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# HOW WRITING STORIES ENABLES US TO FORGIVE

By Chris Cade, [Inscribe Your Life](http://www.InscribeYourLife.com)™

We all have traumas from our past, anger or guilt about what others did to us, about what we did to others, and about what we did to ourselves. These experiences come from those we love, as well as acquaintances and total strangers. And more often than not, we hold onto the pain and are unable to forgive, and that is one of the biggest reasons why we are unable to experience the kinds of purposeful and conscious relationships our hearts yearn for.

Being unable to forgive doesn't feel very empowering, and it causes us to make excuses why we shouldn't try again. We sometimes let go of our hopes and dreams. The thing is, when you understand the story behind all of these feelings and experiences, you learn an invaluable secret:

**It's not your fault.**

In fact, it's not anybody's fault. It's just one more story, and it's the hardest thing for most people to change. When we truly understand this, we're able to transform these old stories of pain and frustration into empowerment. The first thing to understand is why people hurt us.

I believe that people are innately well-intentioned, and that our experiences and conditioning cause us to believe otherwise. I know that I've hurt people in the past, and it wasn't because I was a bad person. I was just in pain. I had been rejected and ostracized for so many years that I lashed out at people. I was protecting myself from more pain and unconsciously I believed that if I pushed enough people away, they wouldn't be able to hurt me anymore.

The problem is, because I pushed people away I made it impossible to have the very thing I wanted: a deeply fulfilling and connected relationship. It would be easy to blame my peers for all their unkind words and actions, and most people would think I was justified in blaming them.

*But is it really their fault?*

I don't believe it is. After all, if I was a good person who lashed out in pain, is it possible that they were merely doing the same thing to me? Perhaps they came from an abusive home, or they were also rejected? Perhaps they pushed me away to protect themselves the same way I did it to protect myself.

In this expanded view, we begin to see that for every person who hurts us, they have a story behind their own pain... a story about why they hurt us (intentionally or not). We then see their story usually involves somebody who hurt them, which is yet another story. In fact, the cycle goes on for generations, and this is why we notice that many families seem to have similar emotional or psychological patterns within them.

**Now think about this in your own life...**

*Have you hurt other people?*

*Do you consider yourself a generally well-intentioned person?*

I believe the answer to both questions is probably 'Yes.'

So if even we have hurt others, maybe what others have done to us is just another story. Maybe we're all characters living this life story, and some of us get hurt by other characters, and we in turn may hurt people as well. It doesn't make us bad people, just people in pain (the same as the people who hurt us).

In my own explorations of forgiveness, what I realized is that that people didn't necessarily want to hurt me, but rather, they just had pain inside they didn't know what to do with. They had a story they were "taking out on me," and it really had nothing to do with me. That helped me see that my inability to forgive had nothing to do with them, but rather, with my ideas of them. I had trouble forgiving because I expected somebody to be a certain way, and they weren't able to live up to that expectation.

This awareness helped me realize that forgiveness was not something I gave to somebody else; it was something I gave to myself. I had to forgive myself for every time I "let" somebody else hurt me. I had to forgive myself for letting go of my hopes and dreams while I unconsciously protected myself from more pain. I had to forgive myself for hurting others, just the way I had been hurt. And I had to forgive myself for believing the stories I told myself, like that I was a victim who didn't deserve a conscious loving relationship.

Over time, as I began to just see all these interactions as stories, I learned how to look more objectively at other peoples' actions. Instead of seeing them subjectively as bad or mean, I became curious. I progressively changed my thoughts from "That person is so mean!" to "I wonder why that person might have done that. Is it possible that he's having a bad day and it has nothing to do with me?"

This more objective viewpoint fostered a greater sense of compassion for myself and others, and it was that compassion and objectivity that objectivity enabled me to transform my painful stories into personal empowerment. I've found that I enjoy my relationships with others more, and even with people close to me who have hurt me.

## A WRITING EXERCISE FOR FORGIVENESS

Now continuing with this idea of objectivity, if you're having difficulty forgiving somebody then I have a writing exercise that may help you. Just ask yourself, "*If somebody like me were able to forgive the person who hurt him/her, what would that look like? How might it be possible?*" Then write whatever comes to you.

This is just for you, so you don't need to think much about it. It doesn't need to be perfect. Just write from your heart and see what possibilities you discover. This gives you the opportunity to experience that objectivity I mentioned; to write the story as just a story and nothing more.

And this doesn't mean you're forgiving the other person, or even saying you're ready to forgive. The purpose of this writing exercise is only to explore the possibility that somebody, somewhere, might be able to forgive in a similar situation.

If you'd like to, I welcome you to share your forgiveness story on my blog at <http://www.inscribeyourlife.com/news/forgiveness> and I promise to read your comment.

Your Partner In Transformation,



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