

How Do I Find Peace...

...in a Fractured Friendship?



by Laura Goossens, MSW, LCSW

We have all had fractured friendships and have experienced the loss of peace that follows after the fracture occurs. In my early college days, I remember being cut off from a close friendship I had, and I felt so broken about it. I remember wondering why I felt so much hurt over the loss of a friendship and had wondered what was wrong with me. Yet, as Christians, we have been created for community. The body of Christ is made up of many parts, so when there is a loss, there is substantial grief. Romans 12:4-5 says “Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.” If you lost a hand, eye, or leg, it would be a difficult adjustment, there would be much pain, and you would always feel like something was missing. This is the same way we experience loss when a Christian friendship is fractured.

What Was My Part?

The most important thing we can do after a friendship has been ended is consider what wrong we did and own up to it. You might be thinking, “But I didn’t do anything wrong; it was all their fault.” While there are times that may be the case, more often than not you have a part in it, especially if you don’t have peace in the situation. To figure out what wrong you may have done takes a great deal of humility. Pray that God brings to light any wrong you have done. Ask yourself, Was what I said to them true, kind, and necessary? Examine your motive. Examine your heart: Was it acting out of judgment or self-righteousness? Was there selfishness on your part or a desire to control? In the case of my ended college friendship, it took me years to see that I had been controlling during the time leading up to the fracture. At the time, I had confronted them on something they were doing wrong and acted controlling when they wouldn’t make a change. Instead, I should have accepted that they were on their own journey and I couldn’t force them to change. I should have spoken truth in love, given them space, and prayed for them. We should do this even if we don’t realize that there is something that we could have done better or that we had let our emotions dictate our actions in a way that was not godly.

How to Own the Wrong You Did

Since this article has the focus of peace and not reconciliation, I believe it’s best to confess the wrong you did and not be tempted to point out their part in it. If our aim is peace, it’s about knowing that we made every effort to right any wrongs we had done, and it isn’t making sure we also bring their wrong to light. “Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

There are many ways you can approach them with your confession of wrong, and it will depend a lot on your specific situation. You will have to ask yourself if it is best to write a card, make a call, or ask them if you can meet with them given the situation you are in. Most often it’s best to write a message or send a card since most fractures mean both parties are no longer in communication. Writing a card or message also doesn’t put them on the spot, and it allows you to be very careful in your wording instead of falling into the temptation of saying something you shouldn’t say.

What to Say if You Send a Message or Card

If you write a card or message, I believe it’s best that you start out by saying that you aren’t expecting them to respond. This approach makes it clear that your intentions are confession and peace instead of an agenda of forcing the relationship to reconcile. When you write, keep your focus on your apology, and be as specific as you can in confessing your part. Pray for God’s wisdom in

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Article taken from the Fall 2021 issue of *PRESSING ON*, a Publication of Chicago Christian Counseling Center
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what to say, and have someone you love and trust read it over to make sure your message is coming out the way you intend. Confess your part of the fracture to God, and pray that his will be done in the situation. They might not respond back, but you can now walk away from the situation knowing that you had owned your part in it all and made every effort toward peace. We are all sinners, but when we confess our sins, we find healing. James 5:16 says, "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results." I love that this verse in James doesn't say that confession means reconciliation, but healing. Healing is what we truly need, right? Healing is found in confession.

Forgive Them, Even When They Don't Know They Need Forgiveness

Just like confession is a part of finding peace, so is forgiveness. How do you forgive a friendship if they don't know they did wrong or never asked for forgiveness? A little while back, I was wrestling with God about a situation with a person I needed to forgive who couldn't see that they did anything wrong. No matter how I tried to explain what I felt, they couldn't understand. So as I talked to God about my need to forgive them anyway, the answer hit me out of nowhere, like it sometimes does. While Jesus was dying on the cross, he said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). How often is this true of us as humans? How often are we sinning and have no idea how wrong we are until we finally see it for what it is? We are all on our own journey, and the Holy Spirit reveals and convicts us of our sin in his own time. We need to also give the same grace to those whom we need to forgive.

What if the Friendship Was Toxic?

Just because you are seeking peace in a friendship doesn't mean you have to remain good friends. Peace means trying to right any wrong on your side and having a settled spirit knowing that you did everything possible to follow God's commands while dealing with the fracture in the friendship. Forgiveness and healing in a friendship doesn't mean there is trust or that you shouldn't have boundaries. I have heard it said before that you don't have to have a relationship with someone you have forgiven, but you will always have a relationship with them if you don't forgive them ([Brant Hansen, 2020](#)). If peace in your fractured friendship also means reconciliation, you have every right to place whatever boundaries you feel are necessary as long as you try to do so with respect. If your friend doesn't agree to these boundaries, that's up to them, but you can rest in the peace that you have communicated your needs with graciousness and leave it at that.

We live in a world that often puts pride over peace, a world that tells us we are right to be angry, cut people off, and disrespect them whenever we feel we have been wronged. Truth is, when I have listened to these lies and have gone down the path of gaining my own justice, I have never found peace. Romans 12:17 says, "Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable." God's ways are far better than ours, and when we submit to his commands of not seeking revenge and becoming a person who is always seeking peace with others, our lives will be more peaceful, our relationships better, and the light we shine even brighter. ■

Article originally published by Family Fire: <https://familyfire.reframemedia.com/articles/how-do-i-find-peace-in-a-fractured-friendship>



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