

forgiveness

a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you



CareGivers
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When was the last time you heard someone in your organization say, "I'm sorry", to a colleague or "I forgive you" to a leader? While these phrases were ingrained in us as children, they seemed to have gotten lost on the way to the office. Twenty years of research supports why forgiveness is more than just a good idea, yet in reality we see little practice of it in the workplace.

Forgiveness can improve our workplace performance by freeing our minds of emotional constraints that allows for greater concentration and focus on the task at hand. Forgiveness can undeniably increase the quality of our work relationships and bind teams together in honest discourse. As a leadership competency, it can influence corporate values and shape corporate culture. Forgiveness can have far reaching positive effects across organizations if it is encouraged and practiced at all levels.

Additionally, people who were "high forgivers" were more likely to work harder to resolve conflict and as a result, tended to have stronger relationships. According to a study at Duke University Medical Center, people who have forgiven others experience lower levels of physical pain, anger, and depression.

Forgiveness takes practice, patience, and humility, all of which can be in short supply at work with too many deadlines, too many meetings, not enough resources, and unrelenting shareholder pressure. Here are a few tips to help you weave forgiveness into your daily life and reap the health rewards:

Get in a forgiveness mindset. Instead of assuming people are out to get you, assume best intentions instead. If you are suspicious of others unceasingly, the slightest wrong may be magnified and further hardens you to the very idea of forgiveness.

Decide your own definition of forgiveness. What does forgiveness mean to you? How does forgiveness feel to you? People experience forgiveness differently. By creating a definition that fits you, you are more likely to take action on what you are able to forgive rather than trying to please someone else.

Practice "letting go". Change your expectations of self and others. Stop expecting yourself to be perfect and others to be perfect. There are no perfect people. Let go of the hurt, release the pain, be free from shame. Emotional shackles can make you unwell.

Forgiveness takes time. Be patient. It will not instantaneously occur. Forgiveness is a process not an event.

Talk to someone who can help you be objective. Explore the feelings you have associated with forgiveness whether it be with a close friend, a family member, a clergy member, or a therapist. They can hold up the proverbial mirror to your face so you can see for yourself what is really there.