
FORGIVING

My Boyfriend/Girlfriend/Spouse



Do you find that sometimes the person closest to you can make you crazy? Why is it that we can sometimes hurt those closest to us the most? Ouch!

The understandable reasons for that harsh word or unloving behavior can be many - feeling exhausted, overwhelmed with life, hurt by someone else, feeling beat-up, having a sense of hopelessness toward the future, angry at parents, etc. In other words, sometimes the person closest to me is NOT the reason I'm feeling bad, but because he/she happens to be CLOSEST to me, he/she gets my garbage. It's not their fault, yet they get

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Sometimes I'm genuinely angry or frustrated with my boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse. Maybe I've been keeping an "I'm offended" list, and that list has gotten long. So now just one little word brings about an explosion from me. That's never pretty. I remember being newly married, and for a variety of reasons, I was building like a pressure cooker inside. I don't even remember what my wife said, but I blew my stack! I yelled and screamed like a wild man. It was pretty ugly, trust me!

There are going to be times we hurt each other, if we are close. Because we live in a broken world with sin, like tainted blood running through our veins, we are going to sometimes say or do things that will genuinely hurt the other person, intentionally or unintentionally.

When that happens, the most life-giving thing to do is to **ask for** and **give forgiveness** to each other. Forgiveness is NOT being OK with what the other person did. It's NOT saying it doesn't bother to me anymore. It IS giving that person and what he/she did to the heavenly Father. It IS giving up my "right" to punish him/her. It IS a decision that I make in response to God's monumental forgiveness toward me! God reminds us:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:12-13)

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His forgiveness toward us is like God paying off a million dollar debt we had towards him. And to put it in perspective, the person who hurt me is like a \$10 debt. Jesus Christ paid our debt of sin on the cross, and freely gave us the gift of forgiveness. And now asks us to extend that same forgiveness to others around us, including our boyfriend, girlfriend or spouse.-



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- PASTOR KEVIN SCHUESSLER

Here's a three-step activity that can help:

- A) Write down (privately) all the sins that continue to bother me that I've done toward others. List them as quickly as possible. This is for God's eyes only. At the top of the sheet, write, "Dear God, please forgive me for...". Because of Jesus' death on the cross, his answer will be - YES, I FORGIVE YOU! (Take in the words - 1 John 1:8-9). After receiving God's words of forgiveness, shred this list or burn it.
- B) Make a list of all the things done and said by your boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse towards you, that bother you. Again, these are for God's eyes only. At the top of the sheet, write, "Because of Jesus, I forgive you for...". Make the decision to forgive everything on that list. When you are done, entrust your list to God, by shredding it.
- C) The two of you come together, and each one ask the other for forgiveness for some specific things you have done and said that hurt. And verbally offer forgiveness to the other. Again, it's a decision. Each time. Decide together - no more lists! If an issue comes up, settle it quickly by forgiving. (Note: If the same issue keeps reoccurring, consider finding a wise, Christ-follower, possibly a pastor or Christian counselor to help facilitate a healing process for your relationship. Every couple can benefit from this at some time! We are happy to be of service to you through counseling and prayer ministry. Contact us at: mail@awakeusnow.com or 612-545-5654)

Also note: In the extreme case that this becomes physical/emotional abuse, call for help from your support system, and possibly the authorities.

Pray together: Lord, you know us best. You know how we were made to love and be loved. You also know the hurts of our past that affect our present. Heal us individually, and heal us as a couple. We receive the promise you made us, that, "by his (Jesus') wounds, we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). As you have forgiven us, help us to keep forgiving (releasing) each other. Thank you for your incredible goodness to us! In Jesus' name.

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