

Guideline 10 : Forgiveness



Humility	Respect
Patience	▶ Forgiveness 10
Contentment	Gratitude
Delight	Responsibility
Kindness	Principles
Honesty	Aspiration
Generosity	Service
Thoughtful Speech	Courage
16 Guidelines for Life www.16Guidelines.org	

Character Guide: Fola Forgiveness



Fola forgives,
releasing anger and hurt,
and reclaiming peace.



The guides' positive chants help you to remember the most important ideas. Say these over and over to remember them.

**I forgive then
I feel better.**



“Holding a grudge is like watering a man-eating plant. Keeping it alive.”

-- Caeman Toombs, 10yrs, USA



Blue Marble Memory



a poem and slideshow about forgiveness and connection in the cyclic existence of a single drop of water

If I were a raindrop, above the planet earth, would I realize everywhere I'd been? Would I know, as I was about to quench the thirst of dry African plains, that earlier that week I had been in the eye of a koala in Australia, in the sneeze of a polar bear in the Arctic, and a drop rolling off the feathers of a duck in Puerto Rico? Would I know that humans are mostly water and that I had been in and out of thousands of people this year? Would I remember being part of the white lemonade a schoolgirl speaking Irish drank in Dingle, being in the hot tea of a rice farmer in Indonesia, in the sweat on the violinist's brow onstage at the symphony in New York, in the cool breath of the hiker in the mountains of Austria, and in the tears of joy for the birthday girl in Brazil? As a raindrop I might remember being part of a rainbow or a waterfall, seeing the other drops as they fell like little blue marbles, reflecting the world. I might see the earth in space as another blue marble and realize how connected we all are. I may meet you next as a beautiful fountain, a long cold drink, a snowflake sparkling in the sun or a puddle to play in. Forgive me if I splash you now. Forgive me if I leave a streak on your window. I am not yet a perfect raindrop, but if you give me a chance, and see me as I am, I may make you smile at a beautiful sunset; I am there in the clouds. We're sure to see each other again, for we are all connected here.

See a slideshow that illustrates this poem [here](#). Click 'view as slideshow', begin reading when you see the symbol of Fola and advance slides at each drop.



Photo by [Lindsay Stark](#)



Try it now: **Easy Does It.**

Experiment:



Magic Quicksand

You need a box of the magic ingredient (it's called cornstarch in the U.S., cornflour in many other places), water, a spoon, and a bowl. Put some water in the bowl, add up to twice as much of the 'magic' powder, very slowly until it flows like thick honey. When you jab the spoon in quickly, no matter how hard you push, it won't go in. When you slide it in slowly, it goes in easily.

This is a little like quicksand. Play with it. If you are strong with this mixture, it acts like a solid. If you are gentle, it accommodates like a liquid and moves slowly out of the way. For more see the National Science Foundation article on 'oobleck' [here](#).

This quicksand can teach you about forgiveness. If you react strongly to others' negative actions, you will get more resistance from them and within yourself. If you are gentle and patient in your response you may be accommodated and achieve more.



Unfortunately, there are many examples of times and places when people were forced to endure terrible situations, imprisonments or torture. Even as you read this many people may be undergoing horrendous experiences at the hands of others. May their suffering end.



Fortunately, even in the very worst cases, after years of suffering, there are strong examples of successful forgiveness. Those who can forgive their oppressors move on to reclaim peace of mind. Those who can't forgive stay imprisoned by their own bitterness.

Ask an adult to sit with you if you wish to read some very powerful stories at <http://www.theforgivenessproject.com/>

Try it now: Lay your burden down



“To forgive is not just to be altruistic.
It is the best form of self-interest.”

-- Dr. Desmond Tutu, South Africa

Movement Game:

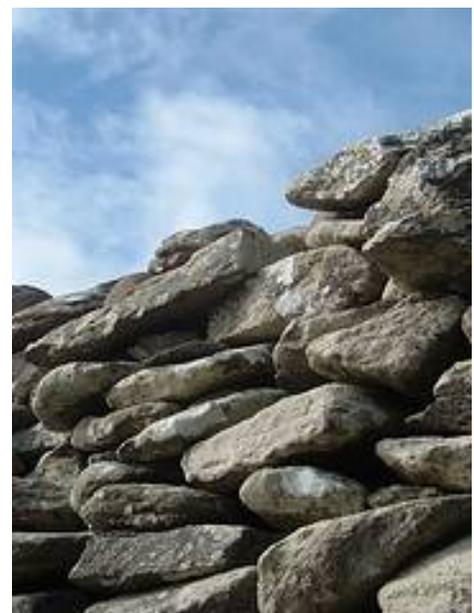
Book 'em -- A weight off my shoulders

Find a stack of books, pile of big rocks or bags of rice, anything you can hand back and forth to a partner and eventually will feel heavy to hold. Take turns passing items to each other so, for example, you hand three books to your partner who has to hold them for 10 seconds. Then your partner chooses a pile of books and hands them to you to hold for 10 seconds. If you can't hold the pile yourself, to pass it to your partner, it's too much. After you've done this for five turns each, the rules will change.

This time agree between you on a certain amount of 'books'. The person giving the books can decide how long the other person has to hold them between 2 and 20 seconds. After three more turns each, change the rules again. This time the person holding the books gets to decide how long to hold them between 2 and 20 seconds. Then everyone have a seat to talk about this.

Imagine the heavy objects are the negative things that happen to you—perhaps a harm someone has done. Although you don't decide in real life how many troubles happen to you, how many 'books' you have to hold, you can decide to forgive a person for something, and when to stop carrying a grudge.

Who does it hurt to be angry? Who suffers if you continue to feel hurt every time you think about something negative from the past? It doesn't mean you forget or deny what happened or don't try to protect yourself from being hurt again. It also doesn't mean that the action is acceptable or okay. It simply means you decide it is not serving you to keep carrying around the bitterness anymore. You can forgive, you can lay that burden down. It's heavy! Why would you want to carry it any longer?



Try it now: Forgive, be forgiven.



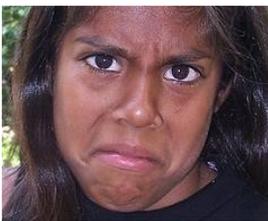
Draw it!

Just Perfect

Try to draw a perfect circle without tracing around anything. Really try it. It's simple, but it's hard! It's the same anytime you try to learn something new. You make mistakes until you get the hang of it. Even then, it's hard to do it perfectly.

Basically, you're human, so you make mistakes. We all do. Take a minute to think about mistakes you've made. For what would you like to be forgiven? It may be more important to forgive yourself than to look for this outside yourself. On the other hand, if you make an apology to someone you have hurt it may help them to let go of their bitterness.

What mistakes have others made that hurt you and that you have not yet forgiven? If it still makes you mad, you're still carrying around those 'books'.



Can you put yourself in the place of the other person? Even if they are not sorry, it doesn't change the fact that the important work is inside your own head. You will know you have forgiven when you can think about that person or event and it travels easily through your mind. Can you see they are imperfect like you and made a poor choice? That's all.



Bad hair day : No one's perfect....

Try it for real: Magic Quicksand Live and in Person -- Any questions?



Remember how being gentle and patient allowed you to move through the 'quicksand'? Can you use the example of this 'magic' mixture to be patient with someone you feel is being rude or unpleasant? Can you pause your first habitual reaction and think before you react?

Example: If someone is behind you, waiting for the bus, and they 'fall' into you, it might be an accident. But when it happens again and again, what do you do? When I was eleven, every day at the bus stop the same girl would bump into me on purpose and laugh. It wasn't rough, but it was embarrassing and I thought it was rude. I felt out of control. I wasn't the type to get into a fight, so I did nothing. I ignored it, but it didn't go away. Finally, I decided to try something different. When she came, even though I wanted to hide from her, I turned around and started a conversation by asking a good question. I talked, listened to what she said, and kept her too busy to fall into me. The next day I talked to her more. At first it felt strange, but in a few days the problem was gone. I also learned about her culture which was different from my own.



Pause and Question:

More than Yes or No...

Sometimes you can diffuse a problem with forgiveness in the moment by pausing your own reaction to rudeness and just asking a really good question. Notice three times this week when someone says or does something rude. Before you react, take a breath and ask them a polite, clarifying question. One they can't answer with just yes or no. See if that pause helps to shift the energy from confrontation to conversation.



This can also work within families -- with teenagers to keep shouting matches from getting out of control or even to head them off altogether. Try the Pause and Question activity above with your brothers, sisters, and parents/caregivers. Disagreements happen at home, because you may be ruder, and they more rude with you, when you are in a place where you feel safe to show emotion.

Keeping this under control is important because you will probably have a longer relationship with your brothers and sisters than with anyone else in your life. You can make a foundation for a lifetime by pausing your reactions and asking a good question.

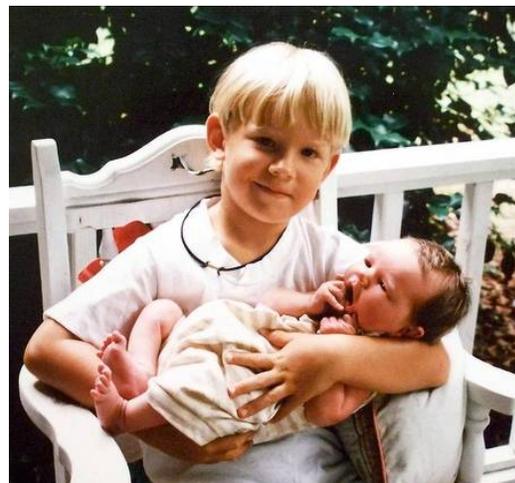
Try it for real: Borrow peace from the future.



I wonder if you worry and end up borrowing negative energy from the future for something that hasn't happened yet. Instead you could choose to borrow some peace from the future. If someone does a small thing to you that you don't like, you could think, "Next week," or "Next month," or "When I'm grown up, I won't remember this little thing. The person who did this is learning bad habits by making poor choices. I hope they make better choices so they don't harm anyone else, and they get on a better path." Putting things in perspective may help you forgive.

Try it for real: Outgrowing Childish Ways

If a baby hits you with their fist, you probably won't get angry, because you realize they don't know better yet. You forgive them naturally and immediately.



Read and Discuss:

Childish Choices

We expect people to grow out of their childish or selfish ways as they get older but it doesn't always happen. Read a newspaper or look at the news online. On the first page is there a story about a terrible choice someone made? Talk with someone about how that choice might have been made differently if the person had acted less like a child trying to get their own way. Read some of the other articles and consider how forgiveness could help in those cases for a happier and more peaceful society.

"Always forgive your enemies.
Nothing annoys them so much."
-- Oscar Wilde, Anglo-Irish author

"Not forgiving is like holding a double-edged sword
by the blade and trying to hit someone with it."
-- Caeman Toombs, 10, USA

Instant Replay for Forgiveness:

