

The Trinity of Forgiveness

Inspired Insights by Rev. Lloyd Strom

The essence of forgiveness is the giving of Love before there is any reason to give it. In other words, it is Love 'fore-given' with un-merited favor, which is the way that God loves us all. There are three basic forms of forgiveness that we encounter in the world.

~ Traditional Forgiveness ~



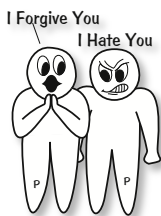
The traditional view of forgiveness involves the necessity for contrition by others in the form of an *apology*. In other words, when someone offends or

harms us in some way, once they show remorse, and apologize, we are called upon to forgive them.

This is fine as far as it goes. However, such an attitude causes us to be dependent upon others in order to enjoy the sweet fruit of forgiveness, which is inner peace and a greater enjoyment of life.

In this sense, Traditional Forgiveness is pre-personal in nature, and is always about what others have done to us. Additionally, it is highly compensatory in nature, and always involves a 'tit for a tat' dynamic that never, ever seems to find an enduring balance our lives.

~ Transitional Forgiveness ~



Transitional forgiveness is the means by which we develop our ability to Love unconditionally. In other words, whenever we are offended or harmed by someone, we

must learn to forgive them, regardless of whether they apologize, or not.

Such an attitude sets us free from *dependency* upon others in order to enjoy the fruits of forgiveness in our lives. In this sense, Transitional Forgiveness tends to be highly personal in nature, for it is something that is initiated by us alone. This is because Love does not obey our expectations, it obeys our *intentions*. Consequently, we don't need another person's permission to love them.

Additionally, we must keep in mind that Transitional Forgiveness takes place in three very distinct stages, that lead us from Traditional Forgiveness to the ultimate state of True Forgiveness.

Stage One: Persecution

The first stage of the Transitional Forgiveness process is the Persecution Stage. One of the definitions of persecution is 'to cause to suffer.' Consequently, whenever we begin to engage in the process of forgiveness, there is an intensification of suffering in our soul. In a sense, we could say that the activity of forgiveness is initially a form of 'self-persecution.' Fortunately, if we are willing to persecute ourselves through the activity of forgiveness, we will not be persecuted by others in the world. But even more importantly, when we persecute ourselves for the sake of Love, we will be blessed beyond measure. In the words of Jesus, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt. 5:10)



Stage Two: Enlightenment

Once we have endured the suffering associated with the first stage of forgiveness, we enter into the Enlightenment Stage. This occurs when the light of Love dispels the



darkness in our soul, and we begin to experience the *'Peace of God that passes all understanding.'* (Phil. 4:7) This is a Peace that is not dependent upon outer conditions. It is a peace that is self-created out of our willingness to Love unconditionally, as revealed through our acts of forgiveness. It is the peace that the Buddha referred to when he said, *"Peace comes from within you. Do not seek it outside of yourself."*

Stage Three: Resurrection

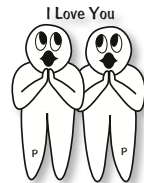
What often happens when we encounter the sweet peace of forgiveness is that we think that this must be the end of the process. However, at this point we have only brought an end to our suffering. In order for the *'forgiveness process'* to be fully complete we must also bring forth some new outer condition that will glorify God by producing a greater expression of life.



The final stage of the *'forgiveness process'* is the Resurrection Stage, which brings Joy into our lives. This is not necessarily the excitement that often passes for joy, but is a *'quiet delight'* that is the experience of deep gratitude. This is the Joy that Jesus referred to when he said, *"And you now therefore*

have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and no man will take your joy from you." (John 16:22) In other words, no one can steal our Joy when it has been self-created out of our willingness to forgive.

True Forgiveness



True Forgiveness is a *graceful* state of being that arises when we live in the perpetual expression of unconditional Love. This expression will produce the quiet delight of deep gratitude in our souls.

Furthermore, when unconditional Love becomes our natural state of being, nothing will ever happen to us that would create a need for either Traditional or Transitional forms of Forgiveness. The reason for this phenomena is contained within the scriptural passage that *"God resists the proud, and gives Grace unto the humble."* (1 Peter 5:5) Consequently, it is important to realize that humility is not about being obsequious or subservient. Instead, true Humility is a *'constant state of Forgiveness'* that leads us into Grace, which then inspires a constant state of Gratitude for all the blessings in our lives.

Love begins with Forgiveness,
and ends in Gratitude.



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