

RECONCILIATION



"If we really want to love,
we must learn how to forgive."
— Mother Teresa

Forgiveness is one of the most important first steps to ending conflicts in our families, our communities and between nations. Most conflicts begin because one person or group feels they have been wronged by another person or group.

Forgiveness is not glossing over a problem or excusing it without consequences, or letting someone continue to treat you badly. It's always important to first get out of a dangerous situation, such as a violent or abusive relationship. Forgiveness does not have to include reconciliation, where both sides work to create a healthy and peaceful ongoing relationship. Forgiveness is a personal decision to not allow anger, hurt and resentment to control your life, and to forgive someone who has wronged you, even if they don't deserve it.

Learning to let go and forgive isn't always easy, but when we truly forgive, it helps foster better health, better relationships, a deeper sense of purpose and self worth and a feeling of connection to others. The healing power of forgiveness reached international attention after the end of apartheid in South Africa when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission helped to bring the bitterly divided nation together after decades of segregation and violence.

Because of its importance, there several days devoted to forgiveness and reconciliation. Advice columnist Ann Landers is responsible for popularizing the April 2 celebration of Reconciliation Day, as a day to try to try to patch up a broken or strained relationship. In South Africa, Reconciliation Day is celebrated on December 16. The Worldwide Forgiveness Alliance promotes the first Sunday in August as International Forgiveness Day, hoping to spread awareness about the healing power of forgiveness to create "a safer, more joyful and peaceful world."

Do One Thing for a Better World

1. Find out more about the power of forgiveness and reconciliation
2. Think about someone who has wronged you and work towards forgiving them
3. Seek forgiveness from someone you have wronged

Forgiveness Links

- Campaign for Forgiveness Research (forgiving.org)
- Campaign for Love & Forgiveness (fetzer.org/LoveAndForgive)
- The Forgiveness Project (theforgivenessproject.com)
- Forgiveness Web (forgivenessweb.com)
- Worldwide Forgiveness Alliance (forgivenessday.org)

DO ONE THING

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