

FORGIVENESS

"It is not in our power to feel or to forget an offense, but the heart that offers itself to the Holy Spirit turns injury into compassion and purifies the memory in transforming the hurt into intercession."

FORGIVENESS IS THE ONLY REMEDY FOR ANGER

"A gentle answer quiets wrath." *Proverbs 15*

The only remedy for anger is forgiveness. This does not mean that some action may not be necessary for the sake of charity and justice. However, the debt must be dismissed "seventy times seven." When someone apologizes, it makes it easier to forgive him or her because of their repentance and confession, and by humbling themselves; they show that they think better of us than the treatment had shown. Still, it takes humility on the part of the one who forgives as well. Justice is on his side, but charity is demanding something more of him. This may be paramount to the meaning of being "Christ-like."

FORGIVENESS IS THE PARDON OR REMISSION OF AN OFFENSE

It involves an act of the will to release a debt against justice on the part of another. It dismisses the memory of the act of injustice.

GOD'S FORGIVENESS VERSUS MAN'S FORGIVENESS

In God's perfect forgiveness, He does not remember our sins. He will "...cast all my sins behind thy back." Is. 38:17 For human beings, however, a memory may return. This memory may bring a variety of emotions. For example, if the memory is joyful, joy may return. If the memory is painful, pain may return.

Thus, there are times when we must struggle with memories and need to repeatedly dismiss a recurring memory, "...not seven times but seventy times seven." -Mt. 18:12

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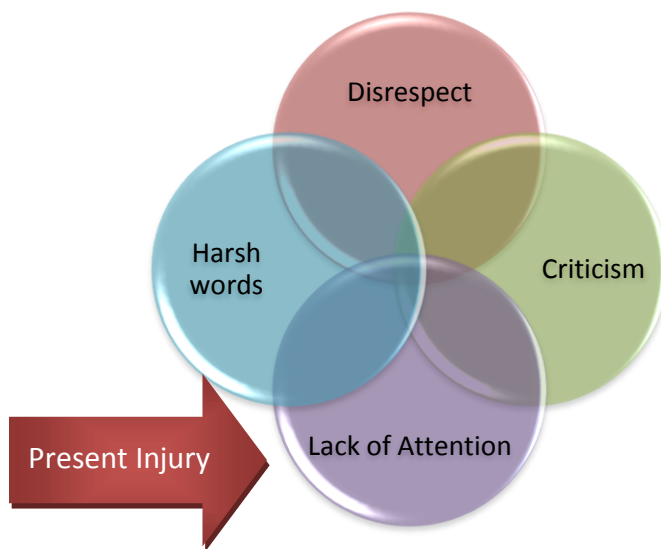
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PRESENT WOUNDS CAN BE COMPOUNDED BY PAST EXPERIENCES

1. A present memory may also bring other memories of similar experiences to mind.
2. The number of these similar memories may intensify the emotions. E.g. Joy may be intensified or pain may be intensified.
3. From this one can see how emotional wounds can be compounded by the memories of wounds in the past. These old wounds may surface in the events of daily life. E.g. If our spouse hurts us it can bring to mind injuries caused by our spouse or even someone else. This is very common today where the wounds from previous relationship, in particular that with family members, affect the intimacy of a couple.
4. One may have to forgive a spouse repeatedly for similar experiences. The spouse, on the other hand, may need to make efforts to change the behavior that might be causing the present injuries.



The present lack of attention makes the woman feel unimportant. She automatically associates this with memories of similar experiences and slights. They merge with the present injury to cause a disproportionate emotional response.

The passion is not proportionate to the present injury. However, it is in proportion to the sum of all the memories of injuries.

SATURATION OF MEMORIES

When a person is filled with bad memories, because someone has let him or her down repeatedly, forgiving is a real challenge. Since the injury has taken place over time, realize that forgiveness will also take time. Forgiveness is easier if there are also some positive moments to remember. This gives the injured party some good reasons to continue to be forgiving and provides a healthy perspective.

One needs to have a certain proportion or ratio of good memories over bad. Some might say for every bad memory one needs to have five or six good memories. When the injuries are plentiful and the good memories in short supply the mind becomes saturated with the bad memories.

This is not the time to talk. To do so would likely end in an argument and thus create another bad memory. In times like these it is better to do some positive things together in order to build up some good memories and experiences before the couple tries to talk about the difficulties.

