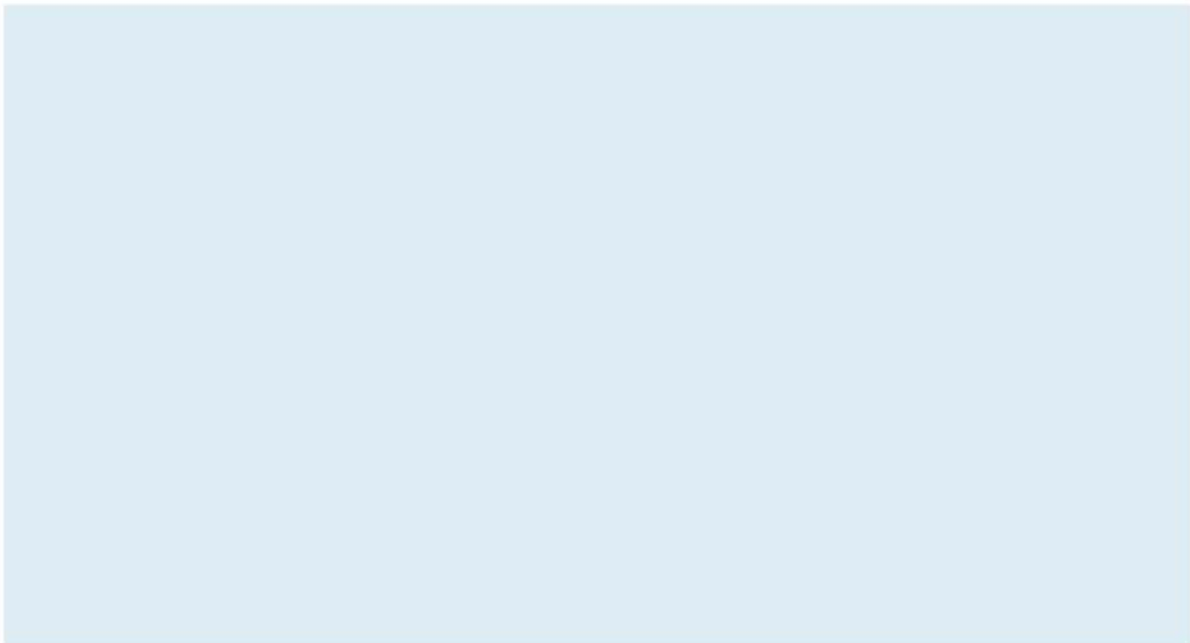


Journal Prompts

Reflect on a time when you were kind and compassionate towards someone else. How can you apply this same kindness and compassion toward yourself?



What is one thing you can do today to practice self-forgiveness and move towards a more compassionate and accepting mindset?



Resentment Exercise

Identify the person or situation that you are resentful towards

What specific actions or behaviors are you resentful towards?

What emotions do you feel when you think about the situation?

What do you hope to gain from letting go of resentment?

Resentment Exercise

- I am choosing to forgive
- My thoughts about the past may be inaccurate
- I can respect others, even though I have been mistreated
- I can overcome
- I am adequate
- I can be accountable
- I can have positive relationships
- I can choose to trust
- I can forgive
- _____

Using some of the choices above, or writing your own phrases, put some words to what you will think about, practice, and declare to others.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Without forgiveness, life is governed by... an endless cycle of resentment and retaliation.

— Roberto Assagioli



Why Forgive?

Healthier relationships

break free from self-pity

Practicing self-Acceptance

regain self-confidence and self acceptance

Improved mental health

Letting go of the past

More compassion and empathy

Forgiveness is a sign of strength

overcoming feelings of anger, bitterness, or revenge

Accepting Accountability and learning responsibility

Less anxiety, stress and hostility

Overcoming shame

Affirmations

I am worthy of forgiveness

I am worthy of forgiveness

I can learn from my mistakes

Forgiveness is a strength

I am human, and sometimes I make mistakes

Punishing myself forever is unhelpful to me and others

Quotes

If we really want to love, we must learn how to forgive - Mother Teresa

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.

-Mahatma Gandhi

Without forgiveness life is governed by an endless cycle of resentment and retaliation - Roberto Assagioli

Forgiveness is above all a personal choice, a decision of the heart to go against natural instinct to pay back evil with evil - Pope John Paul II

True forgiveness is when you can say, 'Thank you for that experience - Oprah

We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love Martin Luther King Jr.

Letting go *Exercise*

Think about a situation/choice/moment that makes you uncomfortable and unable to forgive yourself

**DRAW YOUR FACIAL EXPRESSION WHEN YOU REMEMBER
WHAT YOU DID**

WHAT BELIEFS AND VALUES DID THIS MEMORY VIOLATE?

HOW DID YOU EXPECT YOURSELF TO ACT/TREAT?

**THE CORE BELIEF YOU DEVELOPED BECAUSE OF THIS
MEMORY?**

Letting go *Exercise*

WHAT ARE THE BENIFITS TO HOLDING ON TO THIS RESENTMENT?

WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVES TO HOLDING ON TO THIS RESENTMENT?

WHAT DIFFERENCE COULD IT BRING TO YOUR LIFE IF YOU COULD LET THIS RESENTMENT GO?

LIST 5 REASONS TREASONS TO FORGIVE YOURSELF

Letting go *Journal*

Date:

I am angry/sad/hurt because:

I understand that:

My responsibility in this is:

What I forgive myself for is:

What I forgive him / her / others or _____ for is:

I am grateful for:

Forgiveness *Meditation*

1

Sit upright comfortably.

Breathe deeply. Gently close your eyes. Take a moment to release any unnecessary tension by softening your belly, jaw, shoulders.

2

Begin saying to yourself, I forgive you as much as I can in this moment.

Breathe it in to the heart center... see how it feels. Are you open to it, your own forgiveness? I forgive you as much as I can in this moment. You can name some of the things that are difficult, that you judge, that you suffer about.

3

Feel free to think back on an earlier time in your life

Think about the kid, the adolescent, the teenager. When the mind wanders off into a story, maybe plans, or memories or rationalizations and resistance Come back to the phrase slowly repeating, over and over, I forgive you as much as I can in this moment. You can switch it by saying please forgive me as you think of yourself as a kid.

4

Letting go

At the end of this short guided meditation, see if you're willing to let go of anything you remember – anything negative that you're now holding on to. Trust that you have within you all that needs to be known and accept that you are in fact okay at this moment. When you are ready, open your eyes and bring yourself back to your surroundings.



Challenging *Negative Thoughts*

Answer the following questions to assess your thought:

1

Is there substantial evidence for my thought?

2

Is there evidence contrary to my thought?

3

Am I attempting to interpret this situation without all the evidence?

Challenging *Negative Thoughts*

Answer the following questions to assess your thought:

4

What would a friend think about this situation?

5

If I look at the situation positively, how is it different?

6

Will this matter a year from now ? How about five years from now?

Challenging *Negative Thoughts*

Answer the following table to assess your thought:

AUTOMATIC NEGATIVE THOUGHT	EVIDENCE THIS IS TRUE	EVIDENCE THIS IS FALSE

Self-Forgiveness *Through God*



SCRIPTURE FOR MEDITATION



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MY PRAYER
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I ASK GOD TO FORGIVE ME FOR
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MEDITATING ON THIS CHOSEN SCRIPTURE HOW CAN I FORGIVE MYSELF THROUGH GOD?

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.....

5 steps to *Self-Forgiveness*

01

ACKNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTAND

ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT RESISTANCE TO FORGIVENESS FACTORS IS THAT YOU DON'T FEEL READY. YOU HAVEN'T ULTIMATELY COME TO TERMS WITH HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THE SITUATION. FOCUS ON YOURSELF AND YOUR EMOTIONS FIRST. HOW TO LET GO OF RESENTMENT. WELL, THE FIRST STEP IS TO COME TO TERMS WITH IT. FIND WAYS TO REMOVE THESE FEELINGS FROM YOUR LIFE. FOR EXAMPLE, WRITING THEM DOWN, TALKING THEM OUT, OR EVEN DRAWING A PICTURE OF HOW YOU FEEL.

02

LEARN AND TAKE YOUR TIME

NOW THAT YOU'VE WORKED THROUGH YOUR FEELINGS AND ARE NO LONGER STRUGGLING WITH FEELINGS OF RESENTMENT, ANGER, OR SADNESS (OR A COMBINATION OF ALL THREE), IT'S TIME TO START THE LEARNING PROCESS. WORKING THROUGH YOUR FEELINGS DOESN'T DO TOO WELL UNLESS YOU LEARN FROM THE ENTIRE SITUATION.

03

REMEMBER GOD'S FORGIVENESS

REMINDING OURSELVES OF THE DEBT THAT GOD FORGAVE US IN CHRIST WHEN WE CERTAINLY DIDN'T DESERVE IT, CAN HELP US FORGIVE OURSELVES. IF WE HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN SO MUCH, HOW THEN CAN WE HOLD ONTO THE MISTAKES COMMITTED THAT WE COMMITTED?

04

LET IT GO

ESSENTIALLY, YOU NEED TO START FRESH WITH A BLANK SLATE. YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO REVISIT THE SITUATION IN YOUR MIND AND FEEL CONFIDENT THAT ANY NEGATIVE EMOTIONS ARE GONE, AND YOU'RE OKAY WITH FORGIVING YOURSELF FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE.

05

CONTINUE TO FORGIVE

FORGIVENESS IS MORE THAN JUST SAYING A PRAYER AND MOVING ON. IT'S A SERIOUS DECISION THAT YOU MAKE OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

7 steps Process for Dealing with Guilt & Shame

01

Reflect on the specific actions or behaviors that are causing the guilt or shame. Identify the specific actions or behaviors that are the source of the guilt or shame and think about how they align with your values and beliefs.

02

Examine the facts of the situation. Consider if the guilt or shame is fitting the facts of the situation. Is it appropriate and warranted given the circumstances?

03

Consider the potential consequences of your actions. If the guilt or shame is justified, it may indicate that your actions have caused harm or violated important values or morals.

04

Reflect on your thoughts and feelings. Take a look at the thoughts and feelings that are accompanying the guilt or shame. Are they realistic and based on facts or are they exaggerated and distorted?

05

Seek feedback from trusted individuals. Talk to trusted people such as friends, family, or a therapist, to gain perspective on the situation and whether or not the guilt or shame is justified.

06

Determine if Guilt or Shame is Justified or Unjustified. Based on the information gathered in steps 1-5, make a determination if the guilt or shame is justified or unjustified.

07

Take Appropriate Action. If the emotion is justified, take steps to repair the transgression, apologize, commit to avoiding the same mistake in the future and accept the consequences of your behavior. If the emotion is unjustified, consider using DBT skills such as opposite action to regulate the emotion.

Radical Acceptance

What is the problem or situation that you find problematic or painful and that you want to accept:

When did it occur? How did it unfold? Who was there?

What emotions did you experience during this situation?

What role did your behavior play in this situation? How about others' behavior? a) Describe your actions and behaviors during this experience and consider how your actions influenced what occurred. Remember, you cannot control how others will act.

b) How did other people's behavior influence the situation? How did their actions contribute to what happened?

Radical Acceptance

c) What were you able to control during this situation? What were you unable to control?

3. Why is it important to accept this situation?

What could be different in your life if you accept this situation?

4. Are you currently accepting reality? if not, observe that you are fighting reality, be mindful of that, what emotions and thoughts arise from that?

Radical Acceptance

What is radical acceptance?

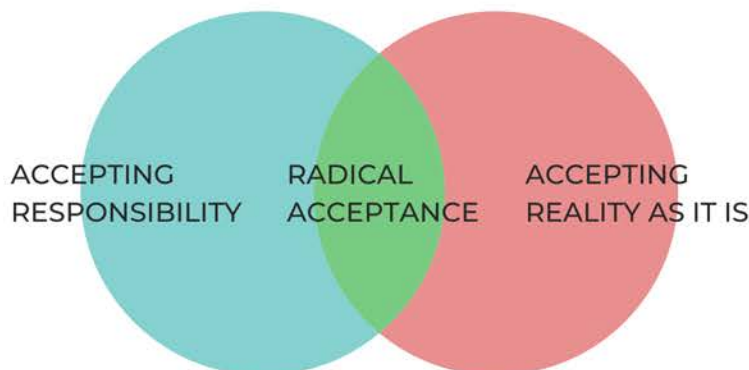
Increasing your ability to tolerate distress starts with a change in your attitude. You're going to need something called radical acceptance. A central idea in DBT is understanding that even if something happening to you is not your fault, it still is your responsibility. It is accepting whatever situation you find yourself in. Radical Acceptance must be just that: radical. That means complete and total. For it to be effective, you must accept all facets of the situation. You can't, for example, accept that your package was sent to the wrong address without also accepting that your package will be late in arriving to you.

You must also accept your circumstances without judgment of yourself, the situation, or others. Accepting that your package was delivered to the wrong address while also raging at the postman for being stupid or careless is not radical acceptance.

Accepting responsibility should be done without judgment and with self-compassion.

Keep in mind that radical acceptance does NOT mean that you condone or agree with bad behavior in others or that you are happy with a negative experience. But it does mean that you stop trying to change what's happened by getting angry and blaming the situation.

Radical Acceptance is one of the most effective and most difficult DBT skills there is. To use the skill successfully, you must accept your entire situation as it is, with no judgment. You must stop fighting reality. Which can be quite challenging.



Radical Acceptance

What is radical acceptance?

To help you begin using radical acceptance, it's often helpful to use a coping statement to remind yourself. Below are a few examples and spaces to create your own. Check the statements that you would be willing to use to remind yourself that you should accept the present moment and the chain of events that created it. Then, in the next exercise, you'll begin using the statements that you chose

"THIS IS THE WAY IT HAS TO BE."

"ALL THE EVENTS HAVE LED UP TO NOW."

"I CAN'T CHANGE WHAT'S ALREADY HAPPENED."

"IT'S NO USE FIGHTING THE PAST."

"FIGHTING THE PAST ONLY BLINDS ME TO MY PRESENT."

"THE PRESENT IS THE ONLY MOMENT I HAVE CONTROL OVER."

"IT'S A WASTE OF TIME TO FIGHT WHAT'S ALREADY OCCURRED."

OTHER:

OTHER:

OTHER:

OTHER:

Radical Acceptance

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OTHER:

OTHER:

OTHER:

OTHER:

Letting Go *Journal*

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10 THE INTENSITY OF MY RESENTMENT IS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

NOT INTENSE

EXTREMELY INTENSE

WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT DID YOU DO?

CHOOSE WORDS TO DESCRIBE THE RESENTMENT
YOU ARE FEELING

Angry	Annoyed	Confused
.....
.....

WHAT ARE THE THOUGHTS YOU HAVE WHEN THIS
SITUATION COMES TO MIND?

Letting Go *Journal*

THOUGHT I WANT TO LET FO OF

FEELINGS IT TRIGGERS

WHY AM I FINDING IT SO
HARD TO MOVE ON FROM

DOES IT SERVE ME ANYMORE? HOW SO?

WHAT WOULD I GAIN BY LETTING GO?

Letting Go *Journal*

WHAT MAKES ME FEEL SAFE?

I'M OKAY WITH NOT HAVING ALL THE ANSWERS BECAUSE...

WHAT DOES 'LETTING GO' REALLY MEAN FOR ME?

I CHOOSE TO PUT MY ENERGY INTO WHAT SERVES ME. THIS INCLUDES...

I AM READY TO LET GO BECAUSE

Letting Go *Journal*

WHAT SITUATION DO I NEED TO FORGIVE MYSELF FOR

WHAT EMOTIONS DID THIS SITUATION PROVOKE

I DESERVE FORGIVENESS BECAUSE

I ACKNOWLEDGE I WAS WRONG IN HOW

WHAT I WANT TO HEAR FROM OTHERS

WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THIS
