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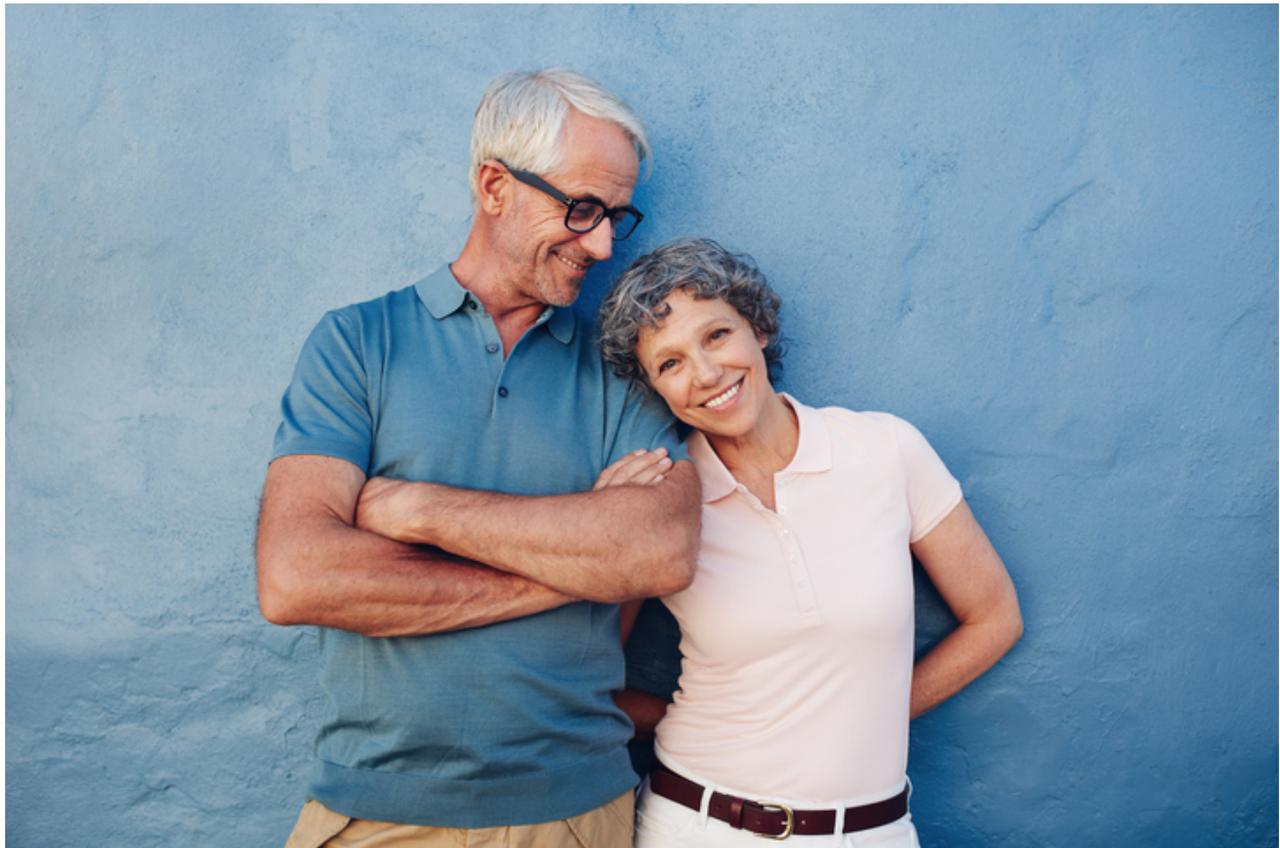
Learn what forgiveness is and what it is not. Take the quiz to see how forgiving you are!



Employee NEWSLETTER

An informational newsletter powered by First Sun EAP.

September 2017 Employee Issue



Forgiveness: The Key to a Happier and Healthier Lifestyle

“Forgiveness is setting a prisoner free and realizing you were the prisoner.”

— Lew Smedes, Christian author, ethicist and theologian

We all have been through situations where we have had to consider forgiveness — of others or ourselves. Forgiveness can bring up different ideas and mixed emotions. It often feels like forgiveness is letting the other person get away with something. In truth, forgiveness is about you. It is a healthy and healing act you do for yourself.

Just as forgiveness is important at home, it is also vital to our success and happiness at work. *Forbes Magazine* says forgiveness is the “least understood leadership trait in the workplace” and that there is a “devastating impact of not forgiving in the workplace.” (Forbes: April 23, 2015). Forgiveness is a powerful tool for promoting wellness, engagement, work-team effectiveness and addressing conflicts with co-workers.

A 2005 study published in *The Journal of Behavioral Medicine* found that participants who considered themselves more forgiving had better health across five measures:

1. Physical symptoms
2. The number of medications used
3. Sleep quality
4. Fatigue
5. Medical complaints

According to Dr. Fred Luskin, in his best-selling book *Forgive For Good: A Proven Prescription for Health and Happiness* (HarperSanFrancisco), people who are more forgiving report fewer health problems stress causes, such as anxiety and panic attacks. Forgiveness can lead to positive changes in blood pressure, muscle tension, and immune response. Failing to forgive may worse than hostility as a heart attack risk factor. In fact, some assert that forgiveness is good for our health on a par with quitting smoking!

So, what exactly is this new science of forgiveness?

Dr. Fred Luskin provides an answer and gives us a road map for how to forgive and move on. Luskin states forgiveness is a trainable life skill that heals grievances, increases hope and optimism, and offers a real-world approach to the transformation of conflict.

Luskin says forgiveness is:

The peace you learn to feel when you let go of unresolved grievances.

For you and not the offender.

Taking back your power.

Taking responsibility for how you feel.

Healing and not about the people who hurt you.

A trainable skill just like learning to throw a baseball.

Help to get control over your feelings.

Improving your mental and physical health.

Becoming a hero instead of a victim.

A choice.

Something everyone can learn.

And says forgiveness is not:

Condoning unkindness.

Forgetting that something painful happened.

Excusing poor behavior.

An otherworldly or religious experience.

Denying or minimizing your hurt.

Always reconciling with the offender.

Giving up having feelings.

So, how does this help us at work?

Let's consider an example. Suppose a co-worker takes credit for your idea. Naturally, feelings of anger, resentment and bitterness may emerge and you may feel compelled to confront your colleague. It is not OK that someone takes credit for your idea. It's best for your health to forgive the co-worker. Forgiveness doesn't mean letting someone off the hook for treating you poorly. If you dwell on the hurt for a prolonged period of time, it becomes detrimental to you. Anger is supposed to be a short-term visitor, not a colonizer who plants a flag.

So, how can you forgive and move on?

The first step, according to Luskin, is to acknowledge the hurt and understand what about it is not OK. Share that with a trusted friend or counselor, then choose to do something about it so you can release it and find peace. You should not let your happiness be captive to the mistakes or misdeeds of others. Find a constructive way to deal with the issue then let it go. With these actions, you have honored your feelings, taken responsibility, acted in your own best interests and made a decision to let go of this event. You have practiced forgiveness. Your co-worker may or may not apologize, but you have acted on your truth. Obviously, if he or she apologizes it is easier to let go of the hurt. Even if he or she doesn't, you are taking charge of your own happiness. Rising above the conflict builds a bridge toward a happier workplace. Choosing resentment or revenge burns this bridge and creates more stress in the workplace. The problem with revenge is there isn't a future in it!

Forgiveness in the Workplace

There is an exciting and growing body of literature establishing the benefits of forgiveness in the workplace. The material confirms that a forgiving workplace is a happier workplace; people are more engaged, productivity is higher and people feel valued and affirmed. In his article, "Forgiveness: The Least Understood Leadership Trait in the Workplace" (*Forbes Magazine*, January 5, 2015), David Williams observes that forgiveness builds great companies because everyone is respected and equally valuable, and everyone feels their contributions matter. Understanding and embracing forgiveness not only makes for a great workplace but also a great company.

How forgiving are you? Take the quiz!

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/quizzes/take_quiz/2

Forgiveness 1-2-3

1. Forgiveness is a trainable life skill, and everyone can learn to forgive.
2. Forgiveness is essential for our health, happiness and well-being.
3. Choosing to forgive creates a happier workplace.

How First Sun EAP can help

If you are feeling challenged by a situation at work or at home, please give us a call. Our counselors can help you find a resolution so you can move forward in health. We are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can come alone to a session, with your spouse or bring the whole family. We are here to help. Call us toll free at 800-968-8143 or visit us at www.firstsuneap.com.

About Lyndon Harris

Lyndon Harris is co-director of Tigg's Pond Retreat Center in Zirconia, NC. He is a forgiveness teacher and coach as well as a popular inspirational speaker. His work was featured in the award-winning documentary, "The Power of Forgiveness." You may reach Lyndon at ajourneytoforgiveness@gmail.com, or visit his website at www.lyndonharris.com.

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Employee
& Family

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- Elder Care Resources and Assistance
- Child Care Resources and Assistance
- College and School Resources
- Adoption Assistance
- Home and Lifestyle Resources
- Health and Wellness Resources
- Work and Career Development
- Legal Consultations and Documents
- Pet Care Program

Do you have a question about your benefits?
Please call 800-968-8143 or [email us](#).

How to Use Your EAP

BACK TO SCHOOL IS NOT ONLY FOR CHILDREN

If you or your family members are looking to enhance your education, look to us for guidance. Here are some ways you can begin.

1. **College bound.** Speak to a college assistance expert who can help you find a college to fit your goals and current situation.
2. **Personal growth.** Want to learn about wills, improving communication skills, getting healthier or organizing your finances? Find information to help you make an educated decision when you log into the wellness and training resources.
3. **Professional growth.** Visit the free training center on our website to increase your leadership and interpersonal skills and take courses in professional development.

First Sun EAP is here to help you and your families navigate these decisions!

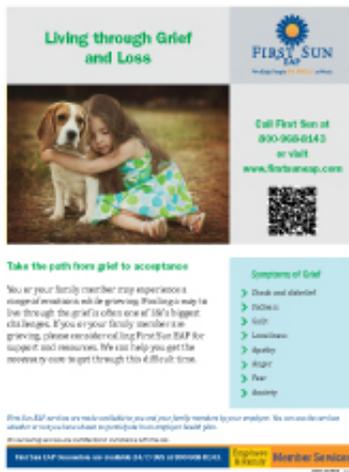
We are just a phone call away ...

- Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Log on to the [wellness and training resources](#) for personal and professional



When to Consider Tax Planning: No Better Time Than the Present!
 Receive tips to grow your financial wellness.

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Living through Grief and Loss

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growth

- Call 800-968-8143 and ask to speak with an intake specialist
- The intake specialist will gather some information then chat with you briefly about the services you need
- The intake specialist will connect you to a college assistance expert who can answer your questions



I SHARED MY EXPERIENCE. I SHARED MY EXPERIENCE. I SHARED MY EXPERIENCE. WILL YOU SHARE YOURS?

Your opinion means the world to us, and it could make a difference in someone else's life.

We love to hear that people's lives improved after using our services! Would you mind sharing your experience so others can also change their lives for the better?

YES! I'd love to share my experience!



*Thank you for letting us
help make so many people's
work and lives better!*



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