



A 21-DAY STUDY GUIDE
By John Louis

PART II
“...As we forgive those who have sinned
against us...”
FORGIVENESS, ONE TO ANOTHER

PART I – “Forgive us our sins...”
FORGIVENESS FROM GOD THROUGH
REPENTANCE



PART II – “...As we forgive those who have
sinned against us...”
FORGIVENESS, ONE TO ANOTHER

Part I of this Study Guide is adapted from the book,
Repentance a Cosmic Shift of Mind and Heart by
Edward Anton

Part II of this Study Guide was written by John Louis.

This Study Guide was written to coincide with the
Forgiveness workshop, held on 2-4 April 2010 at the
Central Christian Church.

CONTENTS



PART 2: AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO HAVE SINNED AGAINST US

Day 12: Definition of Forgiveness	4
Day 13: More Passages on Forgiveness	7
Day 14: Steps to Help Parties to Forgive Each Other	11
Day 15: Hurts and Processing Your Anger	15
Day 16: Take Personal Responsibility	20
Day 17: Prepare for Forgiveness	21
Day 18: The Forgiveness Process	23
Day 19: Signs of Forgiveness and Unforgiveness	25
Day 20: Initiate the Process of Reconciliation	28
Day 21: Preparing Healing Statements	29
Appendix: Empathy Exercise	31

PART 2: AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO HAVE SINNED AGAINST US



For this part of the study guide, please take time daily to go through this material. This is not meant to rush you into forgiving those who have hurt you, but to rather underline the urgency with which this is related to our own salvation as is taught in the scriptures.

Day 12

Being able to forgive and repair a relationship is a vitally important component in the life of all disciples. In fact, being able to truly reconcile after disagreements is proof that we are practicing forgiveness like we should as Christians.

Understanding forgiveness and knowing how to extend it to each other is a very crucial for us to make it to heaven. Unfortunately, many Christians do not know exactly the correct biblical definition of forgiveness. Even in the field of counseling, experts and writers come up with all kinds of attending, assessment and intervention skills, and bravo to all of them, but only in rare cases is forgiveness given the attention it deserves. We strongly believe that unless forgiveness is properly and clearly understood and rendered, the possibility of “relapse” will be high. No doubt forgiveness may be difficult sometimes, but it is essential. When we forgive, all the bitterness, resentment, and anger are swept away. The negative emotional energy is gone and is replaced by a feeling of light-heartedness and freedom. A feeling of peace sets in. Indeed, forgiveness *is* the corner stone for healing in any relationship.

Definition of Forgiveness



The scriptures take an unambiguous stand on forgiveness. God allows us to choose to forgive, just like He gives us the choice to accept His grace and come to Him in repentance. In the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15), the father allowed the son to come to his senses of his own accord. The father waited patiently at home, looking at the horizon everyday, longing to see his son make his way back in humility. When the son made the first move, the father ran and embraced him! (Luke 15:20) Even with all this compassion waiting to burst from the father's heart, he still gave his son the choice to return. God is the same way. Forgiveness is our choice, but the consequences are grave with regards to our salvation if we choose not to forgive. Please read the parable below:

²¹Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" ²²Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. ²³"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. ²⁵Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶"The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' ²⁷The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. ²⁸"But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. ²⁹"His fellow servant fell to his knees

and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' ³⁰"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. ³²"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' ³⁴In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.



³⁵"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." (Matthew 18:21-35)

The last verse in the section above, verse 35, lets us know that God is not just giving a suggestion when He commands us to forgive. Our salvation is linked to whether or not we have forgiven others.

Day 13



More passages on forgiveness

Here are two more passages that are crucial to our understanding of forgiveness:

²¹"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' ²²But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

²³"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:21-24)

¹⁴Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. (Hebrews 12:14-15)

When we speak about forgiveness, we need to obviously make a distinction between the genuine and the superficial. Dr. Everett Worthington and Dr. Robert Enright are the foremost experts on forgiveness in North America. Dr. Worthington writes:

“In genuine forgiveness, one who has suffered an unjust injury chooses to abandon his or her right to resentment and retaliation, and instead offers mercy to the offender.”¹



Dr. Enright tells us:

“People, upon rationally determining that they have been unfairly treated, forgive when they willfully abandon resentment and related responses (to which they have a right), and endeavor to respond to the wrongdoer based on the moral principle of beneficence, which may include compassion, unconditional worth, generosity, and moral love (to which the wrongdoer, by nature of the hurtful act or acts, has no right). (reference to “*Helping Clients to Forgive*, pg 29, 2000, APA).

Using both these definitions, and primarily the scriptures, we believe that forgiveness is made up of several components:

1. We are aware that the offense was unfair.
2. We have the right to respond with anger.
3. We give up the right to revenge **AND RETALIATE THAT MAY CAUSE INJURY TO THE OFFENDER BECAUSE GOD HAS DONE THAT FOR US.**

¹ Worthington, E. L. (1998). *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research & Theological Perspectives*. Templeton Foundation Press.

4. We replace the feelings of resentment with compassion, benevolence and love, the way God has done for us through the death of Jesus Christ, His Son.



Dr. Enright (reference, pg 34, *Forgiveness is a choice*) goes on to say that when people have successfully forgiven someone, they have reduced or eliminated negative feelings, thoughts and behaviors toward the offender. Instead those who forgive have developed:

- Positive *feelings* toward the offender
- Positive *thoughts* toward the offender
- Positive *behavior* toward the offender

According to Enright,² **Forgiveness is NOT**

- Condoning the offender's actions
- Excusing the offender's actions
- Justifying the offender's actions
- Calming Down

Forgiveness is Not Necessarily Reconciliation

As Dr. Enright has put it,

² Enright, R. D. (2001). *Forgiveness Is a Choice*. American Psychological Association. 28–30.

“Reconciliation is the act of two people coming together following separation. Forgiving, on the other hand, is the moral action of one individual that starts as a private act, an unseen decision within the human heart.”³



Reconciliation involves both parties coming together, both rendering forgiveness and asking for forgiveness. Both parties are willing to still continue in a relationship with one another. However if one party feels unsafe being in a relationship with the other party who is not remorseful over his or her actions, then the injured party, after forgiving, may decide to not get reconciled and have only a limited relationship with the other party. For reconciliation to take place, there must be forgiveness beforehand. It cannot take place unless forgiveness is rendered. However, one can forgive without getting reconciled.

When it comes to having a healthy, satisfying marriage, for example, both forgiveness and reconciliation are essential. For other relationships, unfortunately, it may be best to just settle with forgiving the party that has hurt you, but not move towards reconciliation, as the other party may not be willing to do so, or if they themselves are not remorseful or repentant or are willing to take responsibility. In such situations, we may stay away from such unsafe people, even after forgiving. We may decide to not interact with these people in a close relationship for the time being, or to limit our interaction with them.

³ Enright, R. D. (2001). *Forgiveness Is a Choice*. American Psychological Association.

Day 14



Steps to Help Parties to Forgive Each Other

At the end of the day you may identify all the needs that have not been met, gain all the insights about your lifetraps and childhood, and know how to be vulnerable instead of reacting to one another through unhealthy coping styles, but unless there is proper forgiveness you will never completely heal. Perhaps after reading the section on forgiveness, you may realize that you have not forgiven someone on an issue. So it is important to go through these steps and take your time and do this properly and thoroughly. Allowing your hurts to remain may lead you to resentment and bitterness. Instead, rid your heart of all bitterness and truly forgive and get reconciled. This is challenging, no doubt. It takes putting your ego aside, and developing humility. It is this step that will overcome the impasse and bring peace, tranquility in your hearts.

Forgiveness, in our experience, begins with an understanding of God's grace. If we truly understand that God has cancelled our debts and that we didn't deserve such favor, then this understanding at an emotional level (as opposed to a rational level) will help us forgive others at an emotional level as well. The following steps are outlined to help you begin the process of forgiveness.

1. Process Your Anger

Forgiveness is most effective when you know yourself and are able to analyze your anger. Why is it important to identify and process your anger? It is because anger is able to suppress other feelings and get detached from them like the feelings of

shame and guilt. It is important before we go further to define shame and guilt.



Shame is the uncomfortable or painful feeling that we experience when we realize that a part of us is defective, bad, incomplete, rotten, phony, inadequate or a failure (Whitefield, *Healing the Child Within*, pg 44).

Enright goes on to say that that shame is also the fear of what others will think when they find out what has happened to us (*Forgiveness is a Choice*, pg 111) (Bear in mind that the words shame and defectives are used synonymously).

Guilt is where we feel bad from doing something wrong. Guilt comes from *doing* something, but shame comes from *being* something wrong or being bad (Whitefield, pg 44).

For both guilt and shame, there can be a healthy type and an unhealthy type.

Healthy guilt is the bad feeling one gets after actually doing something he/she knows is wrong, such as feeling guilty when you steal, lie, deceitful or cause injury to others. Unhealthy guilt is any guilt that comes from mistaken thinking, including a bad feeling over a perceived wrong that a person actually didn't do or couldn't control, such as when someone is sexually abused when they were young, and just because they tolerated it and perhaps at times received some pleasure from it, they feel guilty. Some people harden their consciences to the point that they do not feel any guilt, as Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4: 1-2:

¹The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by

demons. ²Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.



The Holy Spirit also comes and helps us have healthy guilt (or the right kind of guilt), as the Bible says in John 16: 7-9:

⁷But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me;

Unhealthy guilt is often associated with a person who has the surrendered coping style, who tends to think that most conflicts are usually their fault. In addition, some people feel guilty when someone does not have positive feelings towards them. For example, some of us may feel guilty for speaking up to someone about their sin. Our self-sacrificing or subjugation lifetraps kicks in and we feel guilty. This is an example of unhealthy guilt. Another example would be if we feel guilty for not reaching a certain standard that is imposed on us by other people. Sometimes people with the unrelenting standards lifetraps do this to those who are close to them. In such cases, it would be easy for us to have unhealthy guilt.

Healthy shame comes, for example, when our lies get exposed, and our dark side that caused harm to others is revealed. During such times, it is healthy to feel shame. Such shame is able to produce remorse and repentance. In the Bible, when a person is put out of fellowship from the church and/or disciplined appropriately, he should feel ashamed, as we read in 2 Thessalonians 3: 14

¹⁴If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed.



Then there are those of us who do not have healthy shame, such as described in the book of Jeremiah 6: 13-15.

As with guilt and shame, anger can also be healthy and unhealthy. Not all anger is wrong. Anger can be healthy, if it is controlled. Anger helps us to know where injustice is and helps us to respond to inappropriate behavior. It helps us to react quickly enough before any further harm takes place. It sends out the right signals, if used properly. In the book of Ephesians 4: 26, God says:

²⁶"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,

We are taught in the scriptures to **not sin in our anger**. It is how we deal with anger that determines whether it is harmful or not. In other words, anger becomes a problem when you cope with it in an unhealthy or sinful way. Usually, we cope with it in one of the three coping styles – Surrendered, avoiding or counterattacking.

Day 15



- a. Write down the significant hurts that you have experienced that you may not have properly dealt with as yet. Write down the names of the person(s) involved and how they have hurt you. Start with the person with whom you are the most angry. Do this in by filling up the first two columns in Table 1
- b. Write down how you coped with your anger. Which of the three coping styles do you use: surrender, avoidant or counterattacking? Select one of the following as you fill up the third column of Table 1.

Table 1

Who hurt you?	How did he / she hurt you?	How did you cope with this anger?

Take your time to do this exercise. Do not hurry simply to get this over and done with.



- c. Match the level of your anger with the wrong that was committed. Rate your anger from 1 – 10, with one being “not at all angry”, and 10 being “very angry”. Rate them below:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

- d. Match the level of seriousness of the wrong that was committed, with “1” being very mild, for example, the person was accidentally insensitive to “10” being the person publicly humiliated and shamed you deliberately. Again for objectivity sake you may need a trusted friend or leader to help you with this.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

- e. Is there a huge gap in your ratings of the last two scales?

- f. What triggered your anger? How much of it had to do with your defectiveness/shame lifetraps being triggered? Think back about that event. Try and be objective about two issues: **your perception on how you were being shamed/abused, which may have been exaggerated; and the actual reality.** Use the scale below and make the comparison, with 1 being “no shame/abuse whatsoever”, and 10 being “full of shame/abuse”. You may need someone’s help, a trusted friend or professional help, to make a better assessment of the

reality of how you were shamed/abused,
as often our perception can be distorted
because of our lifetraps.



Your perception

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

Reality

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

Is there a difference between the two levels? If so, why?
The larger the difference, the stronger your lifetraps may
be.

- g. Begin with the incident or issue that you still have
resentment over. Does this incident remind you of any
childhood event? What are they and their similarities?
- h. Is there a pattern in your anger from childhood until the
present time?
- i. To whom is your anger generally directed towards? For
example, is it towards people whom you perceived to
have shamed/abused you, like authority figures in your
life?
- j. Looking at the issue again, do you think you have
behaved inappropriately towards the individual who
has hurt you or even to your self? If so, how was your
behavior inappropriate? Again, to fill this up accurately,
talk to a trusted friend/s or to a professional to get an
objective view.

- Taking revenge in small ways?
- Giving a cold shoulder?
- Gossiping?
- Just avoiding



- p. What lifetraps got triggered as a result of this hurt? For example, you may have been abused, in which case, the mistrust/abuse lifetraps may have been triggered and you are not looking at people the same way. Rather you are now suspicious of people. Your lifetraps are now very active in your life. Perhaps it was the defectiveness lifetraps for being shamed in the past. This may now be very active in your life and you look at yourself very distortedly and in an unhealthy way. So, what lifetraps have been triggered and how do you see yourself and others?

Forgiveness can *weaken* your lifetraps, and change your view of yourself and others for the better. Forgiveness can also change your coping styles, and weaken them. A counter attacker may not counter attack towards that person and others. Likewise an avoider or a surrendered type will cope differently. Forgiveness can take us from the prison of resentment and bitterness and free us. How wonderful!

Day 16



2. Take Personal Responsibility

In any given conflict, most people will blame the other party and not see their own faults so well. While not all faults in a conflict can be grouped into a 50-50 split between each party, it is fruitless to spend time analyzing who is more at fault. Even if one person is responsible for 95% of the conflict, the other must still see their 5% part in the whole process. It will help you to forgive when you clearly see your faults.

As you understand each other's viewpoint better, focus on what you did that was not helpful and how you contributed to the conflict. For today's quiet time, journal about your contribution in the conflict. If you have a problem seeing what your faults are, get help from a friend. There should be a sense of remorse on your part for the contribution you made in the conflict. This is especially true when you think your fault is 5% while others who know you think otherwise. This is when you have to really listen and realize that resentment and bitterness has made you view the situation distortedly.

Day 17



3. Prepare for Forgiveness

After processing your anger and seeing your fault in the conflict, ask yourself if you are now willing to forgive the other party, remembering the definition of forgiveness. Go back and read it again if needs be. If you are not ready to forgive, then ask yourself, “Why am I not willing to forgive?” Explore the following:

- Perhaps the other party has not conveyed proper understanding of his or her responsibility and/or was minimizing it.
- The lifetraps of punitiveness is interfering and is “asking” for some kind of punishment to be inflicted on the other party.
- I have not had time to really deal with the pain and emotion of my childhood hurts.
- My coping style of avoidance is taking over and I do not want to feel the pain again.
- My ego is getting in the way. It is too hard for me to say, “I forgive”.
- I have not had time to do the homework outlined in step 1 above.

Remember, if there are conditions being imposed before a person is willing to forgive, then it ceases to be forgiveness. Forgiveness is a voluntary act and is unconditional, not based on any restitution. It is a private act between you and

God. Any act of benevolence resulting from this should be from the person's own choice, not as a condition that is imposed.



Day 18



4. *The Forgiveness Process*

One exercise that sometimes helps people to be able to forgive is to reflect on a time in the past when he or she received forgiveness from another:

- a. Who was the person offended by you?
- b. What did you do to offend him/her?
- c. What was your reaction initially? Did you see your contribution in the conflict?
- d. What made you see your responsibility in the conflict?
- e. How did the offended party react?
- f. How did you apologize at that time and/or show empathy?
- g. How did he or she feel about your apology?
- h. What did they do to show that they had forgiven you?



- i. Did you also get reconciled (as opposed to just stopping at forgiveness)?
- j. What did that reconciliation look like to you?
- k. How did that make you feel toward him/her?
- l. How did being forgiven make you feel? What emotions were there?
- m. Repeat this exercise with another person/party that forgave you.
- n. Does thinking about being forgiven help you to forgive?
- o. Would you like for the party that was in conflict with you feel the way you felt towards the person who forgave you?
- p. Are you now willing to forgive? If so, you are now able to offer the same gift to that person. Proceed to make the decision to forgive.

Day 19



5. Signs of Forgiveness and Unforgiveness

When a person is not willing to forgive, others will be able to tell. Usually their demeanor gives them away: lack of eye contact, angry expressions on the face, making demands for restitution or for the offended party to initiate. If they are not willing, then more work is needed. Some helpful books: “Forgiveness Is a Choice”⁴ by Dr Robert Enright, and “Dimensions of Forgiveness”⁵ by Dr Everett Worthington. Remember that when forgiveness is extended, your negative feelings (affect), thoughts and actions (behavior) will be replaced by positive ones. Consider the following questions:

- Are your thoughts more positive now compared to before?
- Is there anger now when you think about the incident?
- When you tell the story, do your emotions come up like it just happened yesterday?
- Are you beginning to wish the person well? As Lewis Smede wrote in his book,

⁴ Enright, R. D. (2001). *Forgiveness Is a Choice*. American Psychological Association.

⁵ Worthington, E. L. (1998). *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research & Theological Perspectives*. Templeton Foundation Press.

“You will know that forgiveness has begun when you recall those who hurt you and feel the power to wish them well.”⁶



- If something negative happened to him or her, how would you really feel deep inside your heart?

If you feel that you have not forgiven or are having difficulty, then you may have your own definition of forgiveness.

Write down your definition of forgiveness.

In my opinion, forgiveness is: _____

Compare this with the definition at the beginning of this chapter. How are they different or similar?

Similar: _____

Different: _____

Perhaps after getting hurt and having faced many injustices your definition has changed. Perhaps your definition was based on incorrect understanding. Either way, take stock on your

⁶ Smede, L. B. (1984). *Forgive and Forget. Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve*. New York: Pocket Books.

previous definition and make the appropriate shift in your thinking. Remember it pays to get our definition right because God takes our forgiveness seriously.



If you would like to not just forgive but also get reconciled, then proceed to the following steps in the next few entries.

Day 20



6. Initiate the Process of Reconciliation

It is also not helpful to wait for the person who contributed to the conflict more to initiate reconciliation. However, reconciliation is not possible if only one party is willing. It takes maturity for both to work on their respective part of the conflict simultaneously. Sometimes this takes intervention of a third party with whom both feel safe.

7. Listen and Acknowledge Each Other's Pain

After processing your anger, the person with a lot of hurts should do an exercise where they would take turns to explain his or her pain in the presence of other trusted friends, with the person that you would like to get reconciled with. The goal of this step is to develop empathy for one another, the foundation for forgiveness. They should rehearse doing this in a *vulnerable* way, as explained in chapter four, not by being counterattacking, or avoidant or being surrendered. When we are vulnerable then healing will take place. When we use our coping styles (as explained in chapter three and four), healing will not take place. (For specifics on this step, please see the Appendix.)

When we acknowledge one another's pain, it communicates understanding and empathy, and this has a way of dissolving our anger if it is done well. So saying in your own words how the other person felt, by putting yourself into his/her shoes would go a long way in helping people to be reconciled. If you have a genuine problem showing empathy, even after doing the exercises in the Appendix, then pastoral counseling or professional help should be sought.

Day 21



8. Prepare and State Each Other's Healing Statements

In helping people to get reconciled, there is power in preparing and stating one another's healing statements. Sometimes, reading out each other's pain and acknowledging personal responsibility is not enough to help those involved in the conflict to let go of their hurts and anger. In this case, ask each other what statements and or acknowledgements are needed for there to be healing. This may give rise to another conflict, but it is important that both sides do not label each other. Simply state what healing statements would be helpful for you to hear the other party say. Each party should write these things down in their journal. Then in a non-demeaning way and without any anger in the tone of voice, they should make these statements with sincerity and with gentleness.

Both sides should develop the humility needed to admit to hurting each other. *Bear in mind that healing statements are not to be confused with restitution, or any condition that should be demanded before forgiveness could be rendered.* Healing statements help each other feel the empathy and the personal responsibility of the other person. Remember we need to feel that the other person understands his/her personal responsibility and understands our pain, since we are moving beyond forgiveness to reconciliation. We are choosing to get reconciled, not just to forgive.

CONCLUSION



When Jesus taught his disciples how they were to communicate with their heavenly father in Luke 11:1-4, Jesus stressed forgiveness as an important part of their prayer.

¹One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

²He said to them, "When you pray, say, "'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. ³Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

God views forgiveness as two separate but equally important parts: asking forgiveness from God, and forgiving those around us. Without one, we cannot gain the other. Let us, therefore, strive to live out both in our lives. First by striving for *metanoia* and a change of hearts by accepting God's forgiveness, and secondly by taking the difficult path of continually forgiving those who have hurt us and who will hurt us in the future.⁷

⁷ If you are still unsure whether you have completely forgiven the person who had hurt you, please complete the "Enright Forgiveness Inventory", a questionnaire that was given out as part of the Forgiveness Workshop.

APPENDIX



EXERCISE TO DEVELOP EMPATHY WHEN LISTENING TO THE OTHER'S PARTY'S PAIN

This exercise should take place between the two parties in conflict with each other and in the presence of an arbitrator that they both trust. The person that has been hurt and/or has the resentment should begin by explaining his/her hurts in a vulnerable way, just like the examples given in chapter four. This is why it is important to process your anger ahead of time to help you be vulnerable. After the hurting person has finished being vulnerable, the listening person should provide a summary (rephrasing) of what he heard the other person say. The listening person should continually say, "Is there else that you would like me to know?", not "Are you finished?", or "Why are you taking so long?" The listening person should do this until the other partner has nothing else to say.

Do not minimize their pain or get angry because a past issue is being brought up again. Do not dismiss them as being trivial. Anger should be expressed, but not in a labeling demeaning manner, putting the other person down. There should be no raising of voices or rage. Anger should be directed in a healthy way.

One way to gauge that is to ask the third party arbitrating if the anger is appropriate or not. The partner talking needs to be vulnerable. Do not listen to the voice of your lifetraps, such as avoiding shame or guilt from being vulnerable. It is painful but this is also where the healing starts to come.

By the end, the listening person should be able to give an accurate summary of the perspective of the other person. He or she may not gain new insights or may not shift in his or her emotions and develop empathy as yet, but this first step should be done. This part may take a while especially if it involves revealing different lifetraps, and childhood experiences. This may take time if the

conflict has its roots in lifetraps and the two parties has never talked about this before with one another.



For some of you, it may take days or weeks to process your anger and painful childhood memories. Do not hurry or hasten your process unnecessarily for the sake of getting this over and done with. Until you really process your hurts and pain thoroughly, you may not be able to forgive genuinely, and then at another time in the future, you may bring this up again, and the cycle will repeat itself, except that this time it may get worse. Take your time, but work steadily towards understanding each other's situation.

The more you are able to understand and empathize, the more it will help you in the reconciliation process. When you really understand each other's childhood experiences and hurts, you will develop compassion for each other and you will be able to work towards forgiving one another.

Switch places and repeat the above with the other person. In some situations, the act of doing the above will help each person to see their own respective faults in the conflict. If they are not able to empathize or see their own fault then they should proceed with the step below.

If you have a hard time empathizing, don't give up. Try the following exercise:

If the listening person is not able to empathize, both should do this homework exercise.

Read the notes of the other person's perspective of his or her pain. Empathizing does not mean you are accepting complete responsibility. However, it does give you a window to understand the other person's pain and hurts. Focus on his/her viewpoint. Mull over it for a few days, if need be. Here are some questions that

may help you improve your feelings of empathy for the other person:



- What kind of a home did he or she grow up in?
- What kind of childhood did he or she have?
- How was he treated by his or her parents?
- Are you able to write down the wounds and pains he or she went through growing up?
- Are you able to see how these have shaped his or her worldview?
- If you have, in anger, labeled the person you are in conflict with negatively, do you think that he or she deserves that labeling when you consider the larger context of his or her life?

After empathizing with each other, go through step 8 that will take you both through the reconciliation process.