

The Impact of the Past on Forgiveness

Our past experiences have significant impact on current relationship and coping styles. Inability to forgive or failure to recognize the unforgiven issues from our past can impair the ability to forgive in present circumstances. Sometimes when a current hurt or offense occurs it summons up and piggybacks on powerful feelings from the past. Some of these feelings may come from forgotten events still deeply embedded. To quote the American poet Maya Angelou, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel." It's not necessary to remember the event to feel its impact. Understanding those experiences, we do remember can help us understand and discriminate what emotions are directly connected to the offense and what is a compounded reaction from the past.

Give a description of your five most significant memories before the age of seven:

Memory 1:

Memory 2:

Memory 3:

Memory 4:

Memory 5:

In the chart below, check any possible themes you believe these childhood memories represent:

<input type="checkbox"/> abandonment	<input type="checkbox"/> physical abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> contentment
<input type="checkbox"/> loneliness	<input type="checkbox"/> security	<input type="checkbox"/> loss
<input type="checkbox"/> insecurity	<input type="checkbox"/> violence	<input type="checkbox"/> love
<input type="checkbox"/> dependency	<input type="checkbox"/> marital unity	<input type="checkbox"/> alcoholism/drug use
<input type="checkbox"/> sadness/depression	<input type="checkbox"/> anger	<input type="checkbox"/> affection
<input type="checkbox"/> divorce	<input type="checkbox"/> support	<input type="checkbox"/> anxiety
<input type="checkbox"/> health concerns	<input type="checkbox"/> aggression	<input type="checkbox"/> emotional abuse
<input type="checkbox"/> neglect	<input type="checkbox"/> joy	<input type="checkbox"/> fear
<input type="checkbox"/> spiritual abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> marital discord	<input type="checkbox"/> unhealthy conflict
<input type="checkbox"/> positive communication	<input type="checkbox"/> self-doubt	<input type="checkbox"/> peace
<input type="checkbox"/> financial issues	<input type="checkbox"/> spiritual wellness	<input type="checkbox"/> detachment
<input type="checkbox"/> betrayal	<input type="checkbox"/> dishonesty, deceit	<input type="checkbox"/> integrity
<input type="checkbox"/> bullying	<input type="checkbox"/> manipulation	<input type="checkbox"/> confidence

other: _____

1. Which of these items continue to impact your adult life? How so?

2. How have those areas impacted or interfered with your ability to forgive?

2. How can you address these issues so they don't interfere with your ability to forgive?
