

EmployeeCare News

Keeping you informed from EmployeeCare, your employee assistance program, a benefit extended by your organization to all employees and their household members.



Resentment: Now is the Time to Forgive!

By Anthony Adams, Counselor

Many of us have been hurt or felt betrayed by someone who has played a significant role in our life resulting in ill feelings, bitterness, and resentment toward that person. Perhaps it was a former spouse who cheated on you and whom you can no longer stand the sight of. Maybe your supervisor promoted a coworker who had less experience, less education, and less seniority than you. Maybe you loaned money to someone who has never paid you back. Could your resentments

stem from childhood when your parents favored your older sibling?

You are the one walking around with “lemons on your lips” and somehow expecting the past to be different. The person you hold resentment toward has moved on to another relationship, has never repaid your money, has a new career, a different (you fill in the blanks) and you are still immobilized with vengeance.

Letting go of resentment is challenging. One reason we resist forgiving is that we do not really understand what forgiveness is or how it works. Some of us believe if we forgive our offenders, they are let off the hook – scot-free – and get to go about their merry way while we unfairly suffer from their actions. We also may think we have to be friendly with them again, or go back to the old relationship. You may question: “Why should I forgive someone who has deceived, hurt, or betrayed my trust?”

Katherine Piderman, PhD, defines forgiveness and lists the following benefits for forgiving someone:

What is forgiveness?

Generally, forgiveness is a decision to let go of resentment and thoughts of revenge. The act that hurt or offended you may always remain a memory, but forgiveness can lessen its grip on you and help you focus on other, positive parts of your life. Forgiveness can even lead to experiencing feelings



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of understanding, empathy and compassion for the one who hurt you.

Forgiveness doesn't mean 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.

What are the benefits of forgiving someone?

Letting go of grudges and bitterness makes way for compassion, kindness and peace. Forgiveness can lead to:

- Healthier relationships
- Greater spiritual and psychological well-being
- Less stress and hostility
- Lower blood pressure
- Fewer symptoms of depression, anxiety and chronic pain
- Lower risk of alcohol and substance abuse

Granting Forgiveness

- Forgiveness is not letting the offender off the hook. We can and should still hold others accountable for their actions or lack of actions.
- Forgiveness is not letting the offense recur again and again. We do not have to tolerate, nor should we keep ourselves open to lack of respect or any form of abuse.
- Forgiveness does not mean we have to revert to being the victim. Forgiving is not saying, "What you did was okay, so go ahead and walk all over me." Nor is it playing the martyr where we can feel superior to the other person because we say to ourselves that I would never behave like that.
- Forgiveness is not the same as reconciling. We can forgive someone even if we choose to lessen our interaction with certain others again.
- Forgiveness is a process, not an event. It might take some time to work through our emotions before we can truly forgive. As soon as we can, it may be better for our spirits if we try to forgive, but it probably is not going to happen right after a tragic divorce. That's okay.
- We can attempt to adopt forgiveness as a value. If we find ourselves constantly forgiving, though, we might need to take a look at the dance we are doing with the other person that sets us up to be continually hurt, attacked, or abused.
- Forgetting does not mean denying reality or ignoring repeated offenses. Some people's behavior is obnoxious, mean-spirited, apathetic,

or unreliable. Their behavior may never change. We need to change the way we respond to them and quit expecting them to be different.

- Forgiveness is not based on others' actions but on our attitude. People will continue to impact us in challenging ways. We either can look outward and engage them or stay stuck and angry.

What are the effects of holding a grudge?

If you are always unforgiving, you may pay the price repeatedly of bringing anger and bitterness into every relationship and new experience. Your life may become so wrapped up in the wrong that you can not recognize the positive present. You may become depressed or anxious. You may feel your life lacks meaning or purpose, or that you are at odds with your spiritual beliefs. You may lose valuable and enriching connectedness with others.

How do I reach a state of forgiveness?

Forgiveness is a commitment to a process of change. A way to begin is by recognizing the value of forgiveness and its importance in your life at a given time. Then reflect on the facts of the situation, how you have reacted, and how this combination has affected your life, health and well-being. When you feel ready, actively choose to forgive the person who has offended you. 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 will no longer define your life by how you have been hurt. You may even find compassion and understanding.

What happens if I can't forgive someone?

Forgiveness can be challenging. It may be particularly hard to forgive someone who doesn't admit wrong or doesn't speak of his or her sorrow. If you find yourself stuck, it may help to write in a journal, you may want to talk with a person you've found to be wise and compassionate, or an unbiased family member or friend. Also, feel free to utilize EmployeeCare, your Employee Assistance Program. It's confidential and there is no charge to you or household members.

Someone once stated; "Forgiveness is forfeiting your right to hurt someone who has hurt you." You might want to reflect on times you've hurt others and on those who've forgiven you. Keep in mind that forgiveness has the potential to increase your sense of integrity, peace and overall well-being.

Intimacy

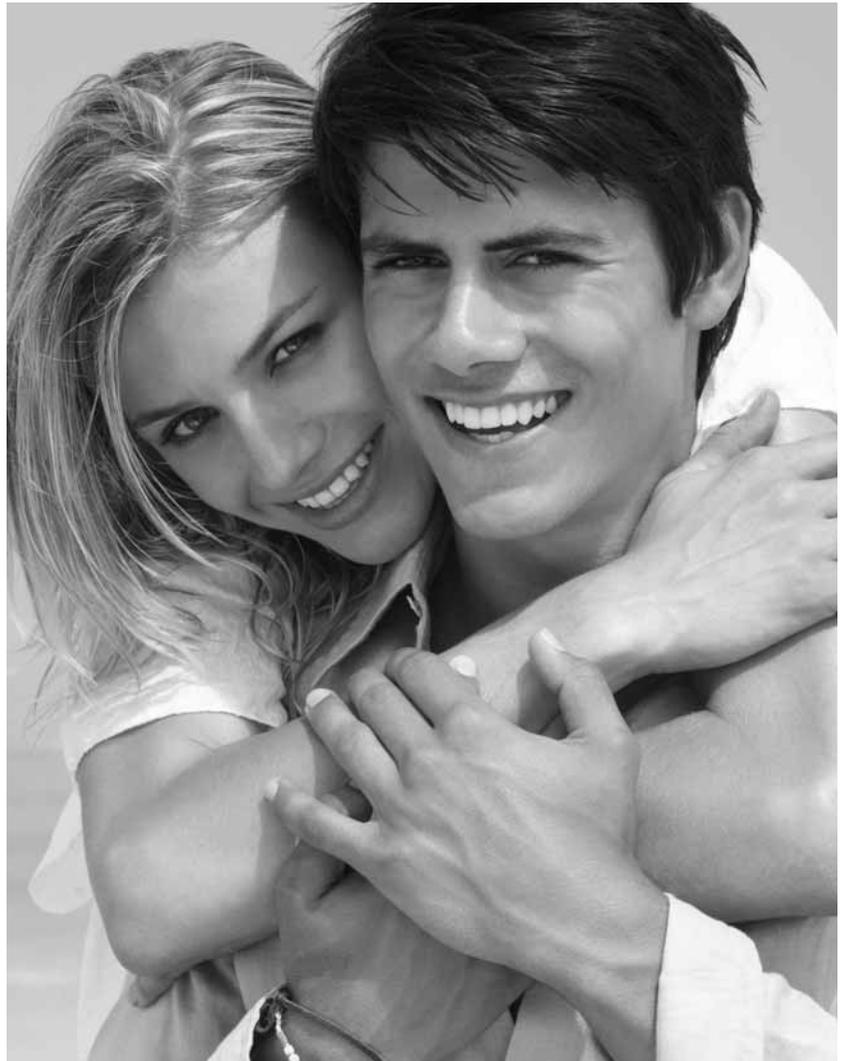
By Ami Olinger, Counselor Intern

Building a sense of closeness is important for a healthy marriage. These feelings of connection can take the form of emotional intimacy, sexual intimacy, social intimacy, recreational intimacy, intellectual intimacy or spiritual intimacy. Different amounts of investment are placed upon each area, due to the couple's personality and preference. The emphasis on each of these areas varies for individuals and couples and each can strive for an appropriate balance.

The knowledge that intimate couples have about one another can be developed on deeper and private sides of the individual that is not common information for all to know. Then the quality of an intimate relationship can become far deeper and more committed. To establish greater connection, one's feelings, thoughts, and actions are invested in another individual. Intimate partners spend an increased amount of time together. Out of this more concentrated amount of time, their lives can become deeply entwined. The partners can then have a greater impact and influence upon one another's outlook and decision-making skills as time continues to pass. This dependence on each other builds mutuality. This investment by each person forms an identity where both partners view the togetherness as becoming a couple. A joining of lives is created and when done with proper boundaries, a large step is taken toward intimacy.

Developing trust is one of the characteristics that can change a relationship from casual to intimate. It is important for issues of trust to be talked about and the amount of mutual trust established is crucial to the relationship's success. Having trust lived out in a relationship creates a feeling of security in each partner. Trust is illustrated within the relationship in terms of communication, in relation to openness with their partner, and behavior that respects the other person in the relationship. Trust can be broken literally in a second, and when it is, it can take time to rebuild.

Lastly, commitment plays a vital role in an intimate relationship. Commitment is a pledge and decision each partner makes to put each other first and be loyal and reliable to one another. In the commitment to another individual, this



investment in the relationship is made through time, having a presence in the positive as well as the negative times, and placing an emphasis on these things by making it a priority in their lives.

It is important to keep in mind that all six of these relationship components of intimacy do not have to be present at the same time for a relationship to be intimate. Relationships are as unique as people, and each have their own pattern. EmployeeCare is here to assist if a couple wishes to develop greater intimacy in their day-to-day life.

Sources:

Intimate Relationships by Miller, Perlman, & Stephens-Brehm

Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling by Worthington

Teen Girls Reinforcing Positive Outlooks

Parents and guardians,

Adolescence is a developmentally significant time for both you and your children. The friends they make and the internal messages they retain can impact the adults they become. Teens often try to test their boundaries, and sometimes this has regretful results. This group aims to help adolescents be prepared to make positive choices that will in turn enhance their self esteem. This group is intended to help adolescents work through the decision making process while remembering the consequences of their actions. We will meet once a week for 90 minutes starting the week of Feb. 28. Please call EmployeeCare at (937) 208-6626 to sign your adolescent up for an assessment before Feb. 14.



Check Us Out on the Web!

Do you want to know more details about your Employee Assistance Program? Do you want more information about each counselor?

Go to www.mvh.org/EmployeeCare

EmployeeCare

Located: 409 E. Monument St.
Suite 201
Dayton, Ohio 45402

We have satellite offices in Eaton, Springboro, Troy, Greenville and on the Good Samaritan Hospital campus

Hours: 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. Monday – Thursday
8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Friday

All counselors provide evening appointment times

Phone: (937) 208-6626 or (800) 628-9343
(24-hour, toll free)

Services Include:

- Voluntary, confidential assessments. Short-term counseling and referral services for employees and household members covering a wide range of issues. Services are free and number of accesses unlimited.
- Substance Abuse and Wellness Education Groups
- In-service for sexual harassment, diversity, violence in the workplace
- Workplace wellness
- 24-Hour Crisis phone service
- Substance Abuse trainings that meet state and Bureau of Worker Compensation requirements for drug free workplaces

M-COM02517-12/10

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