



# THE FORGIVENESS FLIP

7 STEPS TO TRANSFORM HURT,  
ANGER, DEFENSIVENESS INTO  
**A RAINBOW OF COMPASSION,  
FREEDOM, AND ACTION**

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# INTRODUCTION

The idea that we have something to forgive implies that something or someone did something wrong to start with. As we really drop into questioning our thinking, and finding that in many ways there was never a problem (except for our thinking about the situation), we find there actually is nothing to forgive.

*When we are no longer stuck in needing the other to change, apologize, or make up for their actions, we gain great freedom. Those wishes were only serving our choices, and without those conditions, we suddenly see that we have many options for being happy, feeling connected, and achieving our goals.*

Sometimes that works very simply as we look at a situation and easily see another's innocence. Other times it is more subtle. And when we look closely, we find that we are actually wanting them to rescue us from how we reacted as a result of *their* reactions. So this happiness hack is actually set up to look first at where you may be secretly suffering as a result of how you reacted to them (i.e. still blaming them for the fact that you yelled back, thought mean things about them, or otherwise reacted in a way that is the real cause of the breakdown in feeling close to them). Plus, what really hurts is when we close our heart and close down our many paths to peace. It also looks at the way your own pain and lack of forgiveness are an inside job, i.e., find where you're believing that the hurtful things they said about you might actually be true and you have already had shame or an over-flow of shame or self-criticism, so you can't handle even the implication that you're somehow "wrong" (also see the *Descent into Defensiveness* and the [Spark of Self-Love](#) eBooks, for a deeper look at these aspects of unforgiveness).

You may have worked through many of your issues by this point, as you're getting to the forgiveness part of the Six Keys to Dependable Peace and Warm Connection. But this happiness hack is about really going deep and facing what you've feared facing. Going into the places where you really and truly feel that someone did something hurtful, dangerous, threatening, or minimizing to you, or took away the sense of love and safety you wanted to be able to count on from them.

This may bring out a part of you that simply doesn't want to work on yourself anymore. It may seem completely unfair that you would look into your own thinking or

# THE FORGIVENESS FLIP

your own part in perpetuating the pain. There may be a tantrum of sorts--the part of you that never felt it was safe to express your anger, so that's what it keeps wanting!

If that's the case, then it's a good idea to go back to the "becoming teachable" tool, and be with that part of yourself that feels very rebellious and does not WANT to work on your side of things. You may be stuck in just wanting them to apologize or see the error of their ways, and you may need to sit a bit more in observing and truly realizing the cost to yourself of holding onto that idea. Once you realize you're the one that's being hurt by not opening up to taking a closer look, it may shift you into willingness to open to this forgiveness exercise.

It may also feel too hard or too scary to return to old, forgotten, or painful event, so you may want to use the [Beyond Mindfulness Map](#). Read that tool first and [watch the accompanying video](#), then lie down in a quiet place, and let yourself go back to that event and just allow the feelings first. Before you look into the thinking that perpetuates your own pain, it is really important to let the feelings have their life, to let the littlest part of you (that is holding them in a way designed to protect you) know that it's OK, to not tell them they have to change, and to let them know you are here for the part of you that got hurt.

Or you can just dive right into this one. There is no wrong way to do this. Your freedom lies in finding that everyone (including you) is always doing the best they can, given what they are believing, and that you do get to love folks from here. You're able to see that they couldn't do any better. Clearing the fear also helps you make clear decisions about how to proceed now in ways that support and protect yourself completely, while still being connected to others who can't do it any better than they can.

## Using This Happiness Hack

We have presented you with both the longer version of the steps, and the shorter cheatsheet version. Over time, happiness hacks do not need to be read or referred to each time. These common sense approaches allow you to catch yourself going into mind made suffering, and more easily shift out of it just by re-wiring your thinking in a very simple way. When that doesn't work, it often requires going into your specific situation and doing a full blown inquiry in The Work.

# THE FORGIVENESS FLIP CHEATSHEET

1

## Let Yourself See and Feel the Hurt

Write down the things 'they' did or said that made you mad, made you feel wrongly characterized or unfairly accused.

2

## Notice Where This Event Has Triggered Shame

Ask if you fear that what they're seeing in you may be true. Or where is it that you feel bad about the way you reacted and want to blame them?

3

## Find the Innocent Motives Behind Your Actions

Find the spark of love behind your actions. Notice that you were always motivated by the wish to protect yourself or help another.

4

## Find the Innocent Motives Behind Their Actions

Can you forgive them for believing in the heat of the moment that you are what they say you are (even if you don't find it to be true)?

5

## Debunk Your Worst-Case Scenarios

Once you've gotten through the anger, hurt, and defensiveness, ask what fear was driving it.

6

## Return to Self-Solidarity and Connection

Having reconnected to both yourself and the other person, you can stay solid and live happily with your dear self.

7

## Open Your Heart, Whether They Do or Not

Notice that even if your worst fears did happen, the worst part of that would be feeling unforgiving and separate from yourself and them (and that's already happening!).

# 7 STEPS

## 1 Let Yourself See and Feel the Hurt

Write down the things 'they' did or said that made you mad, made you feel wrongly characterized or unfairly accused, or the things that made you want to defend, shut them out, or attack back. ([Send to me](#) if you want to increase the feeling of being held and heard--for the littlest part of you). Really feel your feelings and let the anger and hurt come up while you're writing each one as separate statement.

## 2 Notice Where This Event Has Triggered Shame

Go through each thing they said or did, one by one. Ask if you suspect or fear that what they are seeing in you may be true--or the way you reacted is something you feel ashamed about, don't want, or have worked hard to rid yourself of. Can you let 'them' be your teacher and find where maybe it is or has been true of you--even in the smallest examples when you get really honest--and see if you can find your innocence in that. What if they are right? Were you doing the best you could? Can you forgive yourself?

## 3 Find the Innocent Motives Behind Your Actions

Find the spark of love behind your actions, even the controlling or nasty ones, by noticing that you were always motivated by love. It was always a wish to help the other person or help yourself (based on the belief that something bad was happening to them or to you). If you let even this instinctive need to save yourself be an absolutely valid motive, can you forgive yourself? Stay with you? Truly support yourself?

# THE FORGIVENESS FLIP

4

## Find the Innocent Motives Behind Their Actions

Find the spark of love behind their actions as well; the same is true for them. Can you see that they got ahold of a belief that made them feel hurt or threatened by you? Think of them as feeling that same 'danger' you felt when you lashed out, even if it was only their monkey mind's projection. It was not personal. Can you forgive them for believing in the heat of the moment that you are what they say you are (even if you don't find it to be true)? Can you just let them think it, for as long as they do? Can you be content that you're OK, whether or not they see it? Can you find that they're OK too?

5

## Debunk Your Worst-Case Scenarios

Once you've gotten through the anger, hurt, and defensiveness, ask what fear was driving it. The only reason we are angry is because we fear another can hurt or take something from us (including their affection, cooperation, support). Ask yourself what is the worst case scenario you fear. Go there and find that you cannot know absolutely that it would ultimately be a bad or good thing. The worst that would ever happen in the future is that they believe and act on their thoughts. This creates a mirror for you to find where you have closed your heart by believing your own critical thinking--closing down your options for happiness.

6

## Return to Self-Solidarity and Connection

Having reconnected to both yourself and the other, you can you stay solid and living happily with your dear self. Advocate for that one--knowing they were doing the best they could in every moment. Self-solidarity means committing to never abandoning yourself or letting your safety and happiness depend on their thoughts, words, actions. Hold the part of you that got hurt close. Let it melt into your heart, and keep it absolutely safe and with you at all times no matter what others are doing, just as you would a baby; the way we won't let anyone or anything hurt or take our baby away from us. Once you feel safe, you'll be able to hold them in your heart as well. There are no sides to take; you get to love both of you.

7

## Open Your Heart, Whether They Do or Not

Notice that even if your worst fears did happen, the worst part of that would be feeling unforgiving and separate from yourself and them (and that's already happening!). It's all an inside job; so the ball is in your court. It all gets healed as you love all parts of yourself and them--and stop holding yourself responsible for their actions or letting them dictate your reactions. If you fear you have truly caused harm, forgive yourself completely before you seek to make amends. Even if they stay angry or need you to give them space, keep your heart open from wherever you are. Have fun feeling and acting on your love for them. No matter how they react, they can't take the warm solidarity you feel with yourself, and with them, away from you. Closing our hearts is what hurts.

## GOING DEEPER

We don't even want to think of ourselves as someone who holds grudges, or retaliates, or tries to control others to keep them from committing actions or saying words we experience as unforgivable. It's OK sweetie. You are always doing the very best you can, given what you're believing, so start by forgiving yourself UNCONDITIONALLY! It's OK to take a look...that is, if we want freedom, and see where we are doing to others and especially to ourselves EXACTLY what we thought was being done to us. Finding how 'we are them' is humbling, but living life in that right-sized place is much more FUN!

NOTE: IT'S OK NOT WANT TO FORGIVE. HONOR THAT. IF OU DON'T YOU WILL RESIST THIS PROCESS. After working so hard on ourselves, we often feel resistant or resentful about being the one who always goes in and finds your part or does the work to reconnect to what seems to be an unforgivable person or situation! Take your time and try this:

- Attend to that part of you.
- Notice the resistance.
- Notice the "NOT FAIR!" story.
- Find the fear story about letting them off the hook.
- Notice the ways you don't want to be a doormat, or have your needs overlooked.
- What does it tell you you will loose? What do you really want?
- Can you have it without the condition that they have to change or see the error of their ways?

One important thing to remember is that all of this is about your own happiness, peace, and freedom, as well as your ability to stay connected to those you love (even when they have let you down in very big ways). Ultimately, you may find the opposite instead: that they are your kindest teachers by pushing your buttons. You will find that they have, once you know how to deal with the pain, not only NOT let you down but ultimately supported or even raised you up in very big ways. When you keep the focus on being happy now with the way things are and the way things have been, you will



## GOING DEEPER

see that the only thing that perpetuates the unhappiness is attachment to a belief that something should have been (or still should be) different.

There is great relief and release in realizing that things can be exactly as they are. That the ways people acted to you were not personal and do not mean something is wrong with you, but simply reflect what they were believing. You can let them have those beliefs and love them from here, while still reacting out of love for both yourself and for them to what shows up in the here and now.

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*I finally got to the point where I felt that my parents had been loving supportive parents and not people who undermined me and blocked me and didn't understand me...*

*I had spent a lifetime thinking that...And now it feels different. This work allowed me to replace my old stories with the story of a beautiful loving family.*

*And feeling that security gave me an example of where I'd like to be with each inquiry that I do--I know what I am aiming for now. I can see that I haven't achieved it in many parts of my life, but I am really encouraged by having it in ONE relationship and believing I can have it in lots of others.*

# THE FORGIVENESS FLIP

## 7 STEPS SUMMARIZED

1

Write down the things 'they' did or said that made you mad, made you feel wrongly characterized or unfairly accused, or the things that made you want to defend, shut them out, or attack back. (Send to me if you want to increase the feeling of being held and heard--for the littlest part of you). Really feel your feelings and let the anger and hurt come up while you're writing each one as separate statement.

2

Go through each thing they said or did, one by one. Ask if you suspect or fear that what they are seeing in you may be true, or the way you reacted is something you feel ashamed about, don't want, or have worked hard to rid yourself of. Can you let 'them' be your teacher and find where maybe it is or has been true of you and see if you can find your innocence in that. What if they are right? Were you doing the best you could? Can you forgive yourself?

3

Find the spark of love behind your actions, even the controlling or nasty ones, by noticing that you were always motivated by love. It was always a wish to help the other person or help yourself (based on the belief that something bad was happening to them or to you). If you let even this instinctive need to save yourself be an absolutely valid motive, can you forgive yourself? Stay with you? Truly support yourself?

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Find the spark of love behind their actions as well. Can you see that they got ahold of a belief that made them feel hurt or threatened by you? Can you forgive them for believing in the heat of the moment that you are what they say you are (even if you don't find it to be true)? Can you just let them think it, for as long as they do? Can you be content that you're OK, whether or not they see it? Can you find that they're OK too?

5

Once you've gotten through the anger, hurt, and defensiveness, ask what fear was driving it. The only reason we're angry is because we fear another can hurt or take something from us. The worst that would ever happen in the future is that they believe and act on their thoughts. This creates a mirror for you to find where you have closed your heart by believing your own critical thinking.

6

Self-solidarity means committing to never abandoning yourself or letting your safety and happiness depend on their thoughts, words, actions. Hold the part of you that got hurt close. Let it melt into your heart, and keep it absolutely safe and with you at all times no matter what others are doing, just as you would a baby; Once you feel safe, you'll be able to hold them in your heart as well.

7

Notice that even if your worst fears did happen, the worst part of that would be feeling unforgiving and separate from yourself and them (and that's already happening!). It all gets healed as you love all parts of yourself and them--and stop holding yourself responsible for their actions or letting them dictate your reactions. If you fear you have truly caused harm, forgive yourself completely before you seek to make amends. Even if they stay angry or need you to give them space, keep your heart open from wherever you are. No matter how they react, they can't take the warm solidarity you feel with yourself, and with them, away from you. Closing our hearts is what hurts.

# ABOUT SHAWN MAHSHIE

Shawn Mahshie's focus, "Self-Solidarity" offers reliable, cutting edge—but simple—steps that capitalize (literally) on the intensely private and often harsh self-doubt, fear, regret, defensiveness, and even depression that can come up in all relationships. Your relationship with money, time, your business, and especially with yourself.

Find out for yourself—in those moments when you feel clueless—why Mahshie's clients are bowled over by the tangible and lasting shifts they quickly come to rely on. Opening yourself to USING—with absolute reliability—the very things that upset you will set you free, revealing a dependable kind of peace and delicious connection with self, others, and life.

Shift Quickly into Radical Self-Love, Confidence, and Power by purchasing Shawn's new eBook. [Click here to get yours!](#)



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