



Forgiveness and Self Care

Forgiving Others

Forgiveness typically has a positive connotation. The word suggests that we have dealt with a negative situation, have healed from its affects, and are ready to let go and move on. However, this is not always the case. People may verbalize or act like that they are in a place of forgiveness to

- Avoid conflict
- Adhere to pressure from others
- Ignore their own emotions to move on
- Keep the peace
- Feel like a “good person”

While in recovery, there may be times we reflect on our past with better clarity and recognize times that we may have “forgiven” without fully healing. We may not have actually been able to process situations when people

- Did not try to understand us
- Hurt us
- Left us
- Mistreated us
- Judged us

[The Real Risk of Forgiveness—And Why It’s Worth It](#)

Have there been instances in your life where you “forgave” someone without *actually* forgiving them? Why? How has that impacted the way you view that situation, the relationship with that person, and yourself? What do you feel that you need to begin forgiving?

Forgiving Ourselves

The use of substances often causes conflicts within ourselves and with others. Before recovery, we may have continued abusing substances to cope with these conflicts, causing a cycle of emotional turmoil. These conflicts may include

- Disagreements / arguments with others
- Acting against our morals and ethics
- Relapsing
- Losing loved ones
- Blackouts
- Financial stressors due to substances

What do all of the bullet points that we have read have in common? We have the opportunity to recognize, understand, and learn from these experiences to move toward in **forgiving ourselves**.

How to Begin Forgiving Ourselves

Studies show that self-forgiveness is correlated to high self-esteem, low neuroticism, and low levels of anxiety and depression. Therefore, practicing self-care habits may enhance our ability to exercise self-forgiveness.

How do you exercise self-care? How often do you partake in self-care? How can you incorporate forgiveness into your self-care habits?

Contributed by Jamie Lewitt, MSW Intern