

# Homework Assignments

*Including:*

*Social/Emotional Learning*

*Forgiveness Response*

*Journal Pages*

The Ten Commandments of Confrontation by John C. Maxwell

1. Do it privately, not publicly.
2. Do it as soon as possible. That is more natural than waiting a long time.
3. Speak to one issue at a time. Don't overload the person with a long list of issues.
4. Once you've made a point, don't keep repeating it.
5. Deal only with actions the person can change. If you ask the person to do something he or she is unable to do, frustration builds in your relationship.
6. Avoid sarcasm. Sarcasm signals that you are angry at people, not at their actions, and may cause them to resent you.
7. Avoid words like always and never. They usually detract from accuracy and make people defensive.
8. Present criticisms as suggestions or questions if possible.
9. Don't apologize for the confrontational meeting. Doing so detracts from it and may indicate you are not sure you had the right to say what you did.
10. Don't forget the compliments. Use what I call the 'sandwich' in these types of meetings: compliment - confront - compliment.

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Part of working as a leader and developing professionalism skills is dealing with conflict. Conflict is not an enjoyable experience for most, but if truly understood and worked through, positivity can come from situations of conflict. Mistakes are made, discussions occur, anger is aggravated – but by looking at the conflict and dealing with it, you can grow as a person, professional and leader.

## Conflict Resolution Skills

### Building the Skills That Can Turn Conflicts into Opportunities

Conflict is a normal part of any healthy relationship. After all, two people can't be expected to agree on everything, all the time. Learning how to deal with conflict—rather than avoiding it—is crucial. When conflict is mismanaged, it can cause great harm to a relationship, but when handled in a respectful, positive way, conflict provides an opportunity to strengthen the bond between two people. By learning these skills for conflict resolution, you can keep your personal and professional relationships strong and growing.

### Understanding conflict in relationships

Conflict arises from differences, both large and small. It occurs whenever people disagree over their values, motivations, perceptions, ideas, or desires. Sometimes these differences appear trivial, but when a conflict triggers strong feelings, a deep personal need is often at the core of the problem. These needs can be a need to feel safe and secure, a need to feel respected and valued, or a need for greater closeness and intimacy.

### Conflicts arise from differing needs

Everyone needs to feel understood, nurtured, and supported, but the ways in which these needs are met vary widely. Differing needs for feeling comfortable and safe create some of the most severe challenges in our personal and professional relationships.

Think about the conflicting need for safety and continuity versus the need to explore and take risks. You frequently see this conflict between toddlers and their parents. The child's need is to explore, so the street or the cliff meets a need. But the parents' need is to protect the child's safety, so limiting exploration becomes a bone of contention between them.

The needs of both parties play important roles in the long-term success of most relationships, and each deserves respect and consideration. In personal relationships, a lack of understanding about differing needs can result in distance, arguments, and break-ups. In workplace conflicts, differing needs are often at the heart of bitter disputes, sometimes resulting in broken deals, fewer profits and lost jobs. When you can recognize the legitimacy of conflicting needs and become willing to examine them in an environment of compassionate understanding, it opens pathways to creative problem solving, team building, and improved relationships.

### Conflict 101

- ✦ **A conflict is more than just a disagreement.** It is a situation in which one or both parties perceive a threat (whether or not the threat is real).
- ✦ **Conflicts continue to fester when ignored.** Because conflicts involve perceived threats to our well-being and survival, they stay with us until we face and resolve them.
- ✦ **We respond to conflicts based on our perceptions** of the situation, not necessarily to an objective review of the facts. Our perceptions are influenced by our life experiences, culture, values, and beliefs.
- ✦ **Conflicts trigger strong emotions.** If you aren't comfortable with your emotions or able to manage them in times of stress, you won't be able to resolve conflict successfully.

✦ **Conflicts are an opportunity for growth.** When you're able to resolve conflict in a relationship, it builds trust.

You can feel secure knowing your relationship can survive challenges and disagreements.

Conflict may feel more threatening to you than it really is

Do you fear conflict or avoid it at all costs? If your perception of conflict comes from frightening or painful memories from previous unhealthy relationships or early childhood, you may expect all present-day disagreements to end badly. You may view conflict in relationships as demoralizing, humiliating, dangerous, and something to fear. If your early life experiences also left you feeling out of control and powerless, conflict may even be traumatizing for you.

If you view conflict as dangerous, it tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. When you go into a conflict situation already feeling extremely threatened, it's tough to deal with the problem at hand in a healthy way. Instead, you are more likely to shut down or blow up in anger.

### Healthy and unhealthy ways of managing and resolving conflict

#### Unhealthy responses to conflict:

An inability to recognize and respond to the things that matter to the other person

Explosive, angry, hurtful, and resentful reactions

The withdrawal of love, resulting in rejection, isolation, shaming, and fear of abandonment

An inability to compromise or see the other person's side

The fear and avoidance of conflict; the expectation of bad outcomes

#### Healthy responses to conflict

The capacity to recognize and respond to the things that matter to the other person

Calm, non-defensive, and respectful reactions

A readiness to forgive and forget, and to move past the conflict without holding resentments or anger

The ability to seek compromise and avoid punishing

A belief that facing conflict head on is the best thing for both sides

Successful conflict resolution depends on your ability to regulate stress and your emotions

Conflict triggers strong emotions and can lead to hurt feelings, disappointment, and discomfort. When handled in an unhealthy manner, it can cause irreparable rifts, resentments, and break-ups. But when conflict is resolved in a healthy way, it increases our understanding of one another, builds trust, and strengthens our relationship bonds.

If you are out of touch with your feelings or so stressed that you can only pay attention to a limited number of emotions, you won't be able to understand your own needs. And, if you don't understand your own needs, you will have a hard time communicating with others and staying in touch with what's really troubling you. For example, couples often argue about petty differences—the way she hangs the towels, the way he slurps his soup—rather than what is really bothering them.

The ability to successfully resolve conflict depends on your ability to:

✦ **Manage stress quickly while remaining alert and calm.** By staying calm, you can accurately read and interpret verbal and nonverbal communication.

- ✦ **Control your emotions and behavior.** When you're in control of your emotions, you can communicate your needs without threatening, frightening, or punishing others.
- ✦ **Pay attention to the feelings being expressed** as well as the spoken words of others.
- ✦ **Be aware of and respectful of differences.** By avoiding disrespectful words and actions, you can almost always resolve a problem faster.

To successfully resolve a conflict, you will need to learn and practice two core skills: the ability to quickly reduce stress in the moment and the ability to remain comfortable enough with your emotions to react in constructive ways even in the midst of an argument or a perceived attack.

Being able to manage and relieve stress in the moment is the key to staying balanced, focused, and in control, no matter what challenges you face. If you don't know how to stay centered and in control of yourself, you will become overwhelmed in conflict situations and unable to respond in healthy ways.

Psychologist Connie Lillas uses a driving analogy to describe the three most common ways people respond when they're overwhelmed by stress:

- ✦ **Foot on the gas.** An angry or agitated stress response. You're heated, keyed up, overly emotional, and unable to sit still.
- ✦ **Foot on the brake.** A withdrawn or depressed stress response. You shut down, space out, and show very little energy or emotion.
- ✦ **Foot on both gas and brake.** A tense and frozen stress response. You "freeze" under pressure and can't do anything. You look paralyzed, but under the surface you're extremely agitated.

### **Stress interferes with the ability to resolve conflict by limiting your ability to:**

- ✦ Accurately read another person's nonverbal communication
- ✦ Hear what someone is really saying
- ✦ Be aware of your own feelings
- ✦ Be in touch with your deep-rooted needs
- ✦ Communicate your needs clearly

### **Is stress a problem or you?**

You may be so used to being stressed that you're not even aware you are stressed. Stress may be a problem in your life if you identify with the following:

- ✦ You often feel tense or tight somewhere in your body ✓
- ✦ You're not aware of movement in your chest or stomach when you breathe ✓
- ✦ Conflict absorbs your time and attention ✓

### **Emotional awareness: The second core conflict resolution skill**

Emotional awareness is the key to understanding yourself and others. If you don't know how you feel or why you feel that way, you won't be able to communicate effectively or resolve disagreements.

Although knowing your own feelings may sound simple, many people ignore or try to sedate strong emotions like anger, sadness, and fear. Your ability to handle conflict, however, depends on being connected to these feelings. If you're afraid of strong emotions or if you insist on finding solutions that are strictly rational, your ability to face and resolve differences will be impaired.

## Why emotional awareness is a key factor in resolving conflict

Emotional awareness—the consciousness of your *moment-to-moment* emotional experience—and the ability to manage all of your feelings appropriately is the basis of a communication process that can resolve conflict.

### Emotional awareness helps you:

- ✦ Understand what is really troubling other people
- ✦ Understand yourself, including what is really troubling you
- ✦ Stay motivated until the conflict is resolved
- ✦ Communicate clearly and effectively
- ✦ Attract and influence others

## Assessing your ability to recognize and manage emotions

The following quiz helps you assess your level of emotional awareness. Answer the following questions with: *almost never, occasionally, often, very frequently, or almost always*. There are no right or wrong responses, only the opportunity to become better acquainted with your emotional responses.

### What kind of relationship do I have with my emotions?

- ✦ **Do you experience feelings that flow**, encountering one emotion after another as your experiences change from moment to moment? *often*
- ✦ **Are your emotions accompanied by physical sensations that you experience** in places like your stomach or chest? *very frequently*
- ✦ **Do you experience discrete feelings and emotions**, such as anger, sadness, fear, joy, each of which is evident in subtle facial expressions? *often*
- ✦ **Can you experience intense feelings** that are strong enough to capture both your attention and that of others? *occasionally*
- ✦ **Do you pay attention to your emotions?** Do they factor into your decision-making? *occasionally*

If any of these experiences are unfamiliar, your emotions may be turned down or even turned off. In either case, you may need help developing your emotional awareness. You can do this by reading Developing Emotional Awareness.

## Nonverbal communication plays a big role in conflict resolution

The most important information exchanged during conflicts and arguments is often communicated nonverbally. Nonverbal communication is conveyed by emotionally driven facial expressions, posture, gesture, pace, tone and intensity of voice.

## The most important communication is wordless

When people are upset, the words they use rarely convey the issues and needs at the heart of the problem. When we listen for what is felt—as well as what is said—we connect more deeply to our own needs and emotions, and to those of other people. Listening in this way also strengthens us, informs us, and makes it easier for others to hear us.

When you're in the middle of a conflict, paying close attention to the other person's nonverbal signals may help you figure out what the other person is really saying. This will allow you to respond in a way that builds trust, and get to the root of the problem. A calm tone of voice, a reassuring touch, or an interested or concerned facial expression can go a long way toward relaxing a tense exchange.

Your ability to accurately read another person depends on your own emotional awareness. The more aware you are of your own emotions, the easier it will be for you to pick up on the wordless clues that reveal what others are feeling.

## Humor, judiciously used, can effectively defuse conflict

Once stress and emotion are brought into balance your capacity for joy, pleasure and playfulness is unleashed. Joy is a deceptively powerful resource. Studies show that you can surmount adversity, as long as you continue to have moments of joy. Humor plays a similar role when facing conflict.

You can avoid many confrontations and resolve arguments and disagreements by communicating in a humorous way. Humor can help you say things that might otherwise be difficult to express without offending someone. However, it's important that you laugh *with* the other person, not *at* them. When humor and play are used to reduce tension and anger, reframe problems, and put the situation into perspective, the conflict can actually become an opportunity for greater connection and intimacy.

## Tips for managing and resolving conflict

Managing and resolving conflict requires the ability to quickly reduce stress and bring your emotions into balance. You can ensure that the process is as positive as possible by sticking to the following guidelines:

- ✦ **Listen for what is felt as well as said.** When we listen we connect more deeply to our own needs and emotions, and to those of other people. Listening also strengthens us, informs us, and makes it easier for others to hear us when it's our turn to speak.
- ✦ **Make conflict resolution the priority rather than winning or "being right."** Maintaining and strengthening the relationship, rather than "winning" the argument, should always be your first priority. Be respectful of the other person and his or her viewpoint.
- ✦ **Focus on the present.** If you're holding on to grudges based on past resentments, your ability to see the reality of the current situation will be impaired. Rather than looking to the past and assigning blame, focus on what you can do in the here-and-now to solve the problem.
- ✦ **Pick your battles.** Conflicts can be draining, so it's important to consider whether the issue is really worthy of your time and energy. Maybe you don't want to surrender a parking space if you've been circling for 15 minutes, but if there are dozens of empty spots, arguing over a single space isn't worth it.
- ✦ **Be willing to forgive.** Resolving conflict is impossible if you're unwilling or unable to forgive. Resolution lies in releasing the urge to punish, which can never compensate for our losses and only adds to our injury by further depleting and draining our lives.
- ✦ **Know when to let something go.** If you can't come to an agreement, agree to disagree. It takes two people to keep an argument going. If a conflict is going nowhere, you can choose to disengage and move on.

[http://www.helpguide.org/mental/eq8\\_conflict\\_resolution.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/eq8_conflict_resolution.htm)

## Conflict Resolution Skill Quiz

- True or False: Conflict is a normal part of any healthy relationship.
- Learning how to deal with conflict rather than avoid it is crucial.
- Differing needs for feeling comfortable and safe create some of the most severe challenges in our personal and professional relationships.
- What example did the author of the article use regarding basic forms of conflict that involved safety and risks?
  - Employer versus employee
  - Drama on TV
  - Toddler and Parent
  - None of the above
- What is a result of conflict that is not resolved in the workplace?
  - Broken deals
  - Fewer profits
  - Lost jobs
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
- When there is recognition and problem solving with conflict, what is the end result?
  - Creative problem solving
  - Team building
  - Improved Relationships
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
- True or False: A conflict is more than just a disagreement; it is a situation in which one or both parties perceive a threat (whether or not the threat is real.)
- True or  False? It is a good idea to ignore a conflict and it will solve itself with time.
- If you are not comfortable with your emotions or able to manage them in times of stress, you won't be able to resolve conflict successfully.
- When you are able to resolve conflict in a relationship, it builds trust.
- Name one unhealthy factor of conflict displayed in the chart on page 2 in the packet.  
Explosive anger
- Name one healthy factor of conflict displayed in the chart on page 2 in the packet.  
Ability to seek compromise
- One of the most significant issues with conflicts is:
  - Lack of communication
  - Too much communication
  - Age
  - Pay



14. Pay attention to the feelings being expressed as well as the spoken words of others.
15. To successfully resolve a conflict, you will need to learn and practice two core skills. What are these two skills?
- a. Ability to reduce stress in the moment quickly.
- b. Ability to control stress to respond constructively.
16. What are the three ways individuals respond to conflict?
- a. gas pedal - angry
- b. brake pedal - depressed shut down
- c. gas and brake pedal - paralyzed but agitated.
17. True or False: Conflict absorbs your time and attention.
18. The most important information exchanged during conflicts and arguments is often communicated nonverbally.
19. True or False: Humor can play a role in resolving conflict.
20. A key skill to have in resolving conflict is the ability to?
- a. Speak
- b. Yell
- c. Listen
- d. Smile

## Forgiveness

When someone you care about hurts you, you can hold on to anger, resentment and thoughts of revenge — or embrace forgiveness and move forward. By Mayo Clinic Staff

Nearly everyone has been hurt by the actions or words of another. Perhaps your mother criticized your parenting skills, your colleague sabotaged a project or your partner had an affair. These wounds can leave you with lasting feelings of anger, bitterness or even vengeance.

But if you don't practice forgiveness, you might be the one who pays most dearly. By embracing forgiveness, you can also embrace peace, hope, gratitude and joy. Consider how forgiveness can lead you down the path of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

Generally, forgiveness is a decision to let go of resentment and thoughts of revenge. The act that hurt or offended you might always remain a part of your life, but forgiveness can lessen its grip on you and help you focus on other, more positive parts of your life. Forgiveness can even lead to feelings of understanding, empathy and compassion for the one who hurt you.

Forgiveness doesn't mean that you deny the other person's responsibility for hurting you, and it doesn't minimize or justify the wrong. You can forgive the person without excusing the act. Forgiveness brings a kind of peace that helps you go on with life.

Letting go of grudges and bitterness can make way for happiness, health and peace. Forgiveness can lead to:

- Healthier relationships
- Greater spiritual and psychological well-being
- Less anxiety, stress and hostility
- Lower blood pressure
- Fewer symptoms of depression
- Stronger immune system
- Improved heart health
- Higher self-esteem

When you're hurt by someone you love and trust, you might become angry, sad or confused. If you dwell on hurtful events or situations, grudges filled with resentment, vengeance and hostility can take root. If you allow negative feelings to crowd out positive feelings, you might find yourself swallowed up by your own bitterness or sense of injustice.

If you're unforgiving, you might:

- Bring anger and bitterness into every relationship and new experience
- Become so wrapped up in the wrong that you can't enjoy the present
- Become depressed or anxious
- Feel that your life lacks meaning or purpose, or that you're at odds with your spiritual beliefs
- Lose valuable and enriching connectedness with others

Forgiveness is a commitment to a process of change. To begin, you might:

- Consider the value of forgiveness and its importance in your life at a given time
- Reflect on the facts of the situation, how you've reacted, and how this combination has affected your life, health and well-being
- Actively choose to forgive the person who's offended you, when you're ready
- Move away from your role as victim and release the control and power the offending person and situation have had in your life

As you let go of grudges, you'll no longer define your life by how you've been hurt. You might even find compassion and understanding.

Forgiveness can be challenging, especially if the person who's hurt you doesn't admit wrong or doesn't speak his or her sorrow. If you find yourself stuck:

- Consider the situation from the other person's point of view.
- Ask yourself why he or she would behave in such a way. Perhaps you would have reacted similarly if you faced the same situation.
- Reflect on times you've hurt others and on those who've forgiven you.
- Write in a journal, pray or use guided meditation — or talk with a person you've found to be wise and compassionate, such as a spiritual leader, a mental health provider, or an impartial loved one or friend.
- Be aware that forgiveness is a process and even small hurts may need to be revisited and forgiven over and over again.

If the hurtful event involved someone whose relationship you otherwise value, forgiveness can lead to reconciliation. This isn't always the case, however.

Reconciliation might be impossible if the offender has died or is unwilling to communicate with you. In other cases, reconciliation might not be appropriate. Still, forgiveness is possible — even if reconciliation isn't.

If you haven't reached a state of forgiveness, being near the person who hurt you might prompt you to be tense and stressful. To handle these situations:

- Remember that you can choose to attend or avoid specific functions and gatherings. If you choose to attend, don't be surprised by a certain amount of awkwardness and perhaps even more intense feeling.
- Respect yourself and do what seems best.
- Do your best to keep an open heart and mind. You might find that the experience helps you to move forward with forgiveness.

Getting another person to change his or her actions, behavior or words isn't the point of forgiveness. Think of forgiveness more about how it can change your life — by bringing you peace, happiness, and emotional and spiritual healing. Forgiveness can take away the power the other person continues to wield in your life.

The first step is to honestly assess and acknowledge the wrongs you've done and how those wrongs have affected others. At the same time, avoid judging yourself too harshly. You're human, and you'll make mistakes.

If you're truly sorry for something you've said or done, consider admitting it to those you've harmed. Speak of your sincere sorrow or regret, and specifically ask for forgiveness — without making excuses.

Remember, however, you can't force someone to forgive you. Others need to move to forgiveness in their own time. Whatever the outcome, commit to treating others with compassion, empathy and respect.

Original article: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/forgiveness/art-20047692>

# Forgiveness

Pardon, absolution, leniency, mercy, grace

"And throughout all eternity  
I forgive you, you forgive me."  
*William Blake*

There's an old Zen story that tells of two monks who were walking along the banks of an overflowing river. They saw a young woman who was afraid to cross. Although the monks had taken vows never to touch a woman, the older monk picked her up and carried her to the other side of the river. The younger monk seethed in anger all day. The two didn't speak until sunset, when they were allowed to break their vow of silence. Then the younger monk, enraged, accused the older monk of defiling himself and the whole order. The older monk simply answered "I put the woman down on the other side of the river early this morning. It is only you who have been carting her around throughout the day."

You're not going to get through life without people stepping on your toes and sometimes even stealing your shoes. You've probably already experienced people lying about you, cheating you, betraying you, taking your friends, homework, or possessions, telling you you're stupid, and worse. You may have suffered physical pain, injury, or abuse from people you love. These things should never happen... but they happen.

What should you do? What's best for you. Drop your anger and desire for revenge like a hot potato, because if you don't, the person who wronged you will hurt you twice. *Example:* Your brother takes your bike without asking, ruins the gear shifter, then dumps the evidence in the trash behind a store.

Okay, he's hurt you once. If you seethe in anger like the younger monk, you'll put a stop to your own personal growth and probably hurt your health, too. Wham! Your brother has hurt you twice—and you still don't have your bike.

"Hate is like acid. It can damage the vessel  
in which it is stored as well as destroy the  
object on which it is poured."  
*Ann Landers*

Here's the secret of forgiveness: When you forgive others or yourself, you *stop being a victim*. You stop suffering. You can turn your pain into strength. You can improve your health, your sense of peace, and your happiness.

"Great," you might say, "but forgiveness is easier said than done." And you'd be right. Developing positive character traits isn't for wimps, and forgiveness is one of the hardest of all traits to form. You can do it, though. Here's how.

## How to Forgive Others

1. **Acknowledge and accept what was done to you.** Don't ignore it or bury it. Buried things rot. Life isn't fair, bad things happen to good people, and wrongdoers aren't always punished. This doesn't mean you should give up or give in.
2. **Report the offense.** If the other person broke the law, report him or her to the police. If the person

broke a school rule, report it to your teacher or principal. If the person broke a family rule, tell your parents. You're not being a tattletale. Offenders should be held accountable for what they do.

**3. Let your feelings out.** Go ahead; get mad. Yell and cry if you want to. Let your anger out in a non-violent way. Anger held inside can make you sick. Jog, run, throw a football, pound the floor, pound your pillow, or wad up your dirty socks and throw them at the wall.

**4. Talk with a caring, understanding adult or friend.** Explain what happened and how you feel. Get professional help if you need it.<sup>1</sup>

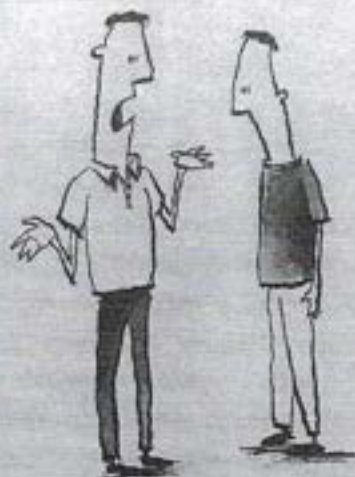
**5. Write about your feelings in your journal.<sup>2</sup>** Let them out. Or pound out your feelings on a piano or other musical instrument. Or draw your feelings. Do whatever works for you.

**6. Tell the offender how you feel.** Sometimes other people aren't aware that they've hurt you. Focus on the problem, not the person. Explain, don't blame. *Example:* You might say "I needed that bike to get to my job. Now I either have to walk or lose my job. This is a real hardship for me, and I don't know what to do." Don't say "You idiot! You stole my bike and ruined it. You're a thief and a liar. I hate you!" The first approach might turn your brother into an ally—someone who sympathizes with your problem. The second approach will put him on the defensive.

**7. Ask the offender to make things right.** Ask the person to return what was taken or fix what was broken. *Example:* "Will you help me repair my bike? Will you help me pay for the parts I need?" Sometimes this is possible, sometimes it isn't.

**8. If this is appropriate for you, talk with God or another Higher Being/Higher Power you have faith in.** Ask to be relieved of your anger and desire for revenge. Ask to be healed of your hurt. Ask for the ability to understand what's happened and put it behind you. Ask for the strength to forgive.

**9. Forgive the offender.** Take charge of your own attitudes, reactions, and feelings. Anger is a choice, revenge is a choice, hatred is a choice—



"I really NEED a bike. What am I going to do?"

and forgiveness is a choice.<sup>3</sup> When you're ready, say "I forgive you." If you're sincere, you should feel a sense of calm and relief. Your body and spirit will be healthier. Don't worry about justice; leave that to the law, to the offender's own conscience, or to a Higher Power.

"It is by forgiving that one is forgiven."  
*Matthew 6:14*

**10. Find a way to serve the offender.** "WHAT?" you might ask. Yes, you read it right! This step is not for the faint of heart. Only the truly courageous can take it. But this is where you grow the most and gain the most—and that's why it's worth a try.

For this step, focus on the person, not the problem. See the human being complete with faults, weaknesses, worries, doubts, deficiencies, and insecurities. Then ask yourself "How can I serve this person? How can I help him or her? What can I do to make his or her life better—without expecting anything in return?" An answer will come to you. You might even do a "secret service" or a random act of kindness.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See "Endurance," pages 87 and 88, for crisis hotlines.

<sup>2</sup> See "Endurance," pages 88, 89, and 92, for journaling resources.

<sup>3</sup> See "Choice and Accountability," pages 28-34.

<sup>4</sup> See "Caring," page 24.

Serving someone who hurt you can be very healing. When you do this, you defeat the wrong that was done to you. You're free. You win!

**11. Repeat any of these steps as often as you need to until they stick.** Be patient with yourself. Forgiveness takes time.

## How to Forgive Yourself

"If you haven't forgiven yourself  
something, how can you forgive others?"  
*Dalbert Austin*

What if you're the person who committed the offense? Who hurt someone else? Who behaved badly? You can hope that the other person will forgive you, but that's not something you can control. What you *can* control is how you treat yourself.

You can't change the past. You can't go back in time and undo the wrong you did. But you can do good in the present. And you can start by forgiving yourself. Here's how:

**1. Admit what you did.** Take responsibility for your actions. You can't forgive yourself until you acknowledge that you did something wrong. Maybe you made a mistake; everybody does from time to time. Or maybe you deliberately hurt someone. Either way, you did it, and you need to admit it.

Think of your wrong or mistake as the first link in a chain that imprisons you. Each time you lie

about or deny what you did, you're adding another link. Admitting it breaks the chain.

**2. Let yourself feel guilty.** But be aware of what kind of guilt you feel. If your guilt leads you to look in the mirror, admit what you did, and feel sorry for it, you'll grow from your experience. If your guilt makes you turn away from the mirror in shame and self-loathing, get help.

**3. Talk with a caring, understanding adult or friend.** Explain what happened and how you feel. Get professional help if you need it. Talking about wrongs and mistakes can be healing. You might ask for advice, if that seems appropriate. Then do what you think is best.

**4. Say you're sorry and ask the person you wronged to forgive you.** Be sincere. And be prepared; the person might throw a tomato in your face. It's not your problem if the person doesn't accept your apology. You can't control what he or she says, does, or feels. You can only control what you say, do, or feel. Try not to get angry if the person doesn't immediately respond the way you'd like. Forgiveness takes time. However, most people will soften if you ask for forgiveness and really mean it.

**5. Accept the consequences of what you did—unless they seem unjust.** Then you have the right to be assertive and work for a better solution. *Example:* You steal \$10 from the cash register in the school cafeteria. Someone sees you and reports you to the

principal, who calls you into his office and confronts you. You say "What I did was wrong. I'm really sorry, and I'll pay it back. Please forgive me. I won't ever do it again." The principal gives you a date by which he expects you to pay back the money. He also gives you a month's worth of detentions. And you know that you've lost his trust and respect and will have to earn them back—if you can. Those consequences are fair.

But what if the principal makes you pay the money back and expels you from school for the rest of the year? Those consequences aren't fair. Ask a parent, teacher, or counselor for help. If you're convicted of breaking the law, get a lawyer. If you can't afford to pay for a lawyer, ask the court to appoint one for you. You have the right to expect fair and just consequences for what you did.

**6. Do what you can to make things right.** Give back the money. Paint over the graffiti. Tell the truth about a friend. Admit that you cheated, then take the test over—or accept a failing grade.

**7. Try to find a way to serve the person you hurt.** If this isn't possible, do kindnesses for other people.

**8. If you have a faith tradition that encourages you to look to a higher power, ask that higher power for forgiveness.** Ask for the strength not to repeat the wrong or mistake. Ask for patience if the person you hurt hasn't forgiven you.

**9. Forgive yourself.** Don't bad-mouth yourself or carry around a load of guilt. This can make you sick in your mind and your body. Sometimes it's easier to forgive others than it is to forgive yourself. When you forgive yourself, you can learn from your actions and mistakes. You're free to use your energy to keep growing and becoming the kind of person you want to be.

If I had to take one concept from my life this far, it would be that forgiveness is really hard. The acts of conflict management and forgiveness have appeared immensely in both my personal and professional life and interactions. It is different though depending on what group of people it pertains to. With family, I sometimes feel too obligated to forgive somebody since I don't have the choice of walking away from them or giving myself time. Friends understand me more than my family does and haven't caused nearly as much conflict, and they are more welcoming when I ask for forgiveness from them. In the professional world, I foresee the management of conflict as being important in an atmosphere where teamwork is involved and everyone is working towards goals. However, when things aren't personal, the forgiveness part isn't nearly as intense for me. As for making peace with myself, I have held onto things more than I have forgiven, which is something I struggle with.

My family has done some things that have put me in uncomfortable situations. The fact that my family is there every step of my life and the people I presumed I was supposed to look up to, their wrongdoings towards me made me feel betrayed. Some of these things were minor and results of me having some unrealistic expectations of them but at other times they were the worst defining memories of my life. No matter what, I still had to go back home to them each day so I wasn't given the time to process these things. Therefore, there was a varying degree to which I was able to forgive these people. There were small things like my parents not getting me to a school event on time or a miscommunication messing up the schedule and instigating conflict. For the minor occurrences, this was a matter of me gaining the independence to take care of myself when they fouled up or just letting go of the things not worth the time. If I didn't, I would have driven myself crazy and never been able to move anywhere. Some things are just not important enough to get yourself in a frenzy over. Some of their biggest mistakes though were ingrained in my memory over long lengths of time. For many, it was too late to reconcile with the person and that made them the hardest to forgive. I could never know the full story of what happened from their perspective and was left feeling a lot of hurt. I just wish I could have asked them questions because it would have given me peace of mind. For this, I am still trying to work towards forgiving them and learning what forgiveness would look like for them.

Friends were the people who I felt more connected with and I could relate to them more. I have always had at least one friend too who I felt was looking out for my best interests. Therefore, I had a lot of trust in them and them in me and we vowed never to put each other in harm's way. When conflict arose and we needed to come together again, we felt comfortable with both stepping away for a while to organize our thoughts and talking to each other in a raw, honest way. I forgive the friends that have made mistakes and will be forever grateful that they have been accepting of my apologies as well. I can empathize well with my peers and just am really in tune with their ways of life.

The professional world deals with a lot of material things. I have never felt deep connections with material objects so reconciling over those kinds of issues comes very easily to me. I can easily identify how I messed up, ask for forgiveness the best I can, and move on. Forgiveness in business has the most structure to it which makes it easier for me. Where personal relationships have a lot of blurry areas and unexpected situations, there are skills in the business world that can be learned in order to be successful. I hope that one day, I will have friends at work too and at that time, they will be considered more of a personal relationship. However, for my day-to-day interactions, the best thing I can do is be myself and I would expect that from anyone else. We all make mistakes and in a progressive world, we must just move on and find the next solution. An example of a time I messed up was when I forgot to send text reminders for meetings scheduled with multiple other people. I apologized for my mistake and brought my absent team members up to date with what we had discussed in the meeting. It was that easy and thus forgiveness was one of the easier traits to pick up.

I have forgiven myself for the little things but have not forgiven myself easily for anything else. Instead, I often get caught up in shaming myself constantly. It has been very confusing when I have wronged my family, myself, and other people have thrown critical slander that has hurt my view of my image. My biggest mistakes towards my family happened when I was younger. I was not as kind to my brother and supportive as I could have been until I got older and feel I have tainted his childhood to an extent. Even though this was so long ago, I have never let myself forget it and even though he tries to reach out to me and he has been kind at most of my life, I take the guilt for every success he has ever missed out on and every struggle



thereon that he has endured. I just feel the responsibility to have protected him the best I could and I failed. Then there were the parents that did wrong to me that I shut myself down from. I feel like if I had acted earlier, I could have helped them and that I should have been there for them no matter what. Half of every day is spent thinking about what I should have done so they could have been here with me today. Unfortunately, it is too late and the fact that it is out of my control now leaves me with even more guilt and shame because I feel like I am responsible for the result and my bad usage of time.

Then there are the times I have wronged myself. These were a bit easier when I had full control the entire way and it only hurt me. I can deal with that because I feel the most guilt when I have hurt other people. However, I have only partially forgiven myself for what my body's limit is and I cope with that by constantly pushing myself towards success. This is the only one that feels at least partially healthy. Then there are the words that have been said towards me. They left me feeling very confused and were usually attacks on my personality. Various important people told me that I was worthless, wouldn't amount to anything, and was just constantly doing wrong. I was left feeling like, when is it going to be my time to do right? If it had been said once or twice, I think I could have brushed it off well. However, it was repeated to me and I was unable to accept myself as that kind of person. I felt like a burden to other people and subsequently started punishing myself with what I thought I deserved. The people who said these things weren't able to be reasoned with so I never found out why they did what they did. Therefore, I never fully forgave them. While surrounding myself with supportive people has helped a bit, I still question my self-worth and isolate myself to protect my trust at times.

The best analogy I have thought of for forgiveness is that forgiveness is like a brick. Multiple things can happen with you, the offender, and the brick in a room. You can set that brick between both of you and build a boundary with forgiveness. You could also throw that brick at the other person in a fit of anger and resentment, or put the brick between you but to the very side and try to forget it. You could also put that brick into your pocket and it will forever weigh you down. It works a lot like forgiveness. If you start to form a small boundary, you are taking a lesson from the other person's mistake and forgiving them by putting the brick down together. If you throw it, you are giving in to revenge and that isn't good. If you put the brick to the side, you

may forget it for a little while but no matter what it is still there. When putting the brick in your own pocket, you are going to feel the pain of carrying that and it isn't going to do you much good. However, you aren't going to be able to do anything with the brick until you gather the strength for the action. I have learned that forgiveness can be a beneficial tool for all types of relationships in life but that it cannot happen until you are ready to forgive.

## Monday

**Reflection** - Analyze the following quote: "The ego centered mind thrives on creating drama to feed its hunger unaware of the surrounding starvation."  
~Author JJ Francis

I wonder what it would be called for people who don't share the drama they create in their mind. Would it just be an overly critical or generally pessimistic person? In that way, they aren't eating from anyone or starving others. If anything, they are eating away at and destroying themselves.

## Tuesday

**Depth** - What is one word to describe your attitude/perception/personality thus far? Explain why this is your word this week.

I felt faulty. Something this year has just made it so difficult to study for AP Exams. Nothing is falling into place like it should. I am behind on everything. Things are not looking good at all. I hope Spring Break helps.

Week 30

## Wednesday

**Awareness** - Find a current event this week that is affecting the world in some fashion. Describe the situation and how it impacts our world.

Inflation is increasing and serving as economic detriment in the US right now. However, according to psychology, actively thinking about inflation can actually make it become worse.

Consumers speed up purchases or seek higher salaries while businesses simultaneously raise prices, both in anticipation of inflation which speeds its growth actually.



# Thursday

Relevance - Something I learned this week:

I was reading an interesting article about vulnerability. However, I hate it. On one hand, it is weird that nobody has ever heard my story. However, I am terrified of people knowing too much about me. My secrets are well-kept but they erode at what is inside of me.

# Friday

Relationships - Days of Gratitude

#30 - What childhood lesson are you grateful for?

I am glad I learned from a young age that the adults do not in fact take care of their responsibilities. It saved me a lot of grief along the way. I grew independent and learned not to place my trust where I can't protect it. Additionally, I gained experience taking care of myself.

# Saturday

Balance - Weekend Homework...

This weekend, I have a Spanish worksheet and test to prep for. I also have APUSH Terms, Slides, and test corrections. Then I have leadership portfolio, ASB Report, and Board Meeting coming up. I also have MJC, Parking Spot, and Pioneer summer applications.

Week 30

# Sunday

Thankfulness - Time to reflect on something positive in your life...

This weekend, I got to rent a suit for Prom and it looks very nice. It is grey and probably the fanciest, most expensive set of clothes that I have ever worn.

# Weekly Planner

Week of: 4/4/22

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<p>APUSH: IIII                      AP Lang: II                      AP Bio: I                      Math: I                      Spanish: I</p> <p>Ortho appt.</p>	<p>Spanish: I                      Bio: I                      Math: I                      English: II</p> <p><u>Leadership:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Portfolio</li> <li>- ASB Report</li> <li>- Prom meeting @ lunch</li> <li>- Promposals</li> <li>- Red Cross paperwork</li> </ul>	<p>AP Bio: I                      Math: I                      APES: I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update websites</li> <li>- June SAT</li> <li>- Scrubs Club paperwork</li> </ul>
Thursday	Friday	Weekend To Do
<p><u>Leadership:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Book Study</li> </ul> <p>- Pioneer meeting @ 5 pm</p> <p>- Leadership meeting @ lunch</p>	<p>Spanish: II                      Math: II                      APUSH: III</p> <p><u>Leadership:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Portfolio</li> <li>- ASB Report</li> <li>- Financial assistance</li> </ul> <p>- Pioneer application</p> <p>- Boys State interview</p>	<p>- Board Meetings Mon.</p> <p>- Parking Spot</p> <p>- MJC</p> <p>Bio: I*</p>

**Intentions for the Week (what I plan to accomplish):** This week, I am going to work to continue on applications. I also need to keep track of things even though there is so much going on right now. Overall, I need to stay organized.

**Fulfillments (what I accomplished this week):** I booked so many meetings, paperwork due dates, interviews, and more. Some application decisions have come back like me becoming Red Cross Club President and also being approved for free college advising.

**Daily Give (how I was able to give back):** The Junior Class Officers are continuing Prom execution and will give two free tickets to what is voted to be the best promposal.

Week 30 - Smile, it can brighten someone's day.

