



Self-Forgiveness

your mother giving you a set of dishes
and all you said was but I move around
so much and you can never forget
her hurt face turning away.
the best friend you accused of
flirting with your boyfriend when
all the time you knew it was him
you just couldn't face it.
the argument with your father about
not having seen him damned magazines
then finding it in your room
and never admitting it.
telling your office mate you
agreed with her motion then
voting with the others after all.

thousands of them, little knots
you can't shake loose from your memory.
it's too late now to say you're sorry.
they contract along your nerves
to consciousness, whenever you think
you are not a bad person, there
they come, little lumps of guilt
making their daily rounds,
like doctors, keeping you sick.

Guilt affects your self-worth,
self-esteem...

- **Guilt** - poem by Leona Gom -

It's important to forgive yourself, otherwise, you will be:

- putting blame and guilt on yourself, which is likely to stop you from living a positive and fulfilling life.
- Stopping yourself from learning and improving from your mistakes.



Blaming yourself, hating yourself, and feeling ashamed and guilty does you no good. How does that help you?

Maybe you haven't been able to forgive yourself because you feel like you don't deserve forgiveness. Or maybe you feel that you have to suffer for the pain that you caused someone else.

But does that make any sense?

Is there a reason to keep hurting yourself through self-hatred and guilt?

Do you know that when you live with these negative emotions, they get projected onto the people you love through your words, conversations, and behaviors? Our Murshid, Pir Hazrat Inayat Khan, teaches us that we pick up Impressions from others and that our negative thoughts and words make impressions on others as well.

So really, by holding onto these emotions, you're unintentionally hurting the ones you love as well.

So why create more pain and suffering? Why not heal and spread more love?

In case you needed to hear it from someone else, you deserve forgiveness no matter what you've done.

'The one who always does right need not be here. This is the place in which to do both wrong and right. But the one who does wrong and repents, who wants to do better next time, their conscience is sharpened by every wrong they have committed. Perhaps the wrong has done them more good than if they had done right; they have become more awakened to the right, and yet they have been humbled in their conscience. Therefore, repentance is a privilege and to be able to be sorry for all that one thinks was not right makes one live and feel more fully. It awakens justice in the heart.'

Hazrat Inayat Khan

You may view self-forgiveness as "letting yourself off the hook," as if self-judgment is the only way to improve. But negative self-judgment and self-blaming can actually act as an obstacle to self-improvement. The more shame you feel about your past actions and behaviors, the more your self-esteem is lowered and the less likely you will feel motivated to change or improve the situation.

Another reason you may have difficulty forgiving yourself is that you may have a powerful need to "be good" and to be seen as "good" in the eyes of others, as well as yourself. This need to be "good" may have started because your parents or other caretakers had unreasonable expectations of you and may have severely punished or abandoned you when you made a mistake. Now you may find that you are equally critical of yourself and equally unforgiving of yourself.



If you have harmed others and resist forgiving yourself, you may ask, “Why should I forgive myself? It won’t help those I’ve harmed.” The most powerful reason is this: If you do not forgive yourself, the shame you carry will compel you to continue to act in harmful ways toward others and yourself... Without the burden of self-hatred, you can literally transform your life.

The truth is, we have all harmed others. In fact, every single person on this planet has harmed at least one other person in ways that have shaped that person’s life. Knowing this and knowing that you are not alone, can help you to have compassion for yourself and to forgive yourself. Feeling compassion for yourself does not release you from taking responsibility for your actions. But it can release you from the self-hatred that prevents you from forgiving yourself and free you to respond to the situation with clarity. Rather than tormenting yourself with guilt and shame, having compassion for your own suffering and for the suffering of those you have harmed can help you achieve the clarity necessary for you to think of ways you can help those you have harmed.

If you continue to find yourself resisting forgiving yourself, ask yourself this question: “Why wouldn’t I want to forgive myself?” If your answer is “I don’t deserve it,” that is your shame talking. If you still feel like you don’t deserve forgiveness, perhaps you believe you need to earn it.

How do you earn forgiveness? First of all, you need to admit to yourself the complete truth about how you harmed others. Until you do, you may not believe you deserve to be forgiven.

When you take responsibility for your actions you may feel more shame at the moment, but that feeling of shame will be replaced with a growing feeling of self-respect.

1. Responsibility

The first step in self-forgiveness is to really take responsibility for what you did, or didn’t do. Own up to it, in all its messiness. And then get to the core of why you did what you did.

Identify the causes and conditions by understanding where the behavior came from and what factors might have influenced you.

Pir Vilayat: ‘One needs to distinguish between mistakes committed from: inadvertently having failed to take precautions, mis-assessing a situation, making a decision to foster what one believes is in one’s interest at the cost of another regardless of the distress it can inflict, willfully harming another or putting spanners in his or her wheels out of resentment, revenge, jealousy, or hatred, deceiving another and even oneself by justifying acts of bad faith on false pretenses.’



Maybe you made this mistake or committed this act because you were too young to know any better, you were careless, you weren't paying attention, you weren't present, your mind wasn't in the right place, you were unconscious (spiritually), your priorities were off, you did it out of fear or selfishness, it's what you were taught to do, you did it to get revenge, you did it because you were in pain yourself, you wanted to feel superior, or your life situation or environment caused you to do it.

Whatever the reason, it's important to be super honest with yourself about what motivated you to do this.

Knowing the true reason for why you did what you did doesn't excuse you from doing it, it simply creates understanding, and understanding creates compassion.

Sufi Wazifa Practice

Ya Hasib (yaa ha-SEEB) Al-Hasib is the action of accounting for the full meaning of everything. Nothing goes unrecorded and nothing is ever lost. It means taking full responsibility for one's actions, words, and even one's thoughts. To become completely accountable allows for a new beginning of what is possible. It brings realization. x 11

2. Resolution/Restitution

The next step in self-forgiveness is seeking resolution or making amends.

Is there anything you can do to resolve this situation? Do you need to apologize to someone, make amends, or take specific action?

How can you change your actions to not repeat these mistakes? If you cannot ask forgiveness of the one you hurt - maybe they are no longer in your life, or maybe they have passed on themselves, you can still ask forgiveness from the Divine. As Hazrat Inayat Khan formulates it:

'When we have hurt someone there comes a reaction, and this reaction is that we feel sorry and wonder why we did it. A conscientious person, after having done some harm, has a strong desire to ask forgiveness. Forgiveness will bring great relief and comfort and until we have asked for it, we will always feel uncomfortable.'

The natural way of consoling ourselves or of bringing comfort to ourselves is therefore to ask forgiveness. And the one who most deserves to be asked is God. It breaks a congestion in the heart and in the spirit, and it brings great comfort. The more we ask forgiveness, the better we begin to feel and think; and we are guided in this if we continue to ask forgiveness.'



It may be that you find it easier to imagine a great being, perhaps the Christ, Buddha, or a Prophet, for forgiveness, rather than God or the Divine Spirit. Whoever you choose, try this practice:

Sufi Wazifa practice for forgiving

Ya Ghafur - Divine Forgiveness.

Center in the heart. Hold your hands cupped together before you, as though offering your heart to your chosen great being, or God, to heal. Breathe the fire breath, the breath of supplication, inhaling and exhaling Ghafur. Ask for release and allow the light of the One Being to descend through you as a blessing of forgiveness.

Guilt and shame

Let's say something about guilt and shame, two of the most self-destructive emotions we can feel.

How to release your shame - Kabbalist teaching from Rav. Doniel Katz.

There are 2 forms of shame in life: justified and unjustified.

- To release shame that is justified: act on it by making reparations, asking forgiveness of the one you hurt, or doing whatever else is required for resolution... Done? Great! The shame has served its purpose. Thank it and let it go. 😊
- Shame that is unjustified comes from being embarrassed over something that was in truth, never in your control.
 - **Step 1** is to realize that.
 - **Step 2** is to allow yourself to feel and remember your true light & infinite value.
 - **Step 3** is to awaken a deep sense of self-compassion.
 - **Step 4** is to practice making self-compassion your new permanent state. Done? Great! The shame has served its purpose, by bringing you back to your true self. Thank it and let it go. 😊

Human imperfection

The emotion of compassion springs from the recognition that the human experience is imperfect. Why else would we say "it's only human" to comfort someone who has made a mistake? Self-compassion honors the fact that all human beings are fallible, that wrong choices and feelings of regret are inevitable, no matter how high and mighty one is.



When we're in touch with our common humanity, we remember that feelings of inadequacy and disappointment are shared by all. This is what distinguishes self-compassion from self-pity. Whereas self-pity says "poor me", self-compassion remembers that everyone suffers, and it offers comfort because everyone is human. The pain I feel in difficult times is the same pain that you feel in difficult times. The triggers are different, the circumstances are different, the degree of pain is different, but the process is the same.

Sufi Practice

Ya Rahman, Divine unconditional love and compassion *At Tawwab*, the Acceptor of Repentance, The Oft-Forgiving, The Acceptor of our Return. Turning from the limitations of the false self and toward the perfection of our immortal soul. It is an antidote for clinging to, and identifying with a wounded sense of self deficiency. x11

3. Renewal

The third and final step in self-forgiveness is renewal: What can you change and improve about yourself?

The point is to take responsibility for your actions and own up to what you did, avoid making the same mistakes again, and then do what you need to do to heal, learn from the episode.

What would it look like to attain liberation from the character traits, patterns or habits that cause us to behave in ways we have come to regret? Can you invite yourself toward that reality?

Now that you see the factors that have caused you to behave in such a way, and now that you know what you need to do to resolve this guilt and shame, remember this truth and repeat it until it's engraved.

People do things in any given moment from their current level of consciousness, including you. People behave based on their past experiences and traumas, inner wounds and pains, current level of knowledge and wisdom, their fears, and how they were programmed and conditioned by society, parents, teachers, etc. Now that you recognize that, you can choose again each day to operate from love, kindness and awareness.



Letting go of the old beliefs

When we forgive ourselves, we energetically say to ourselves “even though I made this mistake and even though I’m not perfect, I still love and accept myself.”

Let go of the past, and live in the present. The more we remember that what happened belongs to the past, and that we have the power to change the present, the more we can create a better future.

Put your hand on your heart and say:

I forgive you.

Let your eyes cry but don't let them run dry.

It's okay,* tell yourself that.

It's okay, it's okay, it's okay, sweetheart, it is

Okay.

What you did, what they did, what happened

Is Past now, has passed now.

Please allow yourself to move on and actually live

This one and only life.

You are a flower-being and you deserve fragrances.

You are a soft soul and it's time you let your scars heal...

So stop. Stop scratching your skin, stop scarring your sacredness within.

You are to live, and live happily.

Please.

Forgive Yourself - poem by Maria Imran

Wazaif practice from a ritual given by Pir Zia to open the world heart

Step 1: 3 Wazaif only in fikr **x11**: in base chakra: inhale **Mu'id** (the Restorer), hold **Muhyi** (the Giver of Life, The Revivifier), Exhale **Ba'ith** (the Resurrector).

Step 2: Concentrate on the heart and contemplate: Nothing can withstand that peace which is awakened in the heart.

Step 3: **11x** fikr: Inhale (from solar plexus): **Rahman** (divine compassion), hold **Salaam** (peace), exhale from the centre of the breast: **Ghafar** (Forgiveness).

Step 4: Crown Centre: fikr **11x**, Inhale: **Wasi** (all embracing, all-pervading), Hold: **Ahad** (The One, the Only One, the transcendental unity), Exhale: **Jami** (the Gatherer).



Step 5: repeat: concentrate on the heart and contemplate: Nothing can withstand that peace which is awakened in the heart.

Step 6: 11x fikr: Inhale (from solar plexus): **Rahman** (divine compassion), hold **Salaam** (peace), exhale from the centre of the breast: **Ghafar** (Forgiveness).

Step 7: 11x at base: **Muid, Muhyi, Ba'ith.**

Step 8: 11x at base: **Khatum.**

Bismallah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim

In the Light of the One,
the Most Merciful,
the Most Compassionate.

Teachings by Eve Munira Salomon in April 2021

gather
your mistakes,

rinse them with
honesty and self
reflection,

let dry until you
can see every choice
and the regret
becomes brittle

cover the
entire surface
in forgiveness.

remind yourself that
you are human

and this too
is a gift

-rudy francisco