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## ***Forgiveness is a Decision, Not a Feeling***

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***"The stupid neither forgive nor forget,  
the naive forgive and forget,  
the wise forgive, but they don't forget."***

**from the Wisdom Tradition**

Frequently, no matter what issue originally brought an individual, couple or family to counseling (depression, anxiety, marital-family issues, work stress) the conversation at some point includes forgiveness -- forgiveness of others or self.

### **Resentful Past Can Poison the Present**

Unhealed issues from the past can negatively impact a person physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually. In "Forgiveness...", Sid and Suzanne Simon list how "unfinished business" from the past can poison the present:

- being obsessed with the person who betrayed, abandoned, lied, cheated, rejected, etc.
- sleep problems, headaches, high blood pressure, heart arrhythmia, digestive difficulties

- problems with trust, intimacy; aggression, withdrawal
- depression, anxiety, maladaptive coping (alcohol, drugs, gambling, eating)

### **Forgiveness is a Decision**

Forgiveness is a decision, not a feeling. The feeling of forgiveness is felt sometime after the initial decision is made. The decision to forgive is based on a deeper decision to be at peace and healthy. (Forgiveness does not mean condoning abusive behavior).

### **Resources**

1. Talk with a friend, minister or counselor for guidance in the process (don't get stuck)
2. Books:
  - "Forgiveness: Making Peace With Your Past...", Simon & Simon
  - "Forgiveness is a Choice", Enright
  - "Forgive For Good", Luskin

***"I forgive you for whatever you did that caused me pain, intentionally or unintentionally, through your actions...words...thoughts."***

***Stephen Levine***