

## Table of Contents

Welcome to *Forgiveness – The Crown Jewel of Personal Freedom* guide.

Welcome Letter from Azim Khamisa	3
Listen to CD 1	
Forgiveness the Crown Jewel of Personal Freedom	4
Step 1 – Acknowledge You Have Been Wronged	7
Pre-questionnaire	8
Step 1 Activities	11
Listen to CD 2	
Step 2 – Giving Up All Resulting Resentment	15
Step 2 Activities	15
Listen to CD 3	
Step 3 – Reach Out	21
Step 3 Activities	23
Summary	25
Post Questionnaire	26
Suggestions	28
Resources – Foundations and Websites	29
A Glossary of Feeling Words	30
Contact Information	32

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[www.azimkhamisa.com](http://www.azimkhamisa.com)

My Dear Friend:

Let me first acknowledge your courage to embark on this journey and create personal freedom in your life! It takes fortitude and courage to live life in a meaningful way – a life that contributes to your personal growth, the growth of your loved ones and the growth of society as a whole.

Through extensive media coverage, numerous documentaries, video presentation, hundreds of public appearances, dozens of feature articles and television exposé's, and my book, "*Azim's Bardo – From Murder To Forgiveness: A Fathers Journey*" my message of Forgiveness has reached millions. However, I believe this CD series is perhaps the most powerful tool on Forgiveness and the most in-depth account of my journey since my son Tariq's death.

I have learned there is much wisdom contained in Gandhi's advice; "Become the change you wish to create in this world". In my own life – the forgiveness choice I made in the aftermath of my son's tragic death has healed me, my family and loved ones. As a result of this work – I enjoy an abundance of personal freedom and am able to contain much joy and compassion in my life. My stress level has almost disappeared. I am confident that this work – followed diligently can create the same results for you. My best wishes to each of you - who have chosen to courageously embark on this journey and I offer my sincere prayers that the Universe grants you the blessing of forgiveness as it did me!

I dedicate this work to Tariq, my son – for reconnecting me with my heart and soul and to my daughter Tasreen and new grandson Shahin Tariq Alaei– for keeping that connection alive. I also dedicate this work to my good friend Reverend Wendy Craig-Purcell who was the first person to inspire me to do this work almost three years ago. Many individuals have asked for this program since then and I feel very blessed and happy it is now available!

I would also like to acknowledge my professional team Cindy and Terry Trushel for making this work possible. I truly appreciate and am grateful for their dedication, heartfelt effort and expertise to help make this work a reality.

My very best wishes for love, happiness and world peace:

*Azim N. Khamisa*

## **Forgiveness – The Crown Jewel of Personal Freedom**

Presented in the CD series and this accompanying workbook you will find a practical three-step approach to forgiveness. In many ways, activating the power of forgiveness in your life is like building a muscle that has not been strengthened for a while. In the beginning, you will have to practice the process and as you build your “forgiveness muscle” and through this regular activity, your muscle will develop more tone, integrity and coordination. In time, the process will become a much more natural part of your life.

Forgiveness is a state of being which can help you deal with painful incidents from your past in an honest direct way. It helps you to find the inner peace that can come from developing yourself and your attitudes beyond the state of automatic reactions or defenses. By adopting an attitude of forgiveness you allow yourself to release the excess baggage of toxic emotions such as HATE, ANGER, RAGE and RESENTMENT. Baggage that has been weighing you down and holding you back from experiencing more LOVE, JOY, PEACE, COMPASSION and FULFILLMENT.

Often times, many of us hold onto negativity because we mistakenly believe the other person or persons involved in the situation(s) that caused us the pain, anger, hatred, guilt, sadness, fear, and/or resentment are affected by our actions and thoughts. When someone has hurt us, a part of us often wants him or her to hurt as much as we are hurting. We somehow believe justice would be to have them experience our pain, so we hold on to the negative experience.

*“The man who opts for revenge should dig two graves.”*

Chinese proverb

Holding onto these negative experiences attaches a weighted burden to our Soul. We begin to invest in hate and not healing. Unfortunately, when we hold onto these negative emotions we are restricting our own inner power and keeping ourselves from growing on many levels. One of the most liberating and freeing ways to move beyond the experiences that have kept us imprisoned is to **Forgive**.

Putting off the act of forgiveness until tomorrow is an easy thing to do. In fact, it takes the form of a habit, which tends to run on autopilot, decreasing the likelihood for change. The longer you put forgiveness off the easier it become to put it off to another day. Without a willful act of consciousness on your part, combined with a sincere desire and intention to have more of the good things in life, the life-stealing pattern is likely to continue unchecked.

Numerous studies and research has shown the individuals who forgive are happier and healthier. While on the other hand, individuals who opt not to

forgive, generally continue to suffer endlessly. The emotional cost of refusing to forgive is far greater than most people realize.

Forgiveness is a major step in spiritual growth and personal development. Forgiveness brings more balance, peace, compassion and harmony into your life. As you move beyond the negative experiences of your past you will begin to open up and create more room to receive more love, joy, happiness, contentment and peace.

The purpose of this workbook is to assist you by taking you through a simple step-by-step process of preparing for and taking the action of forgiveness. Just by taking the time to follow these simple steps you are likely to experience like so many others, profound changes in areas of your life which matter most to you. It may be your health, family, spirituality, career, or relationships where you notice the improvements.

In preparing to begin the forgiveness exercises in this workbook allow yourself time each week to focus on a few exercises. The forgiveness process is a practice and begins by taking the essential first step. Forgiveness is a prescription for health and happiness. Congratulations on the choice to begin healing yourself so you may experience more life, freedom, beauty, love and peace.

According to Webster's New World Dictionary – "Forgiveness is the act of giving up resentment against another or the desire for punishment of another". The thought-action process of "Forgiving" is the step that allows you to stop being angry and/or judgmental towards another and to start feeling better about yourself. The origin of the word "Forgiveness" comes from the root word "Forgiving" which allows you to freely release or give up any collection of negative thoughts you may have about others or yourself and in exchange you will begin to feel good about your life, yourself, and others, as well as feeling more peaceful, joyous and loved.

### **Forgiveness is:**

- A gift you give to yourself
- A choice
- An important key to your own happiness
- Choosing to let go of the past and move on and beginning a brighter future
- Taking negative emotions and turning them into something positive
- Breaking the cycle of hatred, resentment, anger and pain
- A transforming experience fostering more positive emotions and less negative thoughts about others as well as oneself
- A Practice which pays lifetime benefits

## Benefits to Forgiveness

- Increased feelings of love
- Enhanced capacity to trust
- Profoundly reduces stress
- Freedom from the control of events of the past
- Improved physical health
- A tool for enhancing existing interpersonal relationships
- Decreased levels of anger and hostility
- Improved ability to control anger
- More capacity for love and joy
- A calm disposition

*To err is human, to forgive is divine.*

Alexander Pope

## The Myths of Forgiveness

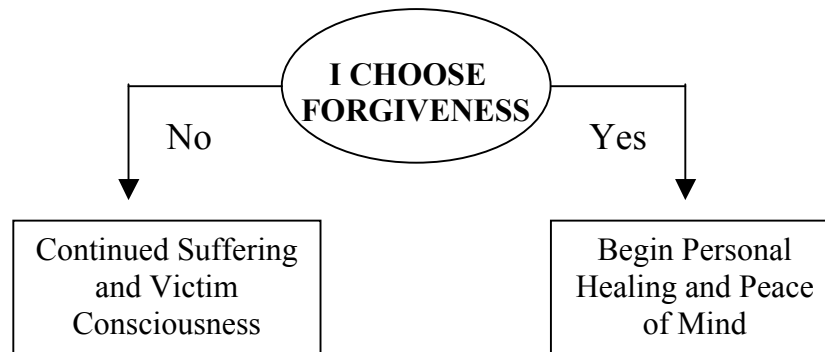
- Forgive and Forget
- Forgiveness removes consequences
- Forgiveness is acting as though it did not happen
- Forgiveness is a quick fix
- Forgiveness is a sign of weakness
- Forgiveness is an event
- Forgiveness is pardoning, condoning, or excusing the behavior
- Forgiveness removes consequences

## Step 1 Acknowledge You Have Been Wronged

Forgiveness is a gift you give yourself.

Refusal to forgive hurts you – not them. Our refusal to forgive is a second injury we do to ourselves after the initial wound.

You have a choice as to how you desire to live your life. The diagram below helps to identify where you are in your forgiveness process.



Staying the victim of an incident brings you these benefits.

- No personal accountability
- The right to sympathy and pity, the “poor me syndrome”
- The right to BLAME
- The belief you deserve special treatment in life
- No expectation of responsibility
- Do not have to participate in society
- Justification for disengaging from life, giving up
- A rational excuse for not contributing to life

Choosing Forgiveness brings you these benefits.

*(Additional benefits are listed on page 6)*

- Relief from depression and resentment
- More positive outlook on life
- Increased happiness, love, joy, peace and fulfillment in your daily life
- Ability to establish new and more intimate relationships
- Friendlier, more tolerance for others and situations
- The beginning of a new life, a sense of rebirth and renewal
- More life energy and an opportunity for more vibrant health
- Deep compassion
- Self assuredness and confidence
- A sense of freedom and liberation
- Quality of life (There is no sustainability to life being a victim)

Prior to starting on your exercises for part one of the CD series make arrangements to find a quiet place where you will be free to contemplate and go inward without any interruption or disturbance. Turn the phone off and make sure the other people in your home understand you would require 30 minutes of quiet time. Make sure you will have at least 30 minutes uninterrupted so you will have plenty of time to fully complete this section.

To assist you with identifying where you are on your own personal path of forgiveness and creating peace and healing in your life we have designed a pre-questionnaire to help you assess your thoughts, feelings and behaviors related to forgiveness. You may find that by simply reading the check-in questionnaire statements and answering them you will be moved toward creating more peace in your life.



## Pre-Questionnaire Check-In

Think about one specific situation you want to transform through forgiveness. Read each statement and rate each one based on the extent of your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Circle the number that best matches where you are.

1 = Strongly disagree      2 – Disagree      3 – Neutral  
4 – Agree      5 – Strongly agree

1. I am going to make them pay for what they have done to me.  
Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree
2. I am going to get even.  
Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree
3. I replay the incident in my mind, sometimes even dwelling on it.  
Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree
4. When I think about the incident I feel anger, resentment or hatred.  
Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree
5. I can understand where they were coming from when they did what they did.  
Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree
6. I have a clear ability to see their good attributes.  
Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree
7. My resentment is gone.  
Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree
8. I pray for them and ask for them to be forgiven for what they have done.  
Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree
9. I feel peace when I think of the incident and the individual(s) involved.  
Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree
10. I keep as much distance between them and me as possible.  
Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

11. I speak of this person with kind and affirmative words.

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

12. When I share the story of what happened I tell it from a neutral position and explain how I have grown from the experience in a positive way.

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

13. I live my life as if they do not exist and never did exist.

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

14. I took steps toward reconciliation, I wrote them or called them and tried to reconnect with them.

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

15. I looked for where the break down was and where the real source of the problem was to try and correct it.

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

After completing the pre-questionnaire check-in write down where you feel you are on your path of forgiveness.

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1. Identify the personal benefits you will receive if you choose NOT to forgive.

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2. To begin the forgiveness process, at first we must identify what the personal benefits are to us and why we should embark on this journey.

Identify the personal benefits you will receive for choosing to forgive.

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3. Once we have chosen to embark on the forgiveness path we discover it becomes a journey where we have the opportunity to practice forgiveness. To assist us in being able to forgive the bigger situations where others have had a detrimental effect on our lives we will start with identifying 3 different situations where we want to practice forgiveness. Of the three you list below identify one minor incident, one moderate incident and one major incident where you would like to apply the process of forgiveness. Decide, now, what 3 people you want to forgive. This person can be living or deceased. It can be someone from far back in your past or from a current relationship. It can be someone you know casually or someone you know very well. The first 3 people that come to your mind are a good choice for this exercise. One of the people you choose can also be you.

**3a. Minor Incident.** Select an incident that you consider minor. Pick traffic situation, a rude sales clerk or something that will be easy to forgive.

What happened? When?

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Who caused it? Who do you blame? Why?

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What was your reaction? Resulting consequences?

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**3b. Moderate Incident.** Select an incident that is more significant. Pick a situation with a friend or someone in your family, or something that is a little more significant to be forgiven.

What happened? When?

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Who caused it? Who do you blame? Why?

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What was your reaction? Resulting consequences?

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**3c. Major Incident.** Select an incident that is major. Pick a situation that has been bothering you for a long time and even upsets you when you think of it. This example is one that has a real charge for you.

What happened? When?

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Who caused it? Who do you blame? Why?

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What was your reaction? Resulting consequences?

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4. The next step is to share with someone the experiences where you have been wronged. It is very important to create an environment where you feel safe to share your experience and you will be honored and not judged and the individual will objectively listen to you. Since learning to forgive takes practice it is very important to begin with someone you trust and feel safe.

- Identify which incident from the above examples you have written out you are going to share. Know exactly how you feel about what happened and be able to articulate what about the situation was not okay.
- Identify the person you are going to share your story with.

- Explain to this person you are in the process of building your forgiveness muscle and you are asking their assistance. Share with them the first step is to acknowledge you have been wronged and you would like to have them listen to you share your experience. **Make sure they understand you only want them to listen.** It is important for you to share your story and be heard.
- Once you have shared your story with someone and you have acknowledged to someone you have been wronged journal below your experience. Make a commitment to yourself to continue building your forgiveness muscle. Forgiveness is for you.
- If your forgiveness process is based on the loss of a love one be sure to honor your grieving period. In the Sufi tradition after a loved ones passes the grieving time is 40 days. Grieve for a prescribed number of days or hours. Be sure to have a sunset on your grieving. You will know when to stop if you create that intention.

5. Complete the above process for all three of your experiences you identified in exercise 3a – 3c. Be sure to journal about each experience after you have shared your feelings with someone.

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## **Step 2 Give Up All Resulting Resentment: *Allowing Your Life to Get Lighter and Brighter***

Giving up all resulting resentment is the stage in the forgiveness process when we decide to look at who we are, how we want to be and how we choose to experience the rest of our life. This step comes after we have experienced enough pain from our memories of the past, we have relived the experience and grief enough to put the past to rest. We realize at this point our willingness to Forgive is an attitude and behavior, which will serve us the rest of our life. There is immense personal healing from just deciding which attitudes and behaviors we want to let go of so we can begin to envision and experience our life free from the resentment, anger or even hatred we have carried for so long. This critical choice point is a pivotal decision that happens at a “soul-ular” level, which is even deeper than cellular. It is the soul’s cry for a deeper experience of love, peace, joy and fulfillment.

*When you hold resentment toward another, you are bound to that person or condition by an emotional link that is stronger than steel. Forgiveness is the only way to dissolve that link and get free.*

**Catherine Ponder**

True forgiveness can only occur once you’ve have allowed yourself to feel the depth of feelings associated with the experience you have been through. Once you have worked through those feelings the road to restoring our lost sense of self will begin to emerge. Forgiveness allows us to get back onto the road of living a fulfilled life. Without giving up all resulting resentment we will be held hostage to our past and will never be able to release those binding memories and grow beyond them.

There is perhaps no greater personal tool for healing than forgiveness. When we allow ourselves to forgive we are truly demonstrating an important element of self-love and an acknowledgement we are ready for a lighter and brighter future.

1. Over the next week allow yourself to read this affirmation to yourself in the mirror. Affirmations help us to shift from one state of consciousness to another. Affirmations are an easy way to acknowledge a new way of being or thinking.

Today I understand the true meaning of forgiveness. I now understand to forgive someone else is to free myself of the pain I have been holding onto. When I hold onto anger, hatred or resentment in my mind, my unconscious mind does not know whom those feelings are meant for. By choosing to let go of those feelings I am no longer a container for the resentment I have been holding onto. To forgive allows me to let go and release from my body, mind and spirit the cycle of pain I have allowed myself to get caught up into. I am choosing to forgive as an

act of love for myself. I am free and moving on to live in a state of grace. Forgiveness allows me to experience a fuller life and to heal from my past.

2. After you have read this affirmation for a week you may choose to write your own affirmation of forgiveness. Carry it with you and read it when you feel the need to remember the gift forgiveness brings to you. Affirmations can become meditations and meditation can become prayer.

Some affirmation examples:

I am willing to release the part of me that becomes angry when I think of you. I forgive you.

I forgive you and I release you. My forgiveness for you is complete. I am free to go my separate way and you are free to go your separate way.

I forgive you, because like you I also make mistakes. I know no one is perfect. My heart is more open as a result of forgiveness. I pray the same is true for you.

Write your affirmations here.

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3. Moving from resentment to compassion is the step required to become the master of your feelings. Mastering your feelings requires you to decide not to take angry or vengeful actions against those who have hurt you from your past. You will have to give up all desires to harm this individual for whatever reason. This is the step where you let all vengeance go to begin experiencing a personal sense of peace.

With the individuals you have identified in the first series of exercises in 3a-c complete the following.



**Minor Incident Person:** \_\_\_\_\_

With your attention on the person repeat this statement to yourself as you write the statement on the lines below the statement.

Just like me, (their name) is seeking happiness in his/her life.

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Just like me, (their name) is trying to avoid suffering in his/her life.

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Just like me, (their name) has had behavior that was motivated by fear.

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Just like me, (their name) has known sorrow, loss, loneliness and hopelessness in his/her life.

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Just like me, (their name) is seeking fulfillment in his/her life.

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Just like me, (their name) is learning about life.

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Just like me, (their name) acted in ways, which if offered an opportunity would make a different decision.

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Just like me, (their name) is not perfect.

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Just like me, (their name) is (write a statement that applies to your situation).

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**Moderate Incident Person:** \_\_\_\_\_

With your attention on the person repeat this statement to yourself as you write the statement on the lines below the statement.

Just like me, (their name) is seeking happiness in his/her life.

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Just like me, (their name) is trying to avoid suffering in his/her life.

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Just like me, (their name) has had behavior that was motivated by fear.

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Just like me, (their name) has known sorrow, loss, loneliness and hopelessness in his/her life.

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Just like me, (their name) is seeking fulfillment in his/her life.

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Just like me, (their name) is learning about life.

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Just like me, (their name) acted in ways, which if offered an opportunity would make a different decision.

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Just like me, (their name) is not perfect.

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Just like me, (their name) is (write a statement that applies to your situation).

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**Major Incident Person:** \_\_\_\_\_

With your attention on the person repeat this statement to yourself as you write the statement on the lines below the statement.

Just like me, (their name) is seeking happiness in his/her life.

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Just like me, (their name) is trying to avoid suffering in his/her life.

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Just like me, (their name) has had behavior that was motivated by fear.

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Just like me, (their name) has known sorrow, loss, loneliness and hopelessness in his/her life.

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Just like me, (their name) is seeking fulfillment in his/her life.

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Just like me, (their name) is learning about life.

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Just like me, (their name) acted in ways, which if offered an opportunity would make a different decision.

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Just like me, (their name) is not perfect.

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Just like me, (their name) is (write a statement that applies to your situation).

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4. Creating Goodwill patterns in your life helps us to remember we have chosen to forgive the individual and we accept them for who they are. You may choose to say or write these statements.

With your attention on the person you forgive repeat this statement to yourself and/or write the statement as you say it.

(State their name), you do not have to change for me to practice inner peace. You do not have to change for me to recognize, accept and develop the good in myself. You do not have to change for me to look for and recognize the good in you and tell it to others. You do not have to change for me to imagine the best that you and I, and our relationship could yet become.

(State their name), you do not have to change for me to understand my own needs and to act harmlessly to get them met. You do not have to change for me to seek to understand your needs the way they are from your position in life and with your history. You do not have to change for me to be willing to meet your needs, or help you meet your needs, if it is practical for me to do so. You do not have to change for me to be glad and joyful each day in my life.

(State their name), you do not have to change for me to step back and see the BIG PICTURE of the different viewpoints of everyone else and the interconnectedness of everything and everyone.

(State their name), you do not have to change for me to practice forgiveness, unconditional love and goodwill in both my thoughts and actions.

5. If you enjoy ritual you may choose to complete this exercise. Rituals can be very healing. Often when I visit my son Tariq's grave I bring incense and flowers. It is my way of honoring him with through a ritual.

- Write the name of a person you wish to forgive and what you are forgiving them for on a piece of paper and affirm you forgive them. Burn Sage around the paper and yourself to purify your energy and release the energy you were holding onto.
- Light a candle and acknowledge as you light the candle the flame represents the flame of forgiveness and you are forgiving this person and you release them and let them go. Also acknowledge you release yourself and let yourself go through the forgiveness.
- Release the person by throwing a rock over the edge of a cliff.
- Write their name on a piece of paper and throw the paper into a fire as you acknowledge you release them and let them go through forgiveness.

### Step 3 Reach Out

In this third and final step in Azim Khamisa's forgiveness process, it is important for you to realize there are certain times when reaching out to the perpetrator(s), group or organization may not be a viable option. For example, in some instances the perpetrator is not unknown, in which case "reaching out" is simply not an option. In other instances, the individual specific details of a circumstance would put an individual at further risk or create more problems rather than bring about the desired healing reconciliation. Regardless of your situation just know that this third step has many levels and degrees of completion, which are individually tied to the unique circumstances of the individual. Your safety is your responsibility and that must be your first and foremost concern.

Simply stated, use sound judgement about when, how and to what degree you can safely apply this final step in your own Forgiveness process. Here is a simple guide to follow if you're unsure on how to proceed.

1. Make Sure Your Decisions Honor Your Own Personal Safety
2. Listen To Your Own Intuition, Instinct and Wisdom Before You Proceed
3. If And When The Time Is Right To "Reach Out" You Will Know It, If You Are Unsure About The Timing Then Wait Until You Have Peaceful Certainty
4. There Is No Set Timetable For "Reaching Out" ...Take Your Time – Every Person Has Their Own Pace
5. Ultimately If You Are Unsure About Proceeding You Should Wait Until You Have Greater Clarity
6. No One Else Is Better Qualified To Advise You If And When To "Reach Out" Than You. Credentials, Degrees, and Education Do Not Necessarily Qualify An Individual To Tell You When The Time Is Right, You Are Your Own Best Judge. You May Choose To Never "Reach Out".
7. For Some Individuals, It Will Never Be Appropriate To "Reach Out" To The Perpetrator Face-To-Face In Daily Life. In Such Cases "Reaching Out" From A Distance Through Kind Thoughts Or Prayer May Constitute Completion
8. Your safety is our number one concern. This step if chosen to do is at your own risk. Be doubly sure your safety is never compromised as a result of this action. Feel free to get appropriate advice and assistance for this step.
9. In many states there are organizations that follow the tenets of Restorative Justice. These organizations have trained mediators to facilitate a victim offender reconciliation program,(VORP). I highly recommend the use of this resource as these mediations are conducted in a safe and secure environment. Contact someone at [www.restorativepractices.org](http://www.restorativepractices.org). There is an

abundance of information on Restorative Justice on the Internet. You can also read about this in Chapter 7 of my book.

Taking responsibility for your life is important part in the third step of forgiveness. This is an invitation for you to rise above the dis-empowering status quo of victim consciousness and embrace a higher level of personal responsibility for your life circumstances. Just the suggestion of such an idea may arouse feelings of anger and indignation inside of you. If so, that is fine.

If your curiosity has been stirred by the idea, though it sounds a little scary and strange, but you somehow have a sense it is the next step on your path to having a richer life, then consider the following information. It is important to try these concepts on knowing there may be aspects of your personality that do not want to leave the old familiar pity patterns which you've grown so accustomed and familiar to behind.

It may be helpful at this point to tell you what taking full responsibility for your life does not mean:

- It does not mean you take on guilt for what has happened to you
- It does not mean you excuse the behavior of the perpetrator
- It does not mean you should remove the punishment that are the social consequences your perpetrators behavior
- It does not mean you should forget about the incident or deny your feelings
- It does not mean you discount or dismiss the amount of pain or suffering you have endured

Taking Full Responsibility for your life is an Invitation to reclaim your personal power and recognize you are the master of your own fate and the shaper of your own destiny. Whether you understand the exact mechanism or not you do recognize there is an implicit order to life and all things are bound together by a series of Universal Laws. You are willing to accept there is something within you, which has attracted each and every circumstance into your life, though the reasons behind this mechanism of attraction may be completely unknown to you.

The exercises in this step require taking full responsibility for your life and completing the forgiveness cycle.

The immediate and complete forgiveness route is best accomplished in person and face-to-face. However face-to-face meetings may not be in your best interest. The exercises below are designed for situations where face-to-face can be applied. There are other exercises for situations where face-to-face are not an option.

## 1. The Forgiveness Appointment

In choosing whom you want to make your first Forgiveness appointment with we suggest you select from your minor or moderate situations earlier in the workbook.

Your safety is important. If you are selecting a perpetrator to forgive we suggest contacting someone with restorative justice program to assist you before proceeding with this exercise.

When you feel you would like to talk with the person you have forgiven make an appointment on your calendar to contact this individual.

Contact the individual and share with them you would like to meet with them. It is key to remember this step takes both sides. Sometimes the other individual is not ready or does not want to participate at this time. There is always timing to this particular step. Be patient and compassionate if the other individual is not ready to do this step.

If the other party agrees to meet then set a date and time and place where you will both be comfortable. Allow for at least an hour.

Prior to meeting with this individual review your workbook and journal. Prepare yourself to be able to share from your heart.

Go to the meeting appointment open-minded. You may experience pre-encounter emotions that will produce feelings of uneasiness and anxiety. The post encounter emotions will leave you feelings of joy, love, peace and calmness. The face-to-face encounter process will get easier and easier.

## 2. An option to the Forgiveness Appointment

If a face-to-face encounter is not an option write a letter to the person or persons you want to forgive. Explain in your letter what you would say if you were meeting them face-to-face.

Once you have completed the letter place it in an envelope and seal the envelope. On the outside write the statements

*"I forgive you, (Their name) and I set you free. I also set myself free."*

You may choose to burn the envelope in a fireplace or bury it.

## 3. Reconstructing your life means getting back on track or even setting a new direction.

Directing your new life path with goals is key to moving forward. Goals invite your attention and interest. Thinking about your goals renews your strength.

Make a list of 3 goals you are already pursuing or have thought about pursuing.

Rate the goals you are most interested in according to how they will assist you in

- Producing something of value to you
- Benefiting others equal to you
- Presenting an opportunity for self development
- Aligning with a broader goal for your community and humankind
- Expressing your personal creativity
- Presenting opportunities for personal recognition for your contribution

Once you have identified the 3 goals you are going to pursue and have rated them according to how they will assist you create an action step list for each one to identify what you need to do to accomplish these goals.

Set a timeline when you plan to complete the action steps identified for each goal.

4. How can you contribute in your community? Often times people want to be able to extend a helping hand to others who are experiencing a challenge in their life.

There are many ways you can contribute in your community. Consider volunteering at a non-profit organization or offer to speak at your church about your forgiveness experience.

If the state you live in is active in the Restorative Justice process contact the organization and ask how you can help.

We encourage you to become active in your community and volunteer where your contributions make a positive difference.

When considering volunteering in your community remember good compassionate deeds are spiritual currency. Doing good deeds for the community is amassing spiritual currency. This, unlike money, you get to take with you. Doing good deeds you can begin to contribute to others and your community. Often you will receive a personal healing as a bonus for giving.

On the 10th anniversary of Tariq's death Azim experienced gratitude for Tariq, rather than grief because of the work he has done in his son's name for children, teenagers and adults.

What action step can you take in the next week to volunteer in your community?

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## Summary

Each time we witness an act of forgiveness, we marvel at its power to heal, to break the seemingly unending cycle of pain. Forgiveness is something people aspire to do. The world is witnessing astonishing acts of forgiveness. Pope John Paul II made a comprehensive apology for the acts committed by the Roman Catholic Church against groups of people throughout history. Prime Minister Tony Blair, of the United Kingdom sought forgiveness for England's role in the Irish Potato Famine and following the September 11, 2001 attack on Americans, Palestine and Israeli officials issued orders to pull back from aggression and violence. The Truth and Reconciliation Committee led by Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu facilitated the forgiveness of countless atrocities committed by the apartheid movement in South Africa.

You know you have forgiven someone when he or she has harmless passage through your mind.

*Rev. Karyl Huntley*

Choice is always present in forgiveness. You do not have to forgive and there are consequences. Refusing to forgive by holding onto the anger, resentment and a sense of betrayal can make your own life miserable. There is nothing so bad that it cannot be forgiven. Nothing! Withholding forgiveness is choosing to remain the victim. Remember, you always have a choice.

Choosing to bring forgiveness into your life is not a repression or forgetting of the harm that has been done. It is a decision to heal oneself and no longer be controlled or diminished by the memory of it. Forgiveness is neutralizing the hostility and grudge built up in reaction to the harm we experienced. Once you have completed the 3-step process it is important to build your forgiveness muscle on a daily basis to avoid allowing resentment, hatred, or anger to build back up. Just as you brush your teeth each evening before bed it is equally important to review the day you have just experienced and forgive and release anyone who has irritated you or upset you during your day. Forgiveness is just a mental and emotional housecleaning.

The act of forgiving is a lot like any other exercise. You have to practice to become good at all. Just like we learned to get angry, we can also learn how to forgive. So instead of getting angry when your computer freezes up or your car runs out of gas or your significant other is late for dinner, practice forgiveness on these simple opportunities.

Learning and practicing forgiveness is an act of will. Consider keeping a journal of the forgiveness processes you have done, and harvest the wisdom you have gained from them. This journal will be a valuable resource in times of pain, tension, or distress. The key is remembering to do it! Remember forgiveness frees the forgiver! You do it for yourself! ☺

## Forgiveness Post-Questionnaire

Thinking about the specific situation you wanted to transform through forgiveness. Read each statement and rate each one based on the extent of your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Circle the number that best matches where you are.

1 = Strongly disagree      2 – Disagree      3 – Neutral  
4 – Agree      5 – Strongly agree

1. I am going to make them pay for what they have done to me.

Strongly disagree    1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

2. I am going to get even.

Strongly disagree    1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

3. I replay the incident in my mind, sometimes even dwelling on it.

Strongly disagree    1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

4. When I think about the incident I feel anger, resentment or hatred.

Strongly disagree    1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

5. I can understand where they were coming from when they did what they did.

Strongly disagree    1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

6. I have a clear ability to see their good attributes.

Strongly disagree    1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

7. My resentment is gone.

Strongly disagree    1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

8. I pray for them and ask for them to be forgiven for what they have done.

Strongly disagree    1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

9. I feel peace when I think of the incident and the individual(s) involved.

Strongly disagree    1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

10. I keep as much distance between them and me as possible.

Strongly disagree    1      2      3      4      5      Strongly agree

11. I speak of this person with kind and affirmative words.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

12. When I share the story of what happened I tell it from a neutral position and explain how I have grown from the experience in a positive way.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

13. I live my life as if they do not exist and never did exist.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

14. I took steps toward reconciliation, I wrote them or called them and tried to reconnect with them.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

15. I looked for where the break down was and where the real source of the problem was to try and correct it.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

After completing the post-questionnaire write down where you feel you are on your path of forgiveness now.

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“There are no mistakes, no coincidences.  
All events are blessings given to us to  
learn from.”

*Elizabeth Kubler-Ross*

## **Suggestions:**

There is a lot of material summarized in this workbook! Working through the material and putting the 3-step process into practice is essential. This process can be far easier if you join with another person or a group of supportive people that meet regularly to help each other through the workbook and CD series. Even if you have to work on your own, perseverance will bring its own rewards, and a far stronger will. Time will be needed for you to assimilate and apply the 3 steps to forgiveness. Be gentle and patient with yourself and others. Let others learn from you more by whom you become after you have applied forgiveness in your own life than by what you say.

## **Suggested Readings:**

Azim Khamisa	<i>From Murder to Forgiveness</i> <i>A Father's Journey</i>	
Louise L. Hay	<i>Heal Your Body</i>	Hay House
Foundation for Inner Peace	<i>A Course in Miracles</i>	
Howard Zehr	<i>Changing Lenses</i>	Howard Press
Zehr/Toews	<i>Critical Issues in</i> <i>Restorative Justice</i>	Criminal Justice Press
Neale Donald Walsh	<i>The Little Soul and The Sun</i>	

## **Dates to be aware of:**

International Forgiveness Day      First Sunday of every August  
Founded by Robert Plath

## **Foundations and Websites**

Tariq Khamisa Foundation                      [www.tkf.org](http://www.tkf.org)

Restorative Justice                              [www.restorativepractices.org](http://www.restorativepractices.org)  
Complete a search on Restorative Justice  
to find additional information

Judicial Council Website                      [www.courtinfo.ca.gov](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov)

- Select the California Community  
Justice Project
- There will be links to multiple web sites for resources

A Glossary of Feeling Words

## Pleasant Feelings

OPEN  
understanding  
confident  
reliable  
easy  
amazed  
free  
sympathetic  
interested  
satisfied  
receptive  
accepting  
kind

HAPPY  
great  
gay  
joyous  
lucky  
fortunate  
delighted  
overjoyed  
gleeful  
thankful  
important  
festive  
ecstatic  
satisfied  
glad  
cheerful  
sunny  
merry  
elated  
jubilant

ALIVE  
playful  
courageous  
energetic  
liberated  
optimistic  
provocative  
impulsive  
free  
frisky  
animated  
spirited  
thrilled  
wonderful

GOOD  
calm  
peaceful  
at ease  
comfortable  
pleased  
encouraged  
clever  
surprised  
content  
quiet  
certain  
relaxed  
serene  
free and easy  
bright  
blessed  
reassured

LOVE  
loving  
considerate  
affectionate  
sensitive  
tender  
devoted  
attracted  
passionate  
admiration  
warm  
touched  
sympathy  
close  
loved  
comforted  
drawn toward

INTERESTED  
concerned  
affected  
fascinated  
intrigued  
absorbed  
inquisitive  
nosy  
snoopy  
engrossed  
curious

POSITIVE  
eager  
keen  
earnest  
intent  
anxious  
inspired  
determined  
excited  
enthusiastic  
bold  
brave  
daring  
challenged  
optimistic  
re-enforced  
confident  
hopeful

STRONG  
impulsive  
free  
sure  
certain  
rebellious  
unique  
dynamic  
tenacious  
hardy  
secure

## Difficult/Unpleasant Feelings

### ANGRY

irritated  
enraged  
hostile  
insulting  
sore  
annoyed  
upset  
hateful  
unpleasant  
offensive  
bitter  
aggressive  
resentful  
inflamed  
provoked  
incensed  
infuriated  
cross  
worked up  
boiling  
fuming  
indignant

### DEPRESSED

lousy  
disappointed  
discouraged  
ashamed  
powerless  
diminished  
guilty  
dissatisfied  
miserable  
detestable  
repugnant  
despicable  
disgusting  
abominable  
terrible  
in despair  
sulky  
bad  
a sense of loss

### CONFUSED

upset  
doubtful  
uncertain  
indecisive  
perplexed  
embarrassed  
hesitant  
shy  
stupefied  
disillusioned  
unbelieving  
skeptical  
distrustful  
misgiving  
lost  
unsure  
uneasy  
pessimistic  
tense

### HELPLESS

incapable  
alone  
paralyzed  
fatigued  
useless  
inferior  
vulnerable  
empty  
forced  
hesitant  
despair  
frustrated  
distressed  
woeful  
pathetic  
tragic  
in a stew  
dominated

### INDIFFERENT

insensitive  
dull  
nonchalant  
neutral  
reserved  
weary  
bored  
preoccupied  
cold  
disinterested  
lifeless

### AFRAID

fearful  
terrified  
suspicious  
anxious  
alarmed  
panic  
nervous  
scared  
worried  
frightened  
timid  
shaky  
restless  
doubtful  
threatened  
cowardly  
quaking

### HURT

crushed  
tormented  
deprived  
pained  
tortured  
dejected  
rejected  
injured  
offended  
afflicted  
aching  
victimized  
heartbroken  
agonized  
appalled  
humiliated  
wronged

### SAD

tearful  
sorrowful  
pained  
grief  
anguish  
desolate  
desperate  
pessimistic  
unhappy  
lonely  
grieved  
mournful  
dismayed



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To bring a forgiveness workshop to your community or to schedule  
Azim Khamisa to speak please call our offices.