

Gratitude

Forgiveness and Atonement

Study and Practice Guide



As I enter today's lessons, I have these thoughts, questions and feelings.

What is your understanding of gratitude in forgiveness and atonement?

What are your questions about forgiveness and atonement?



Reflections

Reflection is one form of contemplative practice. Through reflection, the questions provoke inquiry, thoughtful reflection, and conscious awareness of what is being learned or revealed to us in our inner work. You are also provided with a set of questions.

Take this opportunity to identify the questions that draw your attention. Select two or three questions that are meaningful to you and explore them deeply.

- **What has been your experience with forgiveness in your daily life?**
 - Consider your experience with gratitude in terms of the portals of health, relationship, finance and protection.
 - Where has forgiveness been present?
 - Where are you feeling in need of forgiveness?

- ***Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow. ~Melody Beattie***
 - What do these words summon as you consider their meaning and intention?
 - What meaning do you draw from these words?
 - As a blessing?
 - As learnings?
 - Your experience of mercies?
 - Protections given to you and that you provide to others?

- **How might expressions of forgiveness enhance your relationships at work? In your family? Within your community?**
 - How do you remember those persons who harmed you?
 - What is the work you need to do to have forgiveness?

- **When you experience suffering or harm, how do you maintain hope and a capacity to trust?**
 - Where are the concealed mercies?
 - Where are you experiencing the presence of mercy and forgiveness in your life?

- **What self-forgiveness work is being revealed to you?**
 - What is the reparation or act of mercy that will enable you to forgive yourself and others?
 - What is it that you are not prepared to forgive?

- **What are you now aware of in your need for forgiveness?**
 - What are the truths to acknowledge in your journey?
 - Consider the openings for mercies that may come to you through gratitude.



Practices in Gratitude

The journey of personal discovery can take many pathways. There are multiple ways of processing our understandings. The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society has identified the multiple routes of contemplative practice. These may include:

- Stillness - of meditation and silence
- Generative activities - of visualization, beholding and loving kindness meditation
- Creative activities - journaling, singing, improvisation and the arts
- Activism - acts of social justice and pilgrimage
- Relational - through deep listening, storytelling and dialogue
- Movement - yoga, meditative dance or walking
- Ritual/Cyclical - Retreats, ceremonies, establishing personal/sacred space

We are each different in our emotional intelligences and how we come to understanding.

An array of practices is offered to support you in your development of a grateful life.

Note Your Learning

Forgiveness is a form of gratitude. When we forgive others, we show them the mercy that we have often received and been thankful for.
Sarah Ban Breathnach

- Reflect upon these words and consider,
- How has gratitude shaped your capacity to forgive?
- What are you learning?

Journaling

Research has shown that gratitude is enhanced by daily journaling on gratitude.

Start a journal and record where you find gratitude each day, whether it is in thought, words, or deeds.

Practice Gratitude

In your daily meditation, recite this verse from the Avatamsaka Sutra:

*For all the harmful things I've done, with my body, speech and mind,
from beginningless greed, anger and stupidity,
through lifetimes without number, to this very day;
I now repent and I vow,
to change entirely.*

Speak with Others about Gratitude

Share your learnings about gratitude with others.

You may do this through participation in the discussion forum or gather your friends or associates to talk about gratitude.

Take a Daily Action in Gratitude

Identify the place in your life where gratitude, compassion, service, mercy or reciprocity have meaning. Do one thing each day support that purpose.

- **Make amends in one or two areas of your life.**
- What actions are you ready to take?

Daily Reflection

Take pause daily to reflect and affirm the mercies in your life for which you feel gratitude.

Meditate on the Three-Part Practice of Forgiveness

Part 1: Asking forgiveness from those you have harmed

The first step to forgiveness is to explore our humility. It requires a recognition of the thoughts, words and actions that we have taken that were harmful or wrong, even if in response to a wrongdoing from another. It is finding the truth of what we have done.

During the meditation, reflect upon these words:

“If I have hurt or harmed anyone, knowingly or unknowingly, I ask their forgiveness.”

Accept whatever images, people, events, or memories come to you, release your guilt by asking for forgiveness:

“I ask your forgiveness.”

Part 2: Offering forgiveness to those who have harmed you

In time, the process will move to an opening for the capacity to offer forgiveness to those who have harmed you. Judgment of others breaks away as we acknowledge our own wrong. This is a place of honoring the intention in our minds. The thoughts and impulses to seek revenge and harm the wrongdoer dissolve. There is a search in the heart to do no harm to the other. This will take much time. Slowly the focus is to wish no harm and to forgive.

Use this recitation:

“If anyone has hurt or harmed me, knowingly or unknowingly, I forgive them.”

If there are thoughts of a person or memory that comes to mind, repeat:

“I forgive you.”

Part 3: Offering forgiveness to yourself

There are ways that we harm ourselves or others. Things that we failed for which we hold guilt and shame. It is time to let go of the unkindness toward yourself.

The work of forgiving yourself is supported with these words:

“For all of the ways I have hurt or harmed myself, knowingly or unknowingly, I offer forgiveness.”

From Lovingkindness by Sharon Salzberg

<https://tricycle.org/trikedaily/three-ways-practice-forgiveness/>



Affirmations of Gratitude

Affirmations offer inspiration and support in building the capacity to identify and remember gratitude each day. The audio download provides affirmations that you may choose to adopt and practice. From research, we know that something must be repeated 7 times to be remembered. Each affirmation within the audio download is repeated 7 times so that you may remember the words. The affirmations are also provided here, in print so that you may place them in front of you, at your choosing.

I love you.

I forgive you.

I forgive myself.

I trust that by forgiving you, I will end the suffering we share.

I am grateful for the opportunity to make peace.



List of Quotes

Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.

Melody Beattie

“Ingratitude is the essence of vileness”.

Immanuel Kant

Forgiveness is a form of gratitude. When we forgive others, we show them the mercy that we have often received and been thankful for.

Sarah Ban Breathnach

“Our attitudes of ungratefulness cause us, and those around us, much suffering. When we release them, the gratitude portal of mercy open wide within. We are able to forgive. We can embody kindness. Merciful actions, whether extended to others or received from them, become fortunate moments for which we are immediately grateful. All acts of mercy produce healing and restore the soul.”

Angeles Arrien

For all the harmful things I've done, with my body, speech and mind, from beginningless greed, anger and stupidity, through lifetimes without number, to this very day; I now repent and I vow, to change entirely.

Avatasaka Sutra

“Forgiveness says you are given another chance for making a new beginning.”

Desmond Tutu

“When I harm another, whether intentionally or not, I inevitably harm myself. I become less than I am meant to be. I become less than I am capable of being. When I harm another, I need to restore what I have taken from that person. Or make a gesture of recompense. I need to restore what I have lost within myself through my harmful words or actions.”

Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu

“Atonement...refer(s) to an act that rights a wrong, makes amends, repairs harm, offers restitution, attempts compensation, clears the conscience of the offender, relieves the anger of the victim, and serves justice with a sacrifice commensurate with the harm that has been done.”

Phil Cousineau

“Use the present to repair the past, and prepare the future.”

George Ivanovich Gurdijeff

“One is responsible for one’s deeds; nobody can transfer mistakes to another, and nobody can escape the results of behavior. There is one exception to this rule. Repentance can erase negative consequences - that is, the ultimate repentance that reveals the true nature of the self.”

Reverend Heng Sure

“Trust yourself to open to forgiveness. Believe that you can redeem horrible acts by your own vulnerability. Let go of anything that separates you from other human beings. In so doing you honor all those lost. Your act of forgiveness holds their story in its highest possible glory. And you honor life itself; There could be no greater legacy.”

Phillip Moffitt



Recommended Reading

Arrien, Angeles. *Living in Gratitude: Mastering the Art of Giving Thanks Every Day, A Month-by-Month Guide*. Boulder, Colorado: Sounds True. 2013.

Cousineau, Phil. *Beyond Forgiveness: Reflections on Atonement*. Jossey-Bass. 2011.

Luskin, Fred. *Forgive for Good: A Proven Prescription for Health and Happiness*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco. 2003.

Tutu, Desmond and Tutu, Mpho. *The Book of Forgiving*. Harper Collins Publishers. 2014.

Additional Credits

American Psychological Association. *Forgiveness: A Sampling of Research Findings*. The American Psychological Association. Washington DC: Office of International Affairs. Reprinted 2008. Taken May 22, 2018 from <https://www.apa.org/international/resources/publications/forgiveness.pdf>.

Moffitt, Phillip. *Forgiving the Unforgivable*. Dharma Wisdom. Taken May 22, 2018 from <http://dharmawisdom.org/teachings/articles/forgiving-unforgivable2>.

Salzberg, Sharon. *Three Ways to Practice Forgiveness*. May 22, 2017. Tricycle. Taken May 22, 2018 from <https://tricycle.org/trikedaily/three-ways-practice-forgiveness/>.

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About Sean Fargo



Mindfulness Coaching and Consulting

Founder, MindfulnessExercises.com

Former Buddhist monk of two years

Certified Instructor for Search Inside Yourself

Leadership Institute (*mindfulness program at Google*)

Certified Integral Coach (*from New Ventures West*)

"I blend a combination of depth and practicality to my mindfulness and meditation teachings."

Mindfulness Coaching

In person and via Skype, I coach individuals and teams on a variety of mindfulness skills, holding them accountable for growth.

Classes and Workshops

Lasting between thirty minutes and two days, my classes and workshops introduce key mindfulness practices into organizations for sustainable success.

Program Development

My science-based mindfulness programs infuse a sense of energy and focus into organization's cultures.