



# *The* **Freedom** *of Forgiveness*

Forgiveness heals the brokenness inside whether you ever hear an apology or not. Some folks will never admit they're wrong let alone apologize. Unforgiveness will keep us trapped and captive in a place of despair.

My childhood was tough and full of traumatic experiences. I have a list of stories I could share. My list goes on and on. Being molested by my sister and school principal, left me feeling angry, hurt and betrayed. Bullying caused me feelings of rejection, shame, depression, fear, and anger. My father's abuse physically, mentally and emotionally, cut me so deep I thought I'd bleed forever. His "disappearing acts" were not magical to me at all. It made me feel abandoned, rejected, unloved and unwanted. That was the beginning of my trust issues. Those trust issues grew deep roots in me.

As I grew older, there were more offences I endured. I dated guys that reminded me of my father and manipulated me like my school principal used to do. All of my boyfriends cheated on me. I would remain in unhealthy relationships feeling insecure, lonely, disappointed and broken hearted. Why? Because, I didn't know my self-worth. Unforgiveness created insecurities inside of me. Now you may say "Sylana what does this have to do with forgiveness", keep reading and you'll learn.

I found myself "people pleasing" trying to fit in. I wanted badly to be loved and accepted. Each relationship continued a fierce cycle. Drinking and using drugs became my comforter. It also allowed me to feel a false sense of security. It took all of my hurt and pain away, at least that's what I thought. The roots of resentments grew and as it did, I became more powerful in causing harm to others and myself. I did some terrible things to get what I wanted, and I also went out of my way to cause others harm. Many were indirect victims of my own hurt.

A "temporary moment of insanity" came upon me after the loss of my first born. I was mad at God for a period of time. My drug use became excessive. I was an addict. Although no one including myself recognized it, the harm I caused during that time was something I'll never forget. I even pushed my children away chasing the next high. It was the only peaceful place I thought I could find. The drugs made me feel powerful and in control, yet my life was unmanageable and chaotic.

Finally, a good man came along and wanted to love me but, I couldn't trust him. He didn't want my money, sex nor anything I had except my heart. He wanted to love me and I wanted so bad to believe that but I couldn't. I called him "damaged goods". He was good to me but damaged from his own past hurts and he swept it under his feet. Those past hurts made him a runner.

When things were complicated, just like my dad he'd leave. He'd come back and leave again. We married, divorced and married again.

So, why did I tell you so much of my life story, because I had pain for as long as I could remember, and it wasn't forgiven. Its roots grew deeper and thicker and manifested in several areas of my life as well as the lives of others. Change began the day, I saw that my hurt was destructive, and I began doing self-inventory. My greatest villain was unforgiveness. It kept me hostage. All the great jobs I had, the wonderful opportunities, the close relationship with my children and others I sabotaged. It all boiled down to unforgiveness. I didn't know how to accept greater. It was uncomfortable to me. Doing work on myself opened the door for me to forgive. I not only forgave others but myself. Some of us have to forgive ourselves as well. Unforgiveness will keep us stuck, but forgiveness is freedom.

We forgive to heal ourselves and also to be obedient to God. We have to be willing to forgive the unspoken apology and let go. That means we no longer hold grudges, resentments, the desire to retaliate, nor continue looking at someone as the "offender". Yes, we have to even look at our defender as a different person, after we forgive them. Forgiveness is cleaning one's slate. Self-forgiveness allows us to break free and love ourselves. It will open doors of opportunities that we felt unworthy of. When I was able to forgive others including my husband and self, I learned to love me, my marriage blossomed (my husband by that time also had forgiven past hurts) I strongly bonded with my children and I built other healthy relationships too. Forgiveness allows me to make amends with my community now. Once I was once the problem but now, I am the solution. The outreach I do is from a place of love.

How many times has our higher power forgiven us? Are we greater than he not to forgive? Where would we be if not for His forgiveness and second chances?

Forgiveness is the key to freedom. Free yourself today. Pray, forgive, let go and give it to God. Let your new journey start today.

"The Freedom of Forgiveness"

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