

Forgive For Good

**A Proven
Prescription for
Health and
Happiness (Harper
One, 2002)**

Fred Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

What is forgiveness?

- **Forgiveness is a feeling of peace**
- **Forgiveness is for you and not the offender**
- **Forgiveness is taking back your power**
- **Forgiveness takes responsibility for how you feel**
- **Forgiveness is about your healing**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

What is forgiveness?

- **Forgiveness is *not* about the person who hurt you**
- **Forgiveness is a trainable skill**
- **Forgiveness helps you get control over your feelings**
- **Forgiveness can improve mental and physical health**
- **Forgiveness is a choice**
- **Everyone can learn to forgive!**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

What forgiveness is not!

- **Forgiveness is not condoning unkindness**
- **Forgiveness is not forgetting something painful**
- **Forgiveness is not excusing poor behavior**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

What forgiveness is not!

- **Forgiveness is not denying or minimizing your hurt**
- **Forgiveness does not mean reconciling with the offender**
- **Forgiveness does not mean you give up having feelings**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgive For Good

- **One of the central messages of forgiveness training is that only three core components underlie the creation of a long-standing hurt and grievance:**
 - **The exaggerated taking of personal offense**
 - **The blaming of the offender for how you feel**
 - **The creation of a grievance story**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgive For Good

- Careful feeding and dedicated nurturing of these grievance components can keep a hurt alive forever
- This is exactly what we do when we refuse to forgive

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgive For Good

- We can create a “grievance story”, and every time we complain about this story, we suffer physically
- The ability to get over our wounds is crucial to health, both emotional and physical

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgive For Good

- If you learn to forgive, you will feel better and gain a power over your life that might have seemed impossible
- If you learn to forgive you will find that your life has possibilities you could only dream of
- You will have more energy available to make good decisions

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Studies reveal:

- **People who are more forgiving report fewer health problems**
- **Forgiveness leads to less stress**

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Studies reveal:

- **Forgiveness leads to fewer physical symptoms of stress**
 - **example: anxiety and panic attacks**
- **Failure to forgive may be more important than hostility as a heart attack risk factor**

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Studies reveal:

- **People who blame other people for their troubles have higher incidences of conditions such as cardiovascular disease and cancer**
- **People who imagine not forgiving someone show negative changes in blood pressure, muscle tension and immune response**

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Studies reveal:

- **People who imagine forgiving their offender note immediate improvement in their cardiovascular, muscular and nervous systems**
- **Even people with devastating losses can learn to forgive and feel better psychologically and emotionally!**

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Creating a Grievance

- **Grievances are formed when people are unable to deal successfully with not getting what they wanted and then they rent too much space in their minds to the injustice**
- **This is the grievance process we go through even when the disappointment is as severe and horrible as the loss of a loved one**

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Creating a Grievance

- **It is the same process when the injustice is waiting an extra moment in a supermarket line or struggling in traffic when we are late for an appointment, or struggling to make sense out of a random act of violence**

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Do You Have a Grievance?

- Do you talk over and over about what happened to you?
- Do you let your mind dwell on the grievance many times during the day?
- Do you get tired of the amount of time that you give to thinking about things in the past?

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Do You Have a Grievance?

- When you think of the grievance, what kind of intensity is there?
- Do you pay more attention to those who have hurt you or what you have lost, than being grateful for those who love you?

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Do You Have a Grievance?

- How much time and energy do you spend focusing on the hurt?
- Do you think about the painful situation more than you think about the things in your life that are good?

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Do You Have a Grievance?

- If you answer yes to any of these questions, you have formed a grievance that is renting too much space in your mind
- You can learn to “Forgive For Good”

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Choosing a Story

- The more time spent on the loss, makes the habit stronger and harder and more difficult to break. Dwelling on your wounds, give them power over you!
- What you remember, or focus your attention on, can be shifted much the same way that you can change the channel on your television

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Choosing a Story

- If we are used to watching the same grievance channel, we are likely to see that the world has many grievances, but if we are used to watching the forgiveness channel the world can begin to look different. Change the channel!

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Getting Ready to Forgive

- **Forgiveness is only one response of many you can choose from when you are hurt**
- **Forgiveness is a skill that you can learn**
- **Forgiveness takes place by undoing each of the steps of the grievance process**

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Getting Ready to Forgive

- **We learn to balance the impersonal aspect of hurt with the personal, which most of the time means taking something less personally**
- **We take responsibility for how we feel when someone hurts us**
- **Finally, we change our grievance story to a forgiveness story, where we become the hero instead of the victim**

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Getting Ready to Forgive

- **There are three simple preconditions needed before we are ready to forgive:**
 - **Know what your feelings are about what happened**
 - **Be clear about the action that wronged you**
 - **Share your experience with at least one or two trusted people**

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

What is forgiveness?

- **The major obstacle to forgiving is a lack of understanding of what forgiveness is**
- **Some of us confuse forgiveness with condoning unkind actions**
- **There are those who think that we forgive in order to repair the relationship with the offender**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

What is forgiveness?

- **Some of us are afraid to forgive because we think we will not be able to seek justice**
- **Some think that forgiveness has to be a precursor to reconciliation**
- **Some think that forgiveness means we forget what happened. Each of these conceptions is wrong**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

What is forgiveness?

- **Forgiveness is the feeling of peace that emerges as you take your hurt less personally, take responsibility for how you feel**
- **Become the hero instead of the victim in the story you tell**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

What is forgiveness?

- **Forgiveness is the feeling of peacefulness in the present moment**
- **Forgiveness does not change the past, it changes the present**
- **Forgiveness means that even though you are wounded you choose to hurt and suffer less**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

What is forgiveness?

- **Forgiveness means that you become part of the solution**
- **Forgiveness is the understanding that hurt is a normal part of life**
- **Forgiveness is for you and no one else. You can forgive and rejoin a relationship or forgive and never speak to that person again**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

The Science of Forgiveness

- **Scientific research clearly shows that learning to forgive is good for one's health and well-being – good for mental health and physical health as well.**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Science of Forgiveness

- Preliminary studies from research in allied fields such as psychology, medicine, and religion show that feeling more positive emotions such as gratitude, faith and care have a positive impact on cardiovascular function
- There are positive results in one's life as one learns to forgive!

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness Improves Health

- The positive emotional changes I found have implications for health
- Higher levels of hope have been shown to help people deal successfully with pain and some forms of illness

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness Improves Health

- Spiritually minded people cope better with loss and illness
- The primary goal of forgiveness training is to reduce the amount of anger the participants hold

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness Improves Health

- **Forgiveness is a complex experience that changes an offended person's spiritual feelings, emotions, thoughts, actions, and self-confidence level**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness is Practical

- **The definition of forgiveness is centered on the benefits of feeling peaceful**
- **Finding peace does not have to be complicated**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness is Practical

- **Remember all grievances begin when something in a person's life happens that they do not want to happen**
- **From that initial unpleasantness they take things too personally, blame the offender for how they feel, and tell the grievance story**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness is Practical

- **The grievance means that too much space has been rented in their minds to hurt and anger**
- **Forgiveness is the feeling of peace that emerges as you:**
- **take the hurt less personally**
- **take responsibility for how you feel**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness is Practical

- **Become a hero instead of a victim in the story you tell**
- **As you feel more and more peace, you are progressing in your goal to heal from your grievances**
- **You are learning to forgive**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness is Practical

- **Take responsibility for how you feel**
- **We are responsible for our emotional experience**
- **Our past is not responsible for our present feelings**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness is Practical

- **Just because something unpleasant happened in our past or may occur in our future does not mean that day after day should be ruined**
- **Difficulties, mistreatments and unkindness do not have an extended warranty**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness is Practical

- **We become helpless when we give the person who hurt us excessive power over how we feel**
- **Our painful feelings will diminish only when we take that power back and show we are responsible for how we feel!**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness if Practical

- **Practice these two techniques to help us reclaim responsibility for how we feel**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness if Practical

- **#1. Do not loose sight of the good things in our life**
- **Spend time and energy finding the beauty and love in our life to balance the time we spend on grudges, grievances and wounds**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness is Practical

- **#2. Practice PERT**
- **When you are feeling the effects of an unresolved grievance or ongoing relationship problem do this exercise:**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness is Practical

- **Bring your attention fully to your stomach as you slowly draw in and out two deep breaths**
- **As you inhale, allow the air to gently push your belly out**
- **As you exhale, consciously relax your belly so that it feels soft**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness is Practical

- **On the third and deep inhalation, bring to your mind's eye an image of someone you love or a beautiful scene in nature that fills you with awe and wonder**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness is Practical

- **Often people have a stronger response when they imagine their positive feelings are centered in the area of their heart**
- **While practicing, continue with soft belly breathing**
- **Ask the relaxed and peaceful part of your what you can do to resolve this difficulty**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Changing the Channel on Your Remote Control

- **When you bring more positive experiences into your life, your hurts will diminish in importance!**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Gratitude Channel

- **Walk into a supermarket and give thanks for the abundance of food**
- **Go to a nursing home or hospital and give thanks for your health**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Gratitude Channel

- **When driving, mentally thank each of the drivers who follow the rules of the road**
- **If you have a significant other, thank this person for caring for you. Make it a point to do this every day!**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Gratitude Channel

- **Remind yourself of any kind act done by your parents**
- **Notice a salesperson or clerk at a store and thank that person for their help and for waiting on you**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Gratitude Channel

- In your home, give thanks for all of the labor that went into making your furniture, appliances and food
- As you wake up each morning, give thanks for your breath and the gift of your life

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Beauty Channel

- When stuck in traffic, notice the beauty of the sky or the remarkable movement of birds or clouds
- Find a favorite spot in nature that you can go to easily

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Beauty Channel

- Watch nature shows on television
- Deeply appreciate your favorite piece of music
- Walk slowly, and absorb the smells and sights of nature

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Beauty Channel

- Notice how beautiful well-prepared foods looks and tastes
- Observe the beauty and wonder of flowers

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness Channel

- Look for people who have forgiven others, and ask them to tell you their stories
- Remember when you have forgiven and remind yourself that you can do it again

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness Channel

- Read books about people who have forgiven hurtful situations
- See if there are any forgiveness stories in your own family

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness Channel

- Practice forgiving the smallest offenses against you
- Forgive a driver who cuts you off on the road

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Forgiveness Channel

- Think of the times that you have hurt others and needed forgiveness
- Notice whenever someone is kind to you after you have hurt him/her
- Notice how often you naturally forgive those you truly love

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Love Channel

- Look for people who are in love, and smile at their happiness
- Go to a hospital and observe the love of a family who cares for those who are ill or for a family having a baby

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Love Channel

- Remember the times in your life when you were loved
- Remember the times in your life when you were loving

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Love Channel

- Call up a friend and tell them that you care about them
- Send a card of encouragement to someone who may need it
- Look for memories of kindness done for you by your parents

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Love Channel

- Ask yourself what you can do to be a more loving person
- Ask someone about a time when she or she felt really loved
- FORGIVENESS – A FEELING OF PEACE!

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Challenge Your Unenforceable Rules

- Recognize that you feel hurt, angry, alienated, depressed, or hopeless
- Acknowledge that your feelings may be memories of the past but you experience the feelings in the present

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Challenge Your Unenforceable Rules

- Remind yourself that you feel bad because you are trying to enforce an unenforceable rule
- Assert your willingness to challenge your unenforceable rule

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Challenge Your Unenforceable Rules

- Find your unenforceable rule by asking yourself the following question: “What experiences in my life am I thinking of right now that I am demanding to be different?”

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

Challenge Your Unenforceable Rule

- In your mind change from *demanding* you get what you want to *hoping* you get what you want
- Notice that when you wish or hope things be the way you want, then you think more clearly and feel more peaceful

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

PERT: Positive Emotion Refocusing Technique

- We need to learn how to maintain our peace in any situation, no matter how upsetting
- We gain tremendous confidence when we are suddenly faced with a painful situation or memory and are able to sustain our positive focus

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

PERT: Positive Emotion Refocusing Technique

- Practicing PERT helps us stay calm so we can make good decisions
- Practicing PERT when faced with a raging boss prevents anger and hurt from overwhelming you
- On a crowded freeway it prevents distress from making the situation worse

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

PERT: Positive Emotion Refocusing Technique

- Practice PERT while anticipating visiting a relative you do not like enable you to decide whether the visit is in your best interest
- Practicing PERT while remembering an alcoholic parent prevents falling into despair

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

PERT

- Bring your attention fully to your stomach as you slowly draw and out two deep breaths
- As you inhale, allow the air to gently push your belly out
- As you exhale, consciously relax your belly so that it feel soft

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

PERT

- On the third full and deep inhalation, bring to your mind's eye an image of someone you love or of a beautiful scene in nature that fills you with awe and wonder
- Often people have a stronger response when they imagine their positive feelings centered in the area around your heart

Forgive for Good- Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

PERT

- While practicing, continue with *soft* belly breathing
- Ask the relaxed and peaceful part of you what you can do to resolve your difficulty

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Finding your positive intention

- Find a quiet place where you can be undisturbed for about ten minutes
- Practice PERT once or twice to get yourself into a relaxed frame of mind
- Ask yourself, What was my reason for being in this grievance situation in the first place?

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

Finding Your Positive Intention

- What was my goal, expressed in positive terms?
- Think about your response until you have a one or two sentence positive intention
- Promise yourself you will not tell the grievance story any longer
- Practice telling the positive intention story to only a handful of trusted people

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.

FORGIVE FOR GOOD!

- **He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself, for every man has need to be forgiven**

Forgive for Good- Frederic
Luskin, Ph.D.
