

Moving Toward Self-Forgiveness

The capacity to forgive ourselves for transgressions and mistakes is essential to our subjective well-being. However, deciding to let go of our internal suffering can be difficult. It can also be a slow process.

Moving Toward Self-Forgiveness outlines a step-wise approach to the self-forgiveness process:

- Defining the wrong you wish to forgive yourself for
- Identifying the negative feelings to release
- Acknowledging the positive impacts that self-forgiveness will have on you
- Acknowledging the advantages of self-forgiveness for others, and
- Explicitly committing to self-forgiveness, and accepting its benefits.

Work through this activity at your own pace, making notes where necessary and writing your answers in the boxes provided.

Some prompts and examples are provided to help you.

1. Define the transgression.

What do you want to forgive yourself for, specifically? Choose one specific action or outcome, e.g. "I want to forgive myself for losing my temper and insulting my friend."

2. Identify the negative emotions you want to release.

Acknowledging the negative feelings that hold you back can help you release them. What unwanted emotions do you experience in relation to the transgression? E.g. Self-criticism, self-blame, guilt, anger, regret, frustration, unhappiness.

3. Acknowledge how self-forgiveness will benefit you.

Describe the advantages of freeing yourself from these negative emotions. There may be long- and short-term benefits. Be explicit, e.g. "I acknowledge that forgiving myself will help me because...." Examples might include being able to trust others more, or having a clearer conscience.

4. Acknowledge how forgiving yourself will benefit others.

Again being explicit, consider how your self-forgiveness might be valuable to those around you or the person you have wronged. E.g. "I will become a more supportive friend," or "I will be a more patient person." Some of these benefits might relate to your answers directly above.

5. Explicitly commit to your self-forgiveness.

Using your answers to the questions above, write your own pledge of commitment: "I commit to forgiving myself for [TRANSGRESSION] and open myself to the [BENEFITS] it brings."

E.g. "I commit to forgiving myself for losing my temper and shouting at my friend. I open myself up to the clarity and peace of mind it brings."