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FORGIVENESS

A STEP-BY-STEP

Plan For Freedom

It's not easy to let go of an incident that has caused you pain.

Forgiving the person that caused that pain is even more
challenging. However, forgiveness is a gift you give yourself!

In many cases, the other person might not even care if you forgive them. You forgive others so that you can feel better and enjoy your life again. If the other person benefits, that's the cherry on top.

Give yourself the tremendous gift of forgiveness with these strategies:

1.Understand what forgiveness really means. Some people

erroneously believe that forgiveness means giving the other person a chance to hurt you again. This isn't necessarily so.

You can forgive someone and make the decision to never speak to them again.

- Forgiveness simply means that you're not going to dwell on the situation anymore. You've decided to not feel bad about it anymore. You're moving on with your life and letting go of the past.

2.Accept that the past can never be changed. There's no time

machine to undo what has been done. There's nothing the other person can say that will completely erase what happened. The only way you'll be okay is to forgive.

3.What do you believe you're gaining from not forgiving? Are

you punishing the other person? Do you believe that your anger is the proper response, so you're simply going to maintain it? What do you gain from holding on to your pain?

- Some people refuse to forgive someone that they never even see anymore. Your hurt and anger have absolutely no impact on someone in this situation. They've moved on with their lives, and you're only punishing yourself.

4. Acknowledge your pain. You can't release pain that you're not willing to acknowledge. Sit with your pain and avoid judging it. Just feel it and notice its qualities. Where do you feel it in your body? How would you describe it? Acknowledge and evaluate your pain honestly.

5. Understand the cost of not forgiving. What is it costing you to maintain your feelings of resentment? Is it preventing you from enjoying your life? Are you unable to have another relationship? Is it keeping you up at night? Do you feel angry all day? Withholding forgiveness isn't free. It costs you in some way.

6. List the benefits of forgiving. Obviously, all of the costs of not forgiving are erased, but there's more. There's peace and freedom. There's the knowledge that you have control over your emotions. You know that you have choices to change how you feel. What can you do for yourself that's more beneficial than forgiveness?

7. Forgive. Make the decision to let it go. Avoid thinking about the matter anymore. When your thoughts drift back to that situation, gently direct them to something else.

8. Learn. What lesson can you take away from the situation? It might be obvious, like "Don't get involved with someone that has a drug addiction," or "Never loan money to a friend."

Maybe it's something subtler. Where there's pain, there's usually a lesson to be learned.

Make the decision to forgive and move on. The pain you're causing **yourself isn't worth holding onto your angst. Evaluate your** resistance to forgiveness by listing the benefits and costs of maintaining that position. It's clear that you have much to gain by letting go of your pain.

Forgive those who have hurt you and enjoy your life again!