

# PRESSING ON...

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14



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## How to FORGIVE

■ by Lynne Scherschel, MS, LMFT

*Whether we like it or not, God commands us to forgive when others wrong us.  
There are no qualifiers and no exception clauses to the command.  
God just says, "Forgive!"*

**A**dditionally, He said that if we do not forgive others, our sins won't be forgiven either. (Matthew 6:14-15) We are expected to forgive no matter what the circumstances and no matter how many times we are offended. – seventy times seven. (Matt. 18:21-22) The number seventy means countless times, while seven signifies perfection. This means that Jesus expects us to forgive others countless times to perfection or infinity. Forgiveness is important because it is a command, and disobedience in this area, as in all others, is rebellion, and rebellion opens the door for the enemy to have legal right to oppress us. Even Jesus, our Example in all things, forgave from the cross (immediately) those who were torturing and murdering Him. Should we do less?

Below is a description of the process I have found to be very helpful.

### How does one forgive?

1) **Decide** to forgive. This is based on an act of your will, not on feelings. It is a choice between obedience and rebellion.

- 2) **Record** your decision, including the time, date, and location of your choice to forgive. This is an important part of walking it out.
- 3) **Pray for God's grace** to be able to hold fast to your decision no matter what happens – and things *will* happen! It absolutely is God's will that your heart change toward the person you are forgiving, so when you ask Him, He *will* grant your request. (1 John 5:14-15)
- 4) **Pray for the offender**, asking God to bless him in all possible ways. It is important to pray for him the same way you would pray for a loved one, because Jesus said, "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you." (Matt. 5:44) Try praying scriptures for them. Certainly, if they are not believers, pray for their salvation!
- 5) **Remind yourself** of your decision, including the date, every time you think of the person or your hurt. You might say, "God, that was

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How to Forgive - continued

# The Mirthful Heart



■ by Janet Irvine, PsyD, Clinical Coordinator

*You might be surprised to learn that a lot of laughing goes on in therapy.*

While sitting in my office doing paperwork, I am often forced to smile as I hear an explosion of laughter emitting from one office or another. Getting better emotionally means getting to a point where we can laugh gently and mirthfully at ourselves and our life situations. While there are many situations that just are not funny, there are other situations where humor is the key to healing. It is a great tool to find humor and laugh about improving relationships, discovering new ways of behaving, and healing from life's curve balls.

## God uses many ways to heal us.

He enables us to shed tears, to share grief and worries, to pray and to seek help when the onslaughts of life attack. He also provides us with a sense of humor, to look life in the face and laugh at its absolute ridiculousness and absurdity. A mirthful attitude enables us to be amused by our own antics, have joy in difficult circumstances and a lighthearted approach to life...usually expressed by laughter.

Laughter is a wonderful way to manage the stress of our daily lives. It also affords us the opportunity to take ourselves less seriously and to observe that life is unpredictable and often just plain funny. We ourselves can be eccentric, have odd

and unhelpful methods of coping, and yet figure out the most amazing solutions to problems anyone could ever invent. Laughter helps put things in perspective as we walk through our messy lives. While we weep and sigh and puzzle over the lot that has been given to us in life, we can also laugh uproariously at our own small victories, the joy of working through an issue in unique and surprising ways and startle at unimaginative solutions and creative resolutions as God reaches out to heal and strengthen us.

Many times, I ask clients to "think outside the box" when trying to resolve an issue. Clients can look at an issue and "experiment" with using different approaches. Mirthful laughter can be a surprising response to a bully, an obstreperous offspring, or the constant criticism of another person. Mirthful laughter is different than spite, sarcasm or teasing. Mirthful laughter is gentle but can unobtrusively break down walls and defenses. It can lower the sting of an attack. Mirth can reduce the weight we often carry as we try to manage life and control what is truly unmanageable and uncontrollable. Laughter is a powerful tool which enables us to face life full on rather than to feel victimized by it.

When a person laughs out loud, wonderful physiological changes occur within our bodies. This enables a person to gain perspective and optimism as they look at life's challenges. There are many physical and physiological benefits from laughing. A good belly laugh several times a week is a way to:

Find ways to include laughter in your life! It is important to hang out with funny, upbeat people. Often I suggest watching some of your favorite funny movies. Watch animals and enjoy their antics. God designed some pretty amazing and humorous creatures; with flourishes of unexpected color, features and behaviors that are really quite unexpected and hilariously funny.

God delights in His people. Remember that! While we are grimly slogging along from one activity to the next, remember a God who is smiling on His beloved child who is just doing the best he or she can. Have a laugh with God, knowing you and He are in this together.

While researchers are madly scrabbling around figuring this out, God's word, from thousands of years ago, said it well: "A merry heart is like medicine." (Proverbs 17:22)



*Dr. Janet Irvine is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist. She sees enjoys working with clients in our Orland Park, IL location.*

## CCCC News...

### 2014/2015 Clinical Interns

#### New Staff



**Melissa Cullinane, MSW**  
Licensed Clinical Social Worker

Melissa sees adolescents and adults for individual, couple, or family therapy in our Orland Park location.



**Keenan Cleary, BA**  
MA in Counseling Psychology Student  
Trinity Christian College  
Orland Park & Schererville locations



**Imari Hunter, BA**  
MA in Counseling Psychology Student  
Trinity Christian College  
Schererville & South Holland locations



**Emily Maurer, BA**  
MA in Family Counseling Student  
Northeastern Illinois University  
Chicago (S Loop) & Orland Park locations



**Ashley Schehr, BA**  
MA in Professional Counseling Student  
Olivet Nazarene University  
Orland Park & South Holland locations

# Finding Spiritual Freedom | the 12 steps

■ by Kathy Konrath, MA, LCPC, LMHC

The 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous have existed for decades and have helped millions of people find freedom from their addiction. These steps have been adapted to address various other problems and they can be a guide for spiritual renewal in your life. I urge you to prayerfully consider how God can use these steps to bring you greater freedom in Jesus.



**Step 1:** We admitted that we are powerless over (\_\_\_\_\_) and that our lives have become unmanageable.

**Step 2:** We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

**Step 3:** We made a decision to turn our will and lives over to God's care.

These first three steps remind us we are powerless over sin and there is nothing we can do to save us from it. The effects of sin are destroying our lives and will ultimately destroy all life if left untreated. We give up trying to do things on our own and we admit defeat. Because of Jesus, we are not left alone in our sin! We come to believe that God exists, and he can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. It is here that we are faced with a decision to put our hope, trust, and life into God's care. We say to ourselves "I can't. God can. I think I will let him". We make this decision on a daily basis. This decision brings our lives before God in an attitude of surrender.

**Step 4:** We made a fearless and searching moral inventory of ourselves.

**Step 5:** We admit to God, to our selves, and another person the exact nature of our wrongs.

These steps ask us to take an honest look at our lives. We unpack the pain in our lives. We list our resentments and wrongs done to us and how our life has been impacted as a result. We also consider the part we played in our pain. We consider the ways in which we have hurt others and the way our choices have contributed to our own suffering. As we do this, we enlist the help of another person to help us gain perspective. We get honest with God, ourselves and another person we trust in order to step out of denial and to prepare ourselves to move on.

**Step 6:** Were entirely ready to give God all these defects of character.

**Step 7:** We humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings.

Steps 6 & 7 bring us to a place of willingness to let God take our pain. We ask God to remove those things from our lives that do not serve us, others, or his kingdom.

**Step 8:** We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them.

**Step 9:** Made direct amends to such people except when to do so would injure them or others.

These steps give us the opportunity to make right the wrongs we have made. We list the names of people we have harmed and we ask God to give us the opportunity to make amends. We are careful not to cause greater harm to another person with our amends. We also do more than simply say "I'm sorry". We acknowledge our wrongful behavior and make a pledge, with God's help, to not do it again. We strive to live a different way.

**Step 10:** Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

**Step 11:** Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out.

**Step 12:** Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

These last three steps help us maintain the good work the Lord has done for us and is doing in our lives. We daily examine how we live our lives and when we were wrong, we immediately admit it. We spend time daily with God. We ask God to reveal his will for us and we ask for the power to walk it out, whatever it may be. We also ask how we can be of service to others so that we can share the gifts the Lord has given us. We do this in order to carry the gospel and share the healing we have experienced.

May you find these steps to be a source of renewal in your life and a guide to help you experience the freedom of life in Christ.



Kathy Konrath is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (IL) and Licensed Mental Health Counselor (IN). She sees clients in our Evergreen Park, IL and Schererville, IN locations.



**Toll Free: 800.361.6880**

Email: [info@chicagochristiancounseling.org](mailto:info@chicagochristiancounseling.org)

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## Our Mission Statement

Promoting health and wholeness through professional counseling, consultation and education from a Christian perspective.

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taken care of on X date, and I am counting on you to change my heart and help me to love \_\_\_\_\_. I know that this is totally impossible in my own strength, but I choose to continue to obey you and allow you to work in my heart by your Holy Spirit. With your help, I will now pray for \_\_\_\_\_ according to your heart and will for them."

- 6) **Refuse** the enemy's promptings and immediately focus on God. As you continue to do this as many times a day as necessary, your heart and mind will be healed and transformed. Eventually, you will remember the offense and the person without the pain and anger

that you felt at the beginning. You will also experience God's love in your heart for the person who offended you. Only God could accomplish that!

### How do you relate to this forgiven offender?

I believe there is a difference between forgiveness and reconciliation. First, forgiveness is dependent on the person who was wronged (you), while reconciliation requires the cooperation of both parties. Second, forgiveness is not necessarily synonymous with trust. Third, some people are simply not safe, physically, emotionally, or spiritually, to be around or to have one's children

around. We must forgive, but we must also exercise godly wisdom. A word of caution is necessary here. Be careful that you have actually forgiven the person and that you are not using safety as an excuse to continue to withhold forgiveness. Ask God to reveal your heart attitude to you and to guide you in any further relationship He wants you to have with the person.



*Lynne Scherschel is a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist. She sees clients in our Schererville, IN location.*