

do the unthinkable...

forgive

"Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?...this is how My Heavenly Father will treat each of you - unless you forgive your brother from your heart!"
(Matthew 18:21-35, p. 695)

"Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy." (Matthew 5:7)

"For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."
(Matthew 6:14-15)

"Judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment."
(James. 2:13)

Those who are forgiven must themselves forgive.

Unforgiveness freezes spiritual growth. "Forgiveness" sets the captive free - only to discover the prisoner was me. Do we want to be *right*...or do we want to be *loving* - which invites the blessing of God upon our life?

1. WHY should I forgive?

▶ Because God has forgiven me

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."
(Ephesians 4:32)

▶ Because resentment doesn't work

"To worry yourself to death with resentment would be a foolish, senseless thing to do. You are only hurting yourself with your anger! ...You are only hurting yourself with your anger. Will the earth be deserted because you are angry? Will God move mountains to satisfy you?"
(Job 5:2, 18:4 GN)

▶ Because I will need forgiveness myself in the future

"For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."
(Matthew 6:15)

2. HOW should I forgive?

▶ Recognize that we're all imperfect

"There is not a single person in all the earth who is always good and never sins."
(Ecclesiastes 7:20, GN)

▶ Relinquish my desire to get even

"Never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God, for He has said that He will repay those who deserve it."
(Romans 12:19, LB)

* Forgiveness is me giving up the right to hurt you for hurting me.

▶ Respond to evil with good

"Do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you."
(Luke 6:27-28)

"Love keeps no record of wrongs." (I Corinthians 13:5)

▶ Refocus on God's purpose for my life

Hurt people hurt people. Love like you've never been hurt.

"Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you. Be imitators of God therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love."
(Ephesians 4:30 - 5:2)