

The background of the entire page is a warm, golden sunset over a body of water. Two hands are shown in silhouette, holding each other. The hand on the left is wearing a lace-trimmed sleeve, and the hand on the right is wearing a white sleeve. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow and reflecting off the water's surface.

Beyond Forgiveness

A New Possibility for Transcendent Living

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I have been a "church-goer" my entire life.

My mom is a staunch Catholic, and despite being a single mother with three young kids, she would pack us up every Saturday evening or Sunday morning to head off to Mass. Without exceptions.

After years of Catholicism, as a young adult, I wanted to continue exploring my relationship with God, so I went off to a conservative evangelical college where I studied the Bible and attended a chapel service daily.

With my religious upbringing and my natural curiosity towards spirituality, you could say that over the years, I have heard about forgiveness a lot!

Studying different spiritual traditions over the decades, I have come to see the role of forgiveness in many different ways.

Most of us know that forgiveness is far better than holding a grudge, blaming others, and being "right," but when we look closely on the idea of forgiveness, we might find one major flaw, one egregious limitation.

What are you saying when you forgive someone?

It is a loving decision, a generous gesture, indeed.

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You are willing to put the offending slight or the upset or the crossed line behind you. You are eager to move on without holding the other person in perpetual servitude of your anger, resentment, and hostility. You are, in essence, saying, "It's ok. I can live with this and with you despite what you did to me."

And that is the whole problem with the traditional notion of forgiveness: it communicates that something was done "to you" and that you were the victim of someone else's wrongdoing.

It says that whatever happened in that situation should not have happened or should not have happened in that way.

To say, "I forgive you" sets you apart from or even "above" the "offending person."

Forgiving can perpetuate a sense of victim consciousness rather than acceptance of the spiritual tenant that all things are working together for the greater good.

Yes, all things!

Even those things that we have determined to be inappropriate or hurtful.

You probably heard many times that the quality of your life depends not on what happens to you, but on what you make of what happens to you.

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Maybe you even believe it to be true.

But hold on for one second.

There is one more level underneath it all.

There is "what happens to you", there is also "what you make of what happens to you" and then there is all that determines "what you make of what happens to you."

Why do you respond the way you do?

What is the driver behind your every decision, word, and action?

What makes you act the way you act and be who you are?

It's your vibe that does all of that, it's your vibe that determines who you are.

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How you perceive everything that happens in life is called your level of consciousness or, more simply, your vibe.

Your vibe refers to the vibratory pattern created by your beliefs, emotions, attitudes, and thoughts (your "BEAT" creates your vibe).

Your vibe - ultimately - is what gives you your experience of life.

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And that's why your life has less to do with what happens to you, even less to do with how you respond to everything that is happening around you and more about what happens WITHIN YOU.

But how does that relate to forgiveness, you ask.

Let's look at how consciousness and forgiveness intersect across the consciousness spectrum.

First - what is the consciousness spectrum?

There are four different levels or ways of relating to life.

The first level is called "Survival Consciousness."

This is where life is happening to you.

In this level of consciousness, you might hear someone say, "I wish this didn't happen to me. Why did he do that to me? Why is it always me?"

At this level, people feel as if they are the victim and are unable to bring acceptance to the relationship or experience.

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In survival, there is a lot of blaming others, holding a grudge, feeling victimized, and being resigned that life and circumstances don't "go my way."

The next level is called "Stress Consciousness."

At this level, people feel burdened by how hard life is and therefore are angry a lot!

They are not inclined to forgive, as they often feel entitled, justified, and sometimes downright pleased with their hostile stance.

People who live in this consciousness feel they must work hard and do what is necessary to get ahead.

Forgiveness or acceptance might be present if it is seen as bringing benefit but is offered for altruistic sake.

The third level is called "Transformation Consciousness."

People who live at this level are able and willing to practice acceptance because they value the qualities of relatedness, connection, peace, and harmony.

There is less harsh judgment at this level because there is a belief that people are generally good and doing the best they can.

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There is no sense of entitlement or revenge, and anger is not carried within nor lashed outward.

The highest consciousness level is called "Transcendence Consciousness."

People at this level live in ongoing acceptance of life and all circumstances as a continuous expression of God's constant good and activity.

At this level, one can reconcile all experiences and embrace the "good with the bad" because the dichotomy of good and bad no longer exist in the same way.

At this level, people don't feel the need to forgive anyone anything because they accept everyone and everything as is.

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As you can see, within this model, with only four levels of consciousness to climb, the higher your consciousness, the less need you ever feel to forgive others.

Why?

Because at the highest level of consciousness, you see life unfolding as it should.

You have less or no judgment.

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You see events as mere occurrences, not the things that happen "to you."

Life is.

Neither good nor bad, just is.

When you recognize that your life is always unfolding FOR you rather than TO you, what is there to forgive?

At the highest level, nothing is against you; therefore, there is no need to forgive.

There is only acceptance, love, and a deep and abiding willingness to surrender one's opinion about what happens in life.

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This may sound right now like a lofty theory or philosophy – but it is an incredibly powerful way to live.

Know anyone who never or rarely gets upset, who never loses their cool, who always has kind words to everyone, even those who are unkind to them; someone who is always in a good mood and smiling, someone who feels good to be around?

I'm sure you know people who feel like sunshine.

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I have personally had to deal with numerous situations in which people have wondered how I can continue to relate to people who "did that to me" in years past.

The difference is that I don't feel that anyone can do anything to me.

I accept what has occurred in my life.

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Accept the people, the circumstances, the disappointments and hurts as a vitally important part of your life and you will know peace. Every situation has come together to impact you and create you precisely as you are today.

To call any part of your journey "bad" or suggest that something "shouldn't have happened" would assert that what made you who you are was somehow not right.

But it was all right.

It was all very, very right – because you are perfect, whole, and complete just as you are.

As you grow in consciousness, you get to live with greater acceptance, more profound tolerance, deeper compassion, and unconditional love rather than judgment.

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And unconditional love does not judge.

No one "wronged you," and nothing requires your forgiveness.

It's the judgment and expectations that require the existence of forgiveness.

Every time you judge another or judge yourself, you create negative energy in your vitality.

You are a conduit of energy, and when you accept life, people, and circumstances just as they are, you become radiant and glowing, with no blocks or barriers.

Judgment causes your cells to vibrate in a very dissonant way.

It creates a contraction in your energy that limits your feeling of freedom, ease, and flow.

Always remember that all of your thoughts are energy.

Your emotions are energy.

Anytime you have a judgmental view, recognize it, and realize that you can choose a new thought or emotion right there.

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As you move through your day, notice when you feel a contraction, or when your stomach and muscles tighten.

Relax.

Every time you feel this, recognize that life is allowing you to grow and transcend in consciousness.

Therefore, count it as a blessing.

If you are carrying some emotional reaction to something that someone said or did, bless it.

Recognize that it is your opportunity to accept it.

And as you accept life as it is, as it unfolds around you, you grow.

Let no opportunity be wasted.

Release the hold your emotions and judgment have over you.

Consciousness is a powerful force.

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You are always creating through the power of your energy. The goal of your life is to learn to create deliberately, with awareness, and manifest the life you were born to lead.

So, forgive when you cannot fully embrace and accept what has occurred, but when you can, as often as you can, practice the higher path of unconditional love and acceptance, and I will bet that you will find less and less need ever to forgive.

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