


# Forgiveness

Session Seven



The mind creates the abyss and the heart crosses over it.

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## A Movie Short

I'm not sure how many cookies it takes to be happy, but so far it's not twenty seven.



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UP

You woke up filled with dread,  
There seems no reason for it,  
Morning light sifts through the window,  
There is beckoning  
you can't get out of bed.

It's something about the crumpled sheets  
hanging over the edge like jungle  
foliage, the terry slipper, gaping  
their dark pink mouths for your feet,  
the unseen breakfast—some of it  
in the refrigerator you do not dare  
to open—you do not dare to eat.

What prevents you? The future. The future tense,  
immense as outer space.  
You could get lost there.  
No. Nothing so simple. The past. Its destiny  
and drowned events pressing you down,  
like sea water, like gelatin  
filling your lungs instead of air.

Forget that and let's get up.  
Try moving your arm.  
Try moving your head.  
Pretend the house is on fire  
and you must run or burn.  
No, that one's useless.  
It's never worked before.

Where is it coming from, this echo,  
this huge No that surrounds you,  
silent as the folds of the yellow  
curtains, mute as the cheerful  
Mexican bowl with its cargo  
of mummified flowers?  
[You chose the colour of the sun,  
not the dried neutrals of shadow.  
God knows you've tried.]

Now here's a good one:  
You're lying on your deathbed.  
You have one hour to live.  
Who is it, exactly, you have needed  
all these years to forgive?  
~ Margaret Atwood ~

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### Reflections on Shame

- Shame is sense that I am broken, fundamentally flawed, unworthy, unlovable
- Each of our personalities develop around a deep sense of "wrongness" of self including helplessness
- We then develop strategies to fix, ameliorate, survive
- As we move through life, situations and relationship arise which trigger that original woundedness and we are thrown into the pit of despair, shame
- We blame others for triggering us and thus the most common issues of forgiveness
- It is a strategy of the ego to defend itself, to justify its existence, to hook itself deeper into us by showing us how the story is correct, the super ego is the policeman.
- Vulnerability is sacrificed
- The only ways out are to understand the original story is wrong, that story is not who we are
- Begs the question we have been working with—Who are we?

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### Rosie's Story



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### Stages of Healing Spiritual Pain

- Five ego stages
  - Denial
  - Anger
  - Bargaining
  - Guilt
  - Acceptance
- Surrender the Ego
  - Why would any ego want to do this?
- Transformation
  - Constellating a new "how things are"



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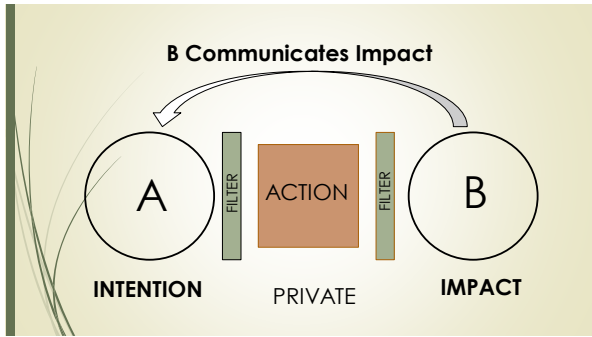
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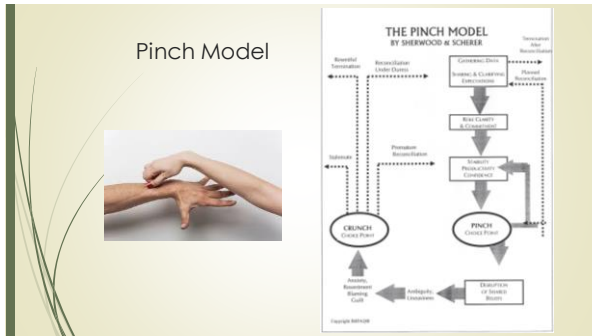
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### Rupture and Repair

- 46% of interactions result in rupture of connection
- 33% of interactions result in continued connection
- This is the good news
  - Safety/trust only develops from rupture and repair
  - Connection deepens with the willingness to repair
- What is trust?

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### Trust—BRAVING Brene Brown

- Boundaries—respect them, have them, ask about them
- Reliability—do what you say you will, are realistic about your time
- Accountability—own your mistakes, apologize, make amends
- Vulnerability—keep confidence—all things
- Integrity—practice your values
- Nonjudgment—we can ask for what we need from one another, no judgment about what we feel
- Generosity—I will interpret what you do in the most generous light




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### Observations on Forgiveness



- The process is not one to make what happened OK, not hurtful, not painful
- Both forgiving and asking for forgiveness
- Don't wait
- Forgiveness does not require reconciliation
- Many levels of hurt from simple misunderstanding to grievous injury
- At the most simple level; to forgive is to let go
- Forgiving does not require an ongoing relationship or a current relationship
- Forgiving another will require forgiving yourself for your part
- Asking for forgiveness is more complex
- One can only ask for forgiveness from the one wronged
- Reconciliation requires rebuilding trust, safety, renegotiating or completely restarting relationship

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### Observations on Forgiveness

This exhausted mind (ego, personality),  
 Beaten helplessly by karma and neurotic thoughts  
 Like the relentless fury of the pounding waves  
 In the infinite ocean of samsara.




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### Two Ways Of Seeing Forgiveness

- If we believe we are a separate somebody, separate from love, in our ego, personality
- If we believe we are of and from love and have surrendered/relaxed the rigid ego structure



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### WOUNDEDNESS OF THE EGO

When our ego-self (the "I") decides that what it received from the world (God, institutions) or in an interaction (with self or others) was not what it deserved, required, or earned...

It retreats into hurt, anger, blame, resentment, or guilt and demands compensation or revenge.



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### WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

- Forgiveness is a voluntary choice and action regarding the wrongs and hurts of the past. It implies a letting go of the desire for vengeance and a release of associated negative feelings such as bitterness and resentment.
- Forgiveness never implies that the actions of the offender were justified and can take place without an ongoing relationship with the offender.
- Not a process of the mind

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### Forgiveness Steps

- Recognize wrong, missed the mark
- Remorse
- Repentance
- Atonement, repair
- Avoid doing again
- Reconciliation, recreate trust




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### Forgiveness – 12 Steps

1. Admitted addiction to the story of our ego – seeking a way to soothe the pain with behavior and beliefs that keep us stuck
2. A bigger story can restore sanity – surrender
3. Decide to surrender to bigger story
4. Searching and fearless moral inventory
5. Admitted our wrongs to another
6. Ready to ask that which is bigger than us for help
7. Asked for help
8. Made a list of all those we had harmed, and willing to make amends
9. Made amends except when it would be hurtful
10. Continued personal inventory and admitted when we were wrong
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to know Higher Will
12. Practice, practice, practice




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### To Forgive Another




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### Emotions of Forgiveness Pain

- ▀ Blame
- ▀ Guilt
- ▀ Anger
- ▀ Resentment
- ▀ Vengeance

vs.

- ▀ Sadness
- ▀ Grief
- ▀ Loss
- ▀ Hurt

Pseudo-power vs. Vulnerable




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### Resentment

Drinking poison, expecting the other person to die.

Your experience is owned by the other person

Expectations are premeditated resentment

If you hug to yourself any resentment, you destroy the bridge by which God would come to you




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### To Forgive

- ▀ Acknowledge hurt
- ▀ Action of the heart
- ▀ Let it go and learn-accountable
- ▀ Path to freedom
- ▀ Does not make what was done right
- ▀ May require boundaries or an ongoing relationship requires all the steps in order for healing to occur
- ▀ Putting your story in a larger story
- ▀ Choosing connection over separation




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### Asking for Forgiveness



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### Ask for Forgiveness

- Must be willing to do all the steps even if no reconciliation
- Must seek forgiveness from the one offended
  - Murder
- Must offer to repair
  - Gossip
- Shame vs guilt
- Willingness to be vulnerable
- Ask 3 times
- Let it go and learn



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### What if?



- We are created in and from love—Universe, God, the divine, the ground of being—look into the eyes of any infant
- We are already loved, adored, cared for, worthy
- Our personalities have added gunk to our lens, which results in imperfect relationships
- Much harmful behavior is from seeking love because we block what's there
- The fundamental love we are is simply forgotten, not gone
- To access is to remove obstacles
- Once accessed we really move beyond forgiveness, what is there to forgive?

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## Forgiveness Beyond Ego

1. Cultivate desire for peace – want more than to be right
2. Turn towards grievance – feel the betrayal, mistakes
  - ▀ Curious why holding on?
  - ▀ What's it providing you?
  - ▀ Protecting your heart, fear?
  - ▀ What's difficult to accept?
  - ▀ Allow the complexity of self/others.
3. Relinquish blame
  - ▀ There is no owner
  - ▀ Everyone has a bummer factor
4. Join from essence
  - ▀ Open to other as self
5. Give it up to the "greater than"



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## Inquiry

- ▀ Total 60 minutes
- ▀ Go through first set of questions in order and respond with "Thank you"
- ▀ Short guided meditation
- ▀ Go through the looping questions



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## Inquiry Questions

15 minutes per person: repeating questions

- ▀ 1. Tell me something you feel you cannot forgive? – Can you identify the body, heart, mind experience for you?
- ▀ 2. What does holding on to this grievance bring you that you think you need?
- ▀ 3. What is the cost of hanging onto this issue?
- ▀ 4. When have you felt this way before? Does this story recur in your life?

Meditation

15 minutes looping question

- ▀ What's it like in body, heart, and mind when grace of forgiveness pervades your being?
- ▀ How does the world appear from here?

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### Meditation



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### Gathering Together to Tell Our Stories

- What did you notice?
- What surprised you?
- Were you able to shift in perspective – find a bigger story?
- When you share, we each hear our own story and it's such a gift.
- Sharing takes courage, connection and willingness to be vulnerable – or whole hearted.
- Whatever you say is perfect – for you – for this moment.



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### Assignment

- Reflect on the forgiveness issues in your life. Where have you been unwilling to let go of wrongs done to you? Where has shame and a fear of vulnerability kept you from asking for forgiveness?
- Reflect on your deepest values. Do your ongoing forgiveness issues violate these values? How can you move from being victimized to being accountable? What might you do now?
- How are the forgiveness issues in your life related to shame and vulnerability?
- How has the discussion and processes today impacted your forgiveness issue?
- Write a reflection paper on these issues or whatever is up for you.



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# Say Grace



Our body of the bus depot is holding forth tonight  
Her body it is wasted but her eyes are shining bright  
And our father who art slightly drunk is wandering off the shakes  
And he staggers underneath the weight of the promises he makes

Say grace - say grace  
Forgive yourself for all of your mistakes  
You can start all over if that's what it takes  
Come inside and set yourself a place  
And say grace

We are gathered here together to praise his holy name  
In a shelter by the Greyhound Station down on 8th and Main  
And as to who we're praying to there run two schools of thought  
A benevolent provider or an unyielding god

Say grace - say grace  
Forgive yourself for all of your mistakes  
You might find salvation in your neighbor's face  
Come inside and set yourself a place  
And say grace

Well the bible on the table's sayin' be of good cheer  
But the TV in the corner's screaming you're not welcome here  
And on a poster in the waiting room she greets the tired and poor  
Our body of the harbor stands beside a golden door

Say grace - say grace  
Forgive yourself for all of your mistakes  
You are not a loser, you are not a hopeless case  
Come inside and set yourself a place  
And say grace

Gretchen Peters



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