

LOVE IN FORGIVENESS

I forgive you for what you have said and done.
I forgive you for what you believe to be true.
I forgive you for making light of the hurt you have caused.
I forgive you for not saying sorry.
I do not withhold my love.
If I ever do so, please forgive me.

Modern Prayer from Tel Aviv, Israel

Have you ever taken the time to think about forgiveness? I mean really contemplate what forgiveness entails? Forgiveness is a bottom line issue. We need to know we are forgiven by God and we need to know we are forgiven by others. To err is definitely part of the human experience but without a shadow of a doubt to forgive is divine.

Looking back over the years I think of what I was like when I first began this journey and how difficult it was for me to cope. In those days I was consumed with pride/ego and ego and forgiveness are like oil and water, they do not mix. So for the longest time I was unable to get anywhere near forgiveness in fact at that point in my life I did not understand what forgiveness was, nor did I know how to forgive. For me forgiveness was impossible. Instead I would rant and rave both mentally and verbally about life's injustices and how I was the victim and that it was everyone's fault but mine that I was on Texas death row. On and on I'd go until I'd wear myself out over and over I'd repeat this cycle until I began to get to the point to where I knew that carrying around this anger and hate was eating me up inside like some malignant cancer and I had to stop this. At that point in my life the best I could do was avoid the issue. When these emotions would pop into my head I would start singing, strike up a conversation with someone; or read... anything to stop that onslaught of thoughts. It wasn't much but it was a start and I thank God and the Universe for that beginning.

One thing is certain, the school of life never stops teaching and as I started to listen and really pay attention I began to learn crucial life lessons. I learned that ego requires slights, disrespects, betrayals and transgressions to exist. These negative emotions are the ego's fuel and through them pride/ego hijacks our person turning us into ranting and raving fools. We must remember, we are not the crazed mental voice in the back of our head that goes on and on with crazy talk. No, we are the Presence that recognizes that voice as ego and works towards controlling it.

As time went on and because the Universe had not given up on me (Thank you, Lord!), I slowly began to fall awake. And it is amazing what shook me to my core and what caused the scales to begin to fall from my eyes was ego's negative fuel. It was the betrayal of some who I thought were my close friends that threw me into such a spiral that I began to lose my mind and with non-stop visions of hate and revenge. It was by the grace of God that I somehow knew I needed to gain control over my mind, body and soul if I was going to make it through this experience. And it was through this I found the Path to spiritual enlightenment. The Path I continue to travel upon today.

God works in mysterious ways and it was in this manner that after 8 years He had my attention and at long last I began to see the light. Slowly I started doing the work on myself that must be done if I was to ever truly change myself and begin to be the man I was destined to be.

It must be stated that even after this awakening began I continued to have major problems with ego and the emotions that fuel it, and these evils continued to block my ability to forgive. So even after walking on the Path for nearly 3 years the best I could do was side step the issue and not allow pride/ego to hijack my being. As I continued down this Path things began to get clearer to me and one day it dawned on me, in order to forgive others I first had to forgive myself.

That way the key, this was my epiphany, my spiritual flash that would change the way I viewed myself and the world. Working through all that made me ashamed, all that made me cringe inside; all the terrible things I had done and said in my life, processing each one of these issues one by one then forgiving myself and throwing them out for good was the beginning of me being able to forgive others. I found that after I forgave myself I was now in a position to rationally think of the things that had happened to me in life and forgive those who had wronged me.

An amazing thing happened when I learned this forgiveness process, I freed myself. The more I forgave the freer I became and this is an amazing blessing. I am the first to say I had much to forgive myself of, and much to forgive others of and I accept that. I've learned that there are some people, and some transgressions that you have to forgive more than once. Some things go forgiven for a week, a month or more, then one day when I'm not paying attention pride sneaks up and snatches away that forgiveness replacing it with those old feelings of hate and revenge. But when I snap back in control I take a deep breath and ask the Creator for forgiveness for that act and once again bestow my forgiveness. I find there are issues that I've been working on for a very long time. I'm okay with that because one day I will wake up and it will never bother me again. They will be truly and completely forgiven and I will be that much freer.

Forgiveness is critical for our wellbeing. Peace and happiness cannot be had without it. For this reason it is a bottom line issue. We must learn to forgive ourselves for our mistakes, for not getting it right the first time or the hundredth time and through this learn to truly forgive ourselves then others.

I thank God and the Universe that I have come to the realization that my mistakes are not forever, they are not even for a life time and through working on myself and with God's grace they are washed clean and that nothing is irrevocable.

It is through these eyes and with this voice that I say first and foremost I forgive myself, I forgive those for what they have said and done, and for the hurt they have caused. I do not withhold my love.

Love Peace & Hope!
Charles Don Flores

And if I ever do so, please forgive me.