FORGIVENESS: A PATHWAY TO EMOTIONAL HEALING

A CONTINUING EDUCATION WEBINAR

ARRANGED AND HOSTED BY

Canadian Society for Spirituality & Social Work

North American Association of Christians in Social Work
PRESENTED BY  
DR. ROBERT D. ENRIGHT  

WISCONSIN  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON  

OBJ ECTIVES FOR TODAY  

- Learn what forgiveness is and what it is not.  
- Discover the Pathway to Forgiveness.  
- Exercise your forgiveness muscles.  
- Develop confidence in introducing the life-giving qualities of forgiveness to your clients and others in your life.
AGENDA

I. Foundation and Fundamentals
II. What is Person-to-Person Forgiveness?
III. The Benefits of Forgiveness
IV. Learning to Forgive – the 20-Step Process Model
V. Spreading Forgiveness - the Forgiving Community

FORGIVENESS:
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PART I:
FOUNDATION
AND
FUNDAMENTALS
THE WORLD IS A DIFFICULT PLACE

ANGER, VIOLENCE, ABUSE, TRAGEDY BEGET MORE OF THE SAME
WITH EACH GENERATION THE MISERY MULTIPLIES

And the list of failed solutions is long

YET, THERE’S A GLIMMER OF HOPE ON THE HORIZON

It’s proving effective at reversing the trend
ITS NAME?
FORGIVENESS

ITS CHAMPION?
THE INTERNATIONAL FORGIVENESS INSTITUTE
MADISON, WISCONSIN

THE IFI MISSION
The International Forgiveness Institute is dedicated to helping people gain knowledge about forgiveness and to use that knowledge for personal, group, and societal renewal.

Missing Peace?
RESEARCH HAS FOUND:

“FORGIVENESS IS A SKILL THAT CAN BE TAUGHT, EXERCISED, STRENGTHENED LIKE A MUSCLE.”

FRED LUSKIN
DIRECTOR OF STANFORD UNIVERSITY’S FORGIVENESS PROJECT

THE INTERNATIONAL FORGIVENESS INSTITUTE
Is Recognized World-Wide
As the Leader in Forgiveness Education
Forgiveness Education in Award-Winning Documentary

http://www.thepowerofforgiveness.com/understanding/index.html#

UNITED NATIONS ENDORSES FORGIVENESS EDUCATION

“I would be interested in working with the IFI to provide training for both the UN staff and national counterparts who could then deliver the curriculum to stakeholders we serve...I would hope for more opportunities for forgiveness education to be introduced in a variety of situations where it is needed around the world.”

Dear Bob,

Thank you for our recent email exchanges which have given me the opportunity to learn more about forgiveness education and its relevance in areas of the world recovering from conflict and violence. It was very impressive to know that your forgiveness programs with children and adults have been scientifically evaluated and found to be effective in improving emotional well-being. From my personal experience observing the effects of war and conflict on people and their societies, I believe that your approach would complement and add to the work of the UN in reconciliation and peacebuilding. I hope that in the long-term, forgiveness, when embedded deeply in communities, can help forge a more lasting peace than has been the case in too many regions of the world. As I mentioned, the UN is grappling with the situations that almost 50% of countries are recovering from incidents of violent conflict with persistent, inter-civil war cycles. Efforts by incorporating forgiveness education as part of a comprehensive peace strategy, we could help more societies sustain peace.”
IFI FORGIVENESS EDUCATION PROGRAMS:

**Asia:**
China, Singapore

**Africa:**
Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda

**Europe:**
Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, *Northern Ireland*, Sweden

**Middle East:**
Iran, Jerusalem/Palestine, Turkey

**North America:**
Canada, Mexico, 18 U.S. States

**South America:**
Brazil, Colombia
IFI FORGIVENESS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

What others are saying:

“Forgiveness has the potential to transform our communities that have not known peace for decades and reshape our world. Teaching the art and power of forgiveness to children may be both the best and the fastest way to positively change our world. I believe the Belfast experiment should be expanded to first grade classes in every elementary school in the world.”

Patrick Wells, Writer & Movie Producer
The Washington Post 3-26-2010

➢ FORGIVENESS IS A CHOICE
FORGIVENESS: A PATHWAY TO EMOTIONAL HEALING

PART II:

WHAT IS PERSON-TO-PERSON FORGIVENESS?

➤ FORGIVENESS IS A MORAL VIRTUE

Aristotle (384-322 BC)
FORGIVENESS CUTS ACROSS MANY DIFFERENT PHILOSOPHIES AND RELIGIONS

FORGIVENESS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- Luke 15:11-32 - the prodigal son
- Matthew 18:23-35 – the unforgiving servant
- Matthew 6:9, 14-15 - Jesus’ commentary on The Lord’s Prayer
- John 15:12-14; 13:34-35 – “Love as I have loved you.”
- Matthew 5:43-47 - we are to pray for those who hurt us
- 1Peter 4:12-14, 19 - we are to share in Christ’s suffering
DEFINING FORGIVENESS

“When unjustly hurt by another, we forgive when we overcome resentment toward the offender, not by denying our right to the resentment, but instead by trying to offer the wrongdoer compassion, benevolence, and love; as we give these, we as forgivers realize that the offender does not necessarily have a right to such gifts.”

Joanna North & Robert D. Enright

FORGIVING IS NOT:

• Condoning or excusing
• Forgetting the injustice
• Condemning
• Simply calming down or becoming indifferent
• Reconciliation
TO FORGIVE A PERSON WHO CAUSED US AN UNFAIR HURT IS:

- To see his or her inherent worth
- To forego resentment or revenge (when the wrongdoer’s actions deserve it)
- To respond to that person with the gifts of mercy, generosity, and love when the wrongdoer’s actions indicate that he/she does not deserve them
- To chose to have a merciful heart—a heart with the power to free yourself so you can live a better life

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PART III:
THE BENEFITS
OF
FORGIVENESS
FORGIVENESS = INCREASING PUBLIC INTEREST

FORGIVING IS NOW SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN TO IMPROVE PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- Men who forgive themselves are seven times more likely not to be classified as clinically depressed than men who don’t forgive themselves. (Toussaint)

- Veterans tested for cardiac problems improved heart health and suffered less risk for sudden death if they forgave. (Journal of Psychology and Health)
FORGIVENESS: SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN

• AIDS patients who forgive are more likely to care for themselves and stop engaging in unprotected sex. (Los Angeles Times)

• Incest sufferers who forgive are emotionally healthier with less depression, anxiety, more hope and self esteem. (Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology, Enright)

• Those who pardon others have lower blood pressure, fewer depressive symptoms and better overall physical and mental health. (Journal of Adult Development)

FORGIVENESS: SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN

• Women who forgive their abusers reduce their anxiety and depression, increase self esteem and hopefulness. (Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology, Enright)

• Terminally ill and elderly cancer patients decline more slowly if they forgive. (Hansen, Enright, Baskin)

• At risk middle school children who forgive have improved emotional health and academic performance over control groups. (Enright, Wisconsin, Seoul, Korea)
ENRIGHT FORGIVENESS RESEARCH
29+YEARS

Peer-Reviewed Empirical Studies

Incest Survivors  Drug Rehab Patients  Terminally-ill Cancer Patients  Students in 3 Countries  Parents of Students

TIME magazine called Dr. Enright “the forgiveness trailblazer.”

HOW FORGIVENESS CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE PHYSICALLY

- Forgiving reduces the anger, bitterness, resentment, depression, and negative emotions that accompany the failure to forgive. [WebMD.com](http://www.webmd.com)

- “People who are able to forgive can actually modify their heart rate, lower their blood pressure, decrease physical pain and even relieve their depression.” [Psychology Today](http://www.psychologytoday.com)
HOW FORGIVENESS CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE
SPIRITUALLY

- Forgiveness affirms what our faith usually requires of us and, therefore, helps us live a life of integrity.

HOW FORGIVENESS CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE
SOCially

- Forgiveness reduces anger and resentment and often leads to an improvement in personal relationships with family, friends and community.
PART IV: LEARNING HOW TO FORGIVE

PRELIMINARIES

- Who hurt you?
- How deeply were you hurt?
- On what specific incident will you focus?
- What were the circumstances at the time?
  - Was it morning or afternoon? Cloudy or sunny?
  - What was said? How did you respond?

THE PROCESS MODEL OF FORGIVING

PHASE I – UNCOVERING YOUR ANGER

- How have you avoided dealing with anger?
- Have you faced your anger?
- Are you afraid to expose your shame or guilt?
- Has your anger affected your health?

CONTINUED


THE PROCESS MODEL OF FORGIVING

PHASE 1 — UNCOVERING YOUR ANGER (CONTINUED)

- Have you been obsessed about the injury or the offender?
- Do you compare your situation with that of the offender?
- Has the injury caused a permanent change in your life?
- Has the injury changed your worldview?

THE PROCESS MODEL OF FORGIVING

PHASE 2 – DECIDING TO FORGIVE

- Decide that what you have been doing hasn’t worked.
- Be willing to begin the forgiveness process.
- Decide to forgive.


THE PROCESS MODEL OF FORGIVING

PHASE 3 – WORKING ON FORGIVENESS

- Work toward understanding.
- Work toward compassion.
- Accept the pain.
- Give the offender a gift.

THE PROCESS MODEL OF FORGIVING

PHASE 4 — DISCOVERY AND RELEASE FROM EMOTIONAL PRISON

❖ Discover the meaning of suffering.
❖ Discover your need for forgiveness.
❖ Discover that you are not alone.
❖ Discover the purpose of your life.
❖ Discover the freedom of forgiveness.

GUIDED PRIVATE REFLECTION

GUIDED PRIVATE REFLECTION
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PART V: SPREADING FORGIVENESS - THE FORGIVING COMMUNITIES

THE FORGIVING COMMUNITIES

- Family
- Place of Worship
- School
- Workplace
YOUR FORGIVENESS LEGACY

What will you leave behind on this earth when you die?
Will you leave more anger or more love?

CLOSING REFERENCES

Eva Mozes Kor
HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR ON WHOM MENGELE EXPERIMENTED

“I have healed myself by forgiving everyone. If anyone had told me I would forgive the Nazis I would tell them they are crazy. But when I chose to forgive I felt the pain lifted from my shoulders. I was finally free of Auschwitz.”

As quoted during her visit to Marshfield, WI, Nov. 2009
CLOSING REFERENCES

Mahatma Gandhi

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

CLOSING REFERENCES

Martin Luther King, Jr.

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. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.
CLOSING REFERENCES

Mother Theresa

If we really want to love we must learn how to forgive.

CLOSING REFERENCES

Roberto Assagioli

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

“Forgiveness is one of the miracles of this world. What other word do you know that suggests love in the face of woundedness, in the face of injustice, in the face of cruelty? To forgive is to try, as best we can, to love those who have wounded us. To forgive is to find a better way.”

Dr. Robert Enright

National Eucharistic Congress
Knock, Ireland - June 26, 2011
PARTING INTERCESSION

In GOD’s eyes, love is never absent.

In GOD’s heart, forgiveness is never impossible.

In GOD’s embrace, no one is ever alone or forgotten.

GOD BLESS YOU!

All we want to do is change the world.
REFERENCES AND RESOURCES FOR THIS PRESENTATION

DR. ENRIGHT’S BOOKS

All Dr. Enright’s books are available at the IFI Online Store
ONLINE CE COURSE

Helping Clients Forgive
An Online Continuing Education Course

For licensed psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, nurses, counselors, ministers, and other helping professionals.

The International Forgiveness Institute is approved by the APA to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The International Forgiveness Institute maintains responsibility for this program and its content.

Course information is available at the IFI Online Store

FORGIVENESS INTERVENTION MANUALS

A Family Guide
Helping Primary-Aged Children Learn About Forgiveness

Strengthening Families
Helping Adolescent Children Learn About Forgiveness

The Anti-Bullying Forgiveness Program
Helping 9-14 Year Old Children Stop Bullying

End of Life Manual
Helping the Dying Person Forgive

Information about each of these courses is available at the IFI Online Store
CURRICULUM GUIDES

Comprehensive forgiveness education curriculum guides (most of them well over 100 pages) are available for grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. Two versions of the guides are available at each grade level—the standard version and a Christian version.

These teacher’s guides employ the scientifically-proven forgiveness education principles and techniques developed by Dr. Enright during his 29 years of research. They have been tested and enhanced in the U.S. and Northern Ireland for the past 12 years.

All Guides are available for purchase in electronic or hard-copy format in the IFI Online Store.

FORGIVENESS RESEARCH TOOLS

This manual provides the only objective test for measuring the degree to which one person forgives another who has hurt him or her deeply and unfairly.

The EFI Manual begins with a description of the concept of forgiveness and the process model of forgiving upon which the Enright Forgiveness Inventory is based. The manual then provides administration and scoring instructions, the establishment of validity and internal consistency, national and international norm tables, and a bibliography of forgiveness research articles.

The EFI Adult Version is available only from Mind Garden, Inc. The EFI for Children is available at the IFI Online Store.
DR. ENRIGHT’S
PEER-REVIEWED EMPIRICAL STUDIES

- The Effects of a Forgiveness Intervention on Patients with Coronary Artery Disease
- Forgiveness Education with Parentally Love-Deprived Late Adolescents
- The Effects of a Forgiveness Intervention on Patients with Coronary Artery Disease
- The Effects of Forgiveness Therapy on Depression, Anxiety, and Posttraumatic Stress for Women after Spousal Emotional Abuse
- A Palliative Care Intervention in Forgiveness Therapy for Elderly Terminally-Ill Cancer Patients

Continued

The full text of each research study can be accessed on the Research Page of the IFI website.

PEER-REVIEWED EMPIRICAL STUDIES
(CONTINUED)

- Forgiveness as a Psychotherapeutic Goal with Elderly Females
- Forgiveness Intervention with Post-abortion Men
- Effects of Forgiveness Therapy on Anger, Mood, and Vulnerability to Substance Use among Inpatient Substance-Dependent Clients
- Forgiveness as an Intervention Goal with Incest Survivors
- Bringing Peace to the Central City: Forgiveness Education in Milwaukee
- The Forgiving Child: The Impact of Forgiveness Education on Excessive Anger for Elementary-Aged Children in Milwaukee’s Central City

The full text of each of these research studies as well as many others can be accessed on the Research Page of the IFI website.
All we want to do is change the world.