

# The Forgiveness Guide

## The Most Misunderstood Word in Recovery

### PURPOSE

*This tool helps both partners understand what forgiveness actually is, where each person genuinely is in the process, and what genuine forgiveness — not performance, not pressure, not pretending — will require from each of you.*

### INSTRUCTIONS

Parts 1 and 2 are completed privately. Parts 3 and 4 are completed together. Do not rush this tool. Forgiveness that is performed under pressure is not forgiveness — it is compliance. Only what is real belongs here.

### PART 1 — WHAT I BELIEVE ABOUT FORGIVENESS (Private)

Check every statement you currently believe to be true:

- Forgiveness means what happened was acceptable
- Forgiveness means I have to act as if it never happened
- Forgiveness requires reconciliation
- I have to feel forgiving before I can choose to forgive
- Forgiving this person means I am weak
- I cannot forgive until I have all the answers I need
- Forgiveness is for my own healing — not for the person who hurt me
- I can forgive and still have boundaries
- Forgiveness is a decision I can make before the feeling arrives
- Forgiveness does not mean I have to stay in this marriage

**The belief above that is most blocking my ability to move toward forgiveness:**

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## PART 2 — WHERE I AM IN THE PROCESS (Private)

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### My honest position on forgiveness right now:

- I am not ready to forgive and I am not pretending otherwise
- I want to forgive but I do not know how to get there from here
- I have chosen to forgive but the feeling has not caught up yet
- I have forgiven — and the feeling is beginning to follow
- I have forgiven but I am not certain I want to reconcile

### What is standing between me and genuine forgiveness right now:

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### What I would need to feel, receive, or resolve before I could move further:

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### The resentment I am most afraid to let go of — and why:

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## **PART 3 — WHAT FORGIVENESS WILL REQUIRE OF BOTH OF US (Together)**

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**What the betrayed spouse needs before genuine forgiveness becomes possible:**

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**What the unfaithful spouse needs to do to make forgiveness easier to extend:**

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**The timeline we are agreeing to — without pressure on either side:**

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**How we will handle it when the betrayed spouse is not ready and the unfaithful spouse feels impatient:**

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## PART 4 — THE FORGIVENESS DECLARATION

Read this section privately first. Sign only what is genuinely true for you right now.

### For the Betrayed Spouse — sign only if this is genuinely true:

*"I am choosing to move toward forgiveness — not because what happened was acceptable, not because the pain is gone, and not because I am required to. I am choosing it because I refuse to carry this indefinitely. I am releasing the debt — on my own timeline, in my own way, for my own healing."*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### For the Unfaithful Spouse — sign only if this is genuinely true:

*"I am not asking for forgiveness before my spouse is ready to give it. I am committing to doing the work that makes it possible — patiently, consistently, and without demanding that my spouse arrive on my schedule."*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_