

**“WE CHOOSE FORGIVENESS!”**  
**An AA/Alanon Forgiveness Workshop**  
**Azalea City Jamboree - June 1, 2024.**

(Presented by Tina H., Al-Anon and Bill H., AA, St. Louis, Mo.)

**We choose forgiveness! Yes, *forgiveness is a choice!***

That is difficult to remember. Other people have disappointed us, embarrassed us, hurt us, neglected us, abused us, abandoned us—sometimes very badly. We are still in pain. We are still angry. We are still suffering. We want them to suffer, too. So, we have resentments.

Our unwillingness to forgive breeds negative thoughts and emotions in us:

anger, resentment, envy, jealousy and self-righteous revenge—the desire for them to suffer.

We remain self-centered and judgmental, separated from God and others.

**Yet, we remember why we are here—to have a spiritual awakening!**

But we say that what they did, and sometimes are still doing, is too much to forgive.

*At that point, we have made a choice to keep poisoning ourselves with our resentments!*

***Forgiving others reduces and even eliminates our resentments—opening us to receive our spiritual awakening—to become “spiritually employable” with emotional sobriety!***

“... we speak of miracles happening in Alanon.” (ODAT, p. 283)

We have a “new Employer”; experience “the sunlight of the Spirit”; enter “the world of the Spirit”; live in “the Fellowship of the Spirit”. (AA, pp. 63, 66, 84, 164)

**1. How does lack of forgiveness block our spiritual awakening? *With resentments!***

“No one ever truly recovered from the effects of alcoholism by harboring anger, or fear, or by holding on to grudges.” (HAW, p. 85)

“For when harboring such feelings, we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit.” (AA, p. 66)

“We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us.” “

“... resentment is infinitely grave ... fatal.” “

*The more we resent the person who hurt us, and wish them to suffer, the harder it is to forgive.*

*Note: If we are in an abusive situation, we leave and work on forgiveness from a place of safety.*

**2. Why are we here? *To seek God’s help—so that we can make a decision to forgive.***

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps ...” Step Twelve

“A part of me wants to cling to old resentments, but I know that the more I forgive, the better my life works.” (C2C, p. 289)

“Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead ... asking each morning in meditation that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.” (AA, p. 83)

*We work the same Twelve Steps—have individual spiritual awakenings—share with each other.*

*Our forgiveness begins in our suffering and our feeling of loss—our grief at our pain. We suffer from their hurtfulness and abuse. We suffer from our resentment at their abuse.*

*Even when we admit resentments, we usually can’t wish them away on our own.*

*Our suffering has purpose. It motivates us to seek help from God to stop deciding to be resentful. We ask God to save us from being angry; to let God heal our pain; to help us forgive.*

*We decide to be forgiving when we ask God to help us be patient, tolerant, kindly and loving toward others.*

Key: AA: Alcoholics Anonymous. ODAT: One Day at a Time. HAW: How Alanon Works. C2C: Courage to Change. H4T: Hope for Today. AA 12x12: Steps and Traditions.

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**3. What is forgiveness? A choice to ask God help us stop wanting the other person to suffer and to choose to ask God to save us from being angry.**

“Forgiveness is no favor.” (HAW, p. 86)

“Love and tolerance of others is our code.” (Step Ten) (AA, p. 84)

*The memory of the act of another person that hurt or offended us may not go away.*

*We feel that damage has been done. Someone must pay for the loss. Someone should be punished. In our growing resentment at what has been done to us or a loved one, we feel the need to “get even”, to punish, to have our revenge.*

*Forgiveness is a decision—a choice—to let go of resentments. With God’s help, we let go of our desire for revenge; our desire to see them suffer; for self-righteousness justice.*

*Forgiveness lessens our pain and our suffering—freeing us from the control of the other person.*

**4. How can I forgive? Steps 3—9, then daily 10 and 11. “God save me from being angry.”**

“Forgiving is not forgetting, it’s letting go of the hurt.” (C2C, p. 178)

“Resentment is the ‘number one’ offender. It destroys more alcoholics ...”. (AA, p. 64)

“We realized that the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick.” (AA, p. 66)

“God save me from being angry.” (Takes the focus off them, puts it on me) (AA, p. 67)

“We avoid retaliation and argument.”

“God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one.”

“... let God remove from us all the things ... objectionable.” (AA, p. 76)

“... asking forgiveness.” (AA, p. 79)

“... we ask God’s forgiveness ...” (AA, p. 86)

*Forgiveness doesn’t mean we are “letting them get away with it”. Forgiveness is how we let go of our desire to judge and to punish. We let go of our illusion that resentment gives us control.*

**5. What benefit do I receive when I forgive? Freedom from the “bondage of self”.**

“By releasing resentment, I set myself free” (H4T, p. 274)

See “promises” in AA:

“... as we enjoyed peace of mind ...” Step 3. (AA, p. 63)

“Our fears fall from us.” Step 5. (AA, p. 75)

“Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.” Step 9. (AA, p. 84)

“After making our review we ask God’s forgiveness ...” Step 11. (AA, p. 86)

*When we decide to forgive others, we become able to receive and feel forgiveness ourselves.*

“First Things First” “Live and Let Live” “Easy Does It” (AA, p. 135)

SUFFER — SURRENDER — HOPE — BELIEVE — FORGIVE — FAITH — TRUST

***“Lord, make me a channel of thy peace—that where there is hatred, I may bring love—that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness ... it is by forgiving that one is forgiven.”*** (AA 12x12, p. 99)

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