

Healing Your Self Through Forgiving Your Spouse

by Jean MacKenzie

Although the person whom it may be most important to forgive may be your spouse, your spouse can often times be the hardest person in your life to forgive. The intimate nature of marriage makes spouses vulnerable to each other. A spouse who knows you better than any other person has the most ability to offend you. And, because you share a life together your spouse also has the most opportunity to be a repeat offender. When the person you are supposed to be closest to refuses to see how his or her actions hurt you or if they continue to hurt you in the same manner over and over again it can seem that forgiveness is impossible.

There is no doubt that forgiveness under these circumstances can be very difficult. However, clearing up some common misunderstandings about forgiveness may help the process along a little.

One of the misconceptions implied by a lack of forgiveness when a spouse is not willing to apologize is that if you forgive your spouse you are somehow doing them a favour. You may be doing your spouse a favour in terms of strengthening your relationship together in the long run and if that is a bad thing you may not want to practice forgiveness.

However, forgiveness certainly does not mean admitting that your spouse didn't hurt you or saying that what he or she did was OK. And, forgiveness definitely doesn't mean you have to let your spouse continue to hurt you. In fact, if you are in a situation of abuse, you should take steps to insure your safety right away. In other instances forgiveness may free up enough energy to deal with the cause of the hurt in a more constructive manner.

It takes a lot of energy to be angry with someone and one thing people don't often realize is that forgiveness is primarily something you do for yourself. You will not help your spouse realize the error of his or her ways by holding onto angry feelings. You only create tension and anxiety for yourself, which can lead to innumerable mental, emotional, and even physical problems, which in turn add further strain to your relationships.

It is true; the only person you can change is yourself. However, when you make changes to better yourself you can inspire others to change as well. So, why not start by freeing yourself of the burden of angry feelings. You'll feel better and if as a side effect your relationship with your spouse improves you'll win on two counts. What have you got to lose?

About Jean

Jean is a marriage and couples counsellor whose approach in working with couples involves the development of techniques for solving current problems and achieving unending growth in relationships. Jean strives to assist couples of various backgrounds in learning to solve their own challenges because a couple that knows how to problem solve can keep their love—and their marriage—alive forever.

Jean also offers Catholic counselling to couples wishing to incorporate the Catholic faith into the counselling process, helping couples to develop a relationship pleasing to each other and God. Jean has a Master of Arts in Counselling from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and has trained in marriage and family therapy.

So, if you think that your relationship could use a little help-- or even a lot of help,--give Jean a call today and take that important first step in turning your marriage into a “happily ever after” story.

Where do you start?

Look no further.

1. **Go to www.jeanmackenzie.com and sign up for my free newsletter “Happily Ever After: A Guide to Healthy Relationships,” filled with helpful tips on how to nurture your relationship.** You will also receive the free report, **“10 Tips for Resolving Anger in Your Relationship.”**
2. **Call today for a free, no obligation, 20 minute phone consultation.** We will discuss your problems and together decide how I might be able to help you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Jean sees clients in her office in Fredericton, NB and offers telephone and online counselling. She can be reached at:

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