

Forgiveness Models

Forgiveness has become a topic of interest to many; even in the secular counseling world. Everett Worthington and Robert Enright are two researchers who have done much work in this area. Dr. Worthington is a Christian and speaker at the American Association for Christian Counselors. Several models of forgiveness are summarized below and the diagram at the bottom of this page summarizes the models into one graphic depicting how a person can extend forgiveness to another. This information comes from Worthington, Aborn and Pina articles as well as from Donald Walker and Richard Gorsuch's article; *Dimensions Underlying Sixteen Models of Forgiveness and Reconciliation*; Journal of Psychology and Theology, 2004

Everett Worthington

- Recall the hurt
- Empathize
- Altruistic gift of forgiveness
- Commit to the forgiveness
- Hold on to forgiveness

David Ausberger

- Restore the attitude of love
- Release the painful past
- Reconstruct the relationship
- Reopen the future
- Reaffirm the relationship

Charles Stanley

- Recognize God's forgiveness
- Release the person from debt
- Accept offender as they are
- View the offender as a tool to aid better understanding God
- Make reconciliation with offender

T. Hargrave & J. Sells

- Insight
- Understanding
- Giving opportunity for compensation
- Overt act of forgiving

D. Donnelly

- Acknowledge the hurt
- Decide to forgive
- Remember forgiveness isn't Easy
- Forgive self
- Consider the consequences of not forgiving

JP Pingleton

- Receive forgiveness from God
- Forgive oneself
- Forgive the other person

Shana Aborn

- Don't wait for an apology
- Empathize with your offender
- Think about the relief you felt when you were forgiven by someone you loved
- Perform a symbolic act
- Remember that forgiving is not forgetting
- Include yourself on the forgiveness list

Nancy Pina

- Acknowledge the true depth of pain
- Give yourself permission to grieve over the loss.
- Examine your perceptions about the world
- Empathize
- Challenge your beliefs about forgiveness



Forgiveness is a process, not some ritual one does and then everything is done. Forgiveness must come from the heart and does not necessarily directly involved the person causing the injury and it is based on God's forgiveness of us, not on whether or not we feel like forgiving. No one model fits a person or a situation perfectly, but as we learn about what it takes to forgive, we can become more effective in our forgiveness of those who have hurt us.