

The 4-View Forgiveness Process



Once a decision to forgive another person has been made, the task of actually accomplishing that act becomes the next challenge. Since forgiveness doesn't arise naturally for most people, it is necessary to actively work on the process over time and intentionally soften the heart and mind toward the one who has done harm.

Remember that forgiveness rarely happens instantly, but takes time to accomplish. Allowing the passage of time after harm has been done is an important step in order to repair some of the damage that has occurred, lessen the pain involved and recover from the shock and numbness that accompanies trauma. Clear thinking, relatively stable emotions and a solid sense of reality are necessary components of the process of forgiveness.

In addition, prayer, contemplation and meditation are useful practices to prepare for the task of forgiving. To actively work toward a state of forgiveness, try following the **4-View Process**, which encourages seeing the situation from every perspective available. Record in a journal all the thoughts and emotions that arise during the steps of this process so you can refer to them at a later time:

1. **Third-person view:** Tell the story of what happened to you as if you were a newspaper reporter composing a column. Focus on the facts involved and minimize emotions and blame.
2. **Second-person view:** To the best of your ability, tell the story from the point of view of the other person. What thoughts may have been going through that person's mind? What feelings were present at the time of the incident and how might that person feel now?
3. **First-person view:** Look deep within yourself to discover feelings that may be hidden beneath your obvious resentment. Does this incident remind you of any other traumas from your past? Are you feeling any other emotions that have not been expressed, such as guilt, shame or fear?

4. **Galaxy view:** Tell the story of what happened from the perspective of your spiritual teacher or guide who oversees your education on this planet. What lessons were contained in this incident for you to learn from? How does this experience help you to grow in wisdom, compassion or love?