

HYPNOSIS and Other Stories

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CHAPTER 12 : Forgiveness

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In 2010, I was sitting at a the IMDHA/IACT conference between Father Marty Patton and Brigadier General Paul Durbin just before the Sunday service. We were discussing what programs were useful that weren't being offered at the conference that year. Hypnosis and Color, always a useful strategy. Time Line Therapy, had I studied with Tad James? No, I went expecting Tad and got to spend time with his son Matt. What I was most passionate about was forgiveness. That is the source of so much stuckness. Forgiveness of self, other, and God, we practically recited it in unison.

Refusing to forgive is like taking poison and expecting the other person to die.

This is an experiential process. Bring a grudge you find disruptive to your joyfulness, transform that stuck energy into a more natural flow of compassion for yourself and others.

Modified from Hypnotherapy (Dahl, 1994, Chapter 210)

Release and Forgiveness

I consider forgiveness a creatively selfish act. It means I am willing to be gentle and kind with myself, surrender to the situation and accept the reality of it with an open heart and mind. Letting go of the hurt, pain, betrayal, loss means I can stop wasting energy defending myself, reclaim the experiences of happiness, joy, appreciation, contentment, trust and hope for myself and others. I am then free to use my full capacities for positive growth, creativity, love, and joyful appreciation for living and being.

Some change is slow, like the growth of a redwood. The change occurs in small, incremental movements, progressive, sometimes regressive, but small. Change doesn't always take a lifetime, a year, a day. . . "Be ye

transformed in the twinkling of an eye” (Paul the Apostle). When the moment of readiness for change comes, the subject will steam roll you if you stand between him or her and the desired change.

The purpose of this program is to:

- 1 – practice forgiveness
- 2 – reduce suffering and improve quality of life
- 3 – cultivate compassion
- 4 – develop easy to use skills useful in personal and professional life

Forgiveness does not mean forgetting or pretending something didn't happen, it doesn't mean it's ok to let it happen again. Forgiveness means letting go of the negative feelings and any resentment toward a person, situation, organization, or community in order to free up one's own life energy for positive creative applications. Forgiveness is used to build resilience, sustain self-worth, and reduce the adverse impact of stressful life experiences. Forgiveness is an element of excellent lubricating capacity in the process of healthy living. It means finding compassion, warmth, good wishes and concern for self and others.

Let any pain in this moment pass. May happiness be part of me. Let joy arise in my life, body, mind and feelings. My body is a temple of my soul / spirit. It is a luminous energetic flow of love and compassion. Each person I encounter is another Being wanting to be acknowledged, heard, safe. I am a Being wanting to be acknowledged, heard, safe.

Grounding

Imagine, roots growing from the feet down to the center of the earth.

Roots from the toes. Roots from the heels. Roots from the sides of the feet that touch the ground, roots from the pad of the foot at the base of the toes. Roots down to the center of the earth. Up from the earth is a bubbling well of loving energy. Beloved, loving, endearing energy. Everything we need is here. It is here. Grounded like a strong tree, deeply rooted, drawing moisture, nourishment from the center of the earth. It comes up through the arch of the feet, up through the legs as if the legs are hollow straws. It rises up like a bubbling freshwater spring, just right, just right, perfect for your health, perfect for your authentic expressions of self, in the right place at the right time. And you trust yourself.

That light / moisture energy rises up your spine, as if the spine is a hollow straw, it is filling with a beloved sensation, a fluid sensation, not too hot, not too cold. Just right. It emerges out the top of your head, it rises and crests like a refreshing fountain. It washes down around the edges of your becoming, you're becoming more aware, your skin, your energy, your thoughts, your feelings, it washes you, passing through your, cleansing every muscle, cell, fiber and tissue of the body / mind / spirit, washing out , washing off, clearing, refreshing. Washing you off, filling you up with a lovely refreshing. . . curiosity. . . washing off. . . all that other stuff.

Washing it off, and You notice, and are curious, about how this feels right, because you are resuming a grounded position on the earth, in your body, and that bubbling light energy washes you out, washes you off, taking all grime, and muck back into the earth, the dust, the dirt, where it transforms into healthy fertilizer for the green living things. And you notice your breathing. You're breathing. You are breathing. Breathing in oxygen, breathing out tension. Breathing in life, breathing out carbon dioxide. And you don't take all the oxygen that comes in, you take only what you need, what is best, and most effective for the task demands, and you release the rest. Breathing in relaxation, breathing out tension. Notice the in breath, and the out breath. And good, and excellent.

Inner Illumination

Light within, light above, expansive flow of energy, from above to within, from within to above, as below, so above. A radiant energy enters and illuminates, radiates from within, shining forth into the world, this is the highest and most natural functioning for your temple of self, home to your soul. Feel the aliveness, the spontaneity, the gratitude and integrity, loving radiant, restored to self with love, acceptance, compassion. Compassion, good wishes for well-being, concern, and warmth. The practice of forgiveness reconnects self with a sense of worth, resilience, reduces the adverse impacts of difficult situations and people.

Exercise: Priming for Love / Compassion

Hanson (2009) frames the world with the Buddhist view that pain is inevitable, suffering is optional. The nervous system has three wings; sympathetic (SNS), parasympathetic (PNS), and enteric (gastrointestinal). PNS is rest and digest, SNS is fight or flight. PNS calms the nervous system, supports insight, centering, aliveness. Being hurt once, which can be thought of as a first arrow, is the idea that a wound is temporary, and ideally the nervous system will reset to a natural resting level in the PNS activation. But once a second or third arrow hits the same target, the SNS arousal level may kick in to protect and defend without a resumption of the PNS relaxed state.

Remember someone who loves you. Imagine being in the presence of that person right now. Remember the feelings that come with being cared for, protected, loved.

How does it feel to receive this kind of love?

This stimulates attachment circuits of your brain, primes you for compassion.

Remember someone or something you love and actively protect; a child, an elder, a friend, an animal, an ideal, a project, . Notice how you feel inside when you think of this person, place or thing. Now allow yourself to extend that same feeling toward yourself, allow your love and compassionate desire to care for another flow down into your own life, body, thoughts, and feelings, finding all those wounded, cracked places and filling them as if with a healing balm, like aloe on a burn, allow a healing salve to soothe your innermost wounds, your public and private hurts. Let that healing balm flow down into your heart, into your lungs, into your stomach and gallbladder, your liver, your kidneys, your bowel. How does that feel in each organ? How do they respond to your loving, compassionate desire to care for them? Now let that loving, compassionate energy flow down into your glands. Your pineal, pituitary, hypothalamus, thalamus, thymus, adrenals, gonads / ovaries. How do they respond to your loving, compassionate desire to care for them? Now feel that loving, compassionate energy radiate so fully within your body that it overflows you, oozes out the pores of your skin in a golden bubble of loving, compassionate life. And you find yourself. You find yourself smiling. And the body smiles back. Every muscle, cell, tissue and fiber of your being.

Hanson (2009) proposes a law of little things, the pile of positive and negative memories are sorted to compare with incoming data. This residue of past experiences filters incoming data to match expectations. When releasing negative, it may be a conscious, deliberate thing until the nervous system is re-wired to find solutions and options with a positive slant.

Your life is filled with memories of what has happened in your life. There is a pile of things that were positive and beneficial, there is another pile of things that were negative and detrimental, there is another pile of things that appear to have had a neutral impact in your life. Our goal is to reduce your focus on the negative, move smoothly through the neutral, and increase your focus on the positive.

Opting to engage from a positive slant allows you to take the virtuous path, which is founded in your own self-interest based on enlightened compassion despite the behavior of other people. Being good feels good in the long run as you have behaved with integrity, in a blameless manner, freeing you from regret or guilt. Doing what is right is more likely to result in a clear head and heart. Behaving positively wires the brain to transmit dopamine, which feels good in the working memory, able to amplify joy, bliss, tranquility, happiness, contentment. This allows joy to become the focus of your attention. A positive frame of reference.

Casarian's (1992) approach is to practicing forgiveness daily, make it a normal part of living. To become proficient at this practice, select a target to practice forgiveness with. Once you have identified a person, situation, or organization with whom you are finding it difficult to relate, feel betrayed, abandoned, offended with in any way for whatever reason, notice how you feel about forgiving this person, place or situation.

Is there any conflict inside?

Are you aware of anything that holds you back, or inspires to you practice?

Can you immediately practice forgiveness with the first thing / person / situation that came to mind when I suggested it or do you want to start with something that is not so much in the foreground?

Perhaps you want to select a small offense first.

Perhaps you will find the practice of forgiveness with the stranger driving aggressively, someone you don't know, than someone with whom you have a larger emotional load to release.

Notice if there is more than one person / place / forgiveness. Perhaps you will find it easier to practice initially with someone / thing / situation with whom it is easier to practice forgiveness. Maybe the stranger who is driving badly and annoyed you, or cut you off.

l'enfer, c'est les autres ("Hell is other people", Sartre, No Exit, 1944).

Be gentle with yourself and others.

Practice grounding, cleansing, priming for love / compassion.

Refusing to forgive is like taking poison and expecting the other person to die.

Forgiveness is a selfish act.

That's right, SELFISH.

Not a greedy selfish, to hell with the other person attitude

A creatively selfish, I must love my neighbor as my self

Not better than or worse than me

How able are you to practice forgiveness, acceptance, listening to love / compassion in your own heart for the face in the mirror?

Can you forgive yourself for all the times you didn't strive for your dream, or let yourself down?

Can you get back up, brush yourself off and keep going. That's how you learned to walk. Ride a bike. Swim. If you are still listening, you survived all those times you learned what didn't work. You know what works. You know what you want or need that you haven't gotten, yet.

Readiness for Change

We are biologically designed to approach opportunities and avoid threat in order to survive as individual organisms. We pay close attention to that which could kill because of the survival instinct. This leaves the human organism with a biological priming to observe for that which is lethal in order to survive. That which will not kill us tends to drop below conscious awareness, innocuous,

unnoticed. We tend to move toward that which is pleasing / desirable / attractive for whatever reason, and away from that which is unpleasant / undesirable / repulsive for whatever reason.

All human beings resist change until they are ready to change. It is only when we reach a point of readiness to change that change occurs. The indecision stage of knowing that something needs to change, but not knowing how, when, or in what form change will occur, can be a state of exquisite torment. The times of hanging in limbo, indecisive, uncertain or unaware of what choices are available, present some of life's greatest opportunities for change and growth or status quo and stagnation. When movement in a positive direction is achieved, there comes a feeling of relief. Change is often felt while it is occurring, but the how, when and what form is seen most clearly in hindsight.

"Back there, I changed."

The moment of readiness for change is triggered during:

1 - Mental, emotional, physical and/or spiritual suffering.

"I cannot tolerate this any longer."

2 - Hopelessness entering despair.

"I cannot continue on like this and survive."

3 - Becoming aware that change is possible.

"I'm tired of this. I must do something different."

"I'm over this. There must be something more."

"I'm through with this. I've outgrown it."

I may see others change and think, "I can do that."

Forgiveness

“Real pleasure is not the opposite of pain, it is the absence of it” (Finley, 1993, p. 64).

“It (*forgiveness*) reawakens us to the truth of our own goodness and loveableness” (Casarjian, 1992, p.10, *italics mine*). Casarjian suggests that remaining resentful might be a way of refusing to accept responsibility for one’s own role in the past, present, and future, and proposes that beneath all the hurt is a desire to be heard, acknowledged, safe, loved, and respected. Practicing forgiveness allows the individual to refocus life’s energy on a spirit of hope and optimism, in contrast to pessimism and hopelessness, learned helplessness. This is a shift into loving creation rather than selfish, destructive application of life’s energy. Forgiveness may release a need to grieve loss, find acceptance with the way things are instead of the hoped for ideal. What is life like if you stop struggling to get things the way you hoped they would be, and accepted them as they are?

“Forgiveness is a crucial part of release and change. If you want someone else to magically make you different, failure is assured. If you are willing to let go the shame, guilt, pain, hurt, grieving, sadness, sorrow, fear, anger, indecision, numbness and denial of a situation, you can then deal with what happens on the other side of those negative emotions. Forgiveness requires a release of negativity and a refocusing on the positive and good of Life.”

(It may be beneficial to establish a Gestalt dialogue with the person the subject is holding thoughts of unfinished business or negative feelings about. You can start with a great debate, or you can open the dialogue with:)

I do my thing and you do your thing. I am not in this world to live up to your expectations and you are not in this world to live up to mine. You are you and I am I. If by chance we find each other, that is beautiful. - Fritz Perls -

"I am I and you are you. I am not here to live up to your expectations and you are not here to live up to mine. If by chance we can find a middle ground, that is wonderful, but we don't need that to live. My middle ground is love. What's yours" (Gil Boyne, 1987)?

How do you feel unloved / unlovable in this _____ (situation / relationship)?

What will life be like when you stop struggling with _____ (issue)?

What will be left of that _____ (situation / relationship)?

What will your life be like without that struggle?

How will you feel about letting go of all that stress and struggle?

How will your life be different without that struggle or difficulty?

Self-forgiveness includes existential, spiritual, historical, cultural, physical aspects (Casarjian, 1992), and requires a being gentle, honest with self

I will never forgive _____ for _____.

I will never forgive myself for _____.

If I could I would _____.

If _____ could, I would want _____ to _____.

_____ should never have _____.

I should never have _____.

If _____ had only _____.

If I had only _____.

_____ should have.

I should have _____.

I refuse to forgive _____ for _____.

I refuse to forgive myself for _____.

What do I get from holding onto this grudge, this refusal to forgive?

What do I avoid with holding onto this refusal to forgive?

What do I foreclose / lose while holding onto this refusal to forgive?

The Forgiving Chair

"Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Listen to the sound of your breathing and imagine a beautiful old hard backed chair. It is one of those old intricately carved hard wood chairs that you may have seen in a museum. . . or an old person's home, perhaps your grandparent's home. It is so beautiful. . . but it is too pretty to be comfortable. It is slippery and slidy. . . and the chair is too tall for your feet to touch the ground. This is a very special chair. This chair in your mind is called the forgiving chair. It is made up of the many intricate human relationships that comprise your life. It is a beautiful chair, ornate, carved wood and so tall that no matter who sits in that chair, their feet do not touch the ground and we are young in this chair. It is so slippery that it is impossible to sit still in this chair. And every time you have something you are holding against someone, when you blink, you will perceive this chair. The image of the chair comes to you as you blink letting you know you are holding some negativity about someone, so that when you are ready, you can close your eyes, briefly and see if there is a male or female in that chair, and who that person seems to

be. As you become aware of that particular person who seems to be in the chair, you become aware of what it is that is bothering or disturbing you."

"Now as I snap my fingers, if there anything bothering you, anyone you feel owes you something, or anyone you are holding something against, they will appear in that chair one at a time or all at once."

(snap your fingers)

"Notice who is in that chair, if anyone, is it someone male or female?"

"Now tell them your true feelings toward them right now, start like this, 'Here's my true feelings _____.'"

"What would you like to do to them?"

"Do that now."

"Now how do you feel about what you have done."

"Does that feel better?"

"What would you prefer to do?"

Positive or negative experience, which do you wish to do? Struggle against it for a win / lose outcome, or surrender to the love that does not reject or judge.

How often have you been subjected to neglect, abuse, rejection, ridicule, hatred, betrayal? How often have you treated your own body with this behaviors? Can you forgive yourself for your vulnerabilities, frailties, and mortality?

Physical pain can feed upon mental / emotional pain causing a cycle of vicious pain enhancement. Physical / mental / emotional pain can transform through forgiveness into relaxation of the body / mind / feelings resulting in less

pain, more relaxation. Forgiving self / body for being sick helps transform the chaotic experience that can emerge during illness into a healing crisis.

Hot Hand / Cold Hand

I forgive _____ for all that stuff.

(Is it warm or cool between the hand and the heart? If warm, consider the forgiveness to be genuine, if cool, probe:)

What will be the worst thing that will happen when you forgive?

What will be the best thing that will happen when you forgive?

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IMDHA Resources

<https://www.hypnosisalliance.com/imdha/>



The International Medical and Dental Hypnotherapy Association can help you find hypnosis practitioners, training in hypnosis, events, a virtual library and an online store.

There are four types of membership providing access to tens of thousands of hypnosis and other articles for human health and well-being: associate, student, certified, and educator.

“The International Medical and Dental Hypnotherapy Association is a Referral Service dedicated to providing the community with excellently trained Certified Hypnotherapists. IMDHA Practitioners work harmoniously with allied healthcare professionals to aid individuals in dealing with specific challenges and procedures.

Our objective is to help create a sense of peace and harmony within the individual so that the current challenge can be met and dealt with in a positive manner, thus making the journey toward wellness and peace of mind less traumatic.

Our goal is to reduce the stress the individual is experiencing as a hospital patient and / or surgical patient, etc. Less stress allows the body to focus attention on its natural course of healing. The method to be used is hypnosis.

In addition to medical challenges, all IMDHA members assist persons in dealing effectively with non-medical problems. Finding solutions to self-sabotaging habits leads to peace of mind and control of unwanted, negative behavior. Self Empowerment is the goal.

The International Medical and Dental Hypnotherapy Association: Dedicated to Healing: Body, Mind and Spirit.”

M.G. Dahl has classes scheduled through 2026

Keywesthypnosis.com

Her training manuals are available on Amazon.

Hypnotherapy, Vol. 1: Basic Hypnosis.

Hypnotherapy, Vol. 2: Hypnotherapy

Hypnotherapy, Vol. 3: Electives

Her chapters (Chapter 10, 1st ed.; Chapter 13, 2nd ed.) regarding the use of neurofeedback for reducing the adverse impact of PTSD and mTBI are found in Restoring the Brain, edited by Hanno Kirk. Both editions are available on Amazon.

She is co-author of an article with Hanno Kirk that is in press, 2022.