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A Little Book of Forgiveness: Challenges & Meditations for Anyone with Something to Forgive

D. Patrick Miller
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If a person has been wronged by another, shouldn't the common course of action for making things right be to forgive and forget? That's a popular distortion, according to the author. The real process is this: to remember fully and forgive.

Trying to forget is just another means of denying the original trespass, Miller believes, and whatever is denied is not truly forgiven. This insight is one of many presented in this ten-year anniversary audio version of Miller's book, originally published in 1994. The first brief section outlines the "Seven Steps of Forgiving," followed by three sections, similar in length, titled "Forgiving Others," "Forgiving Yourself," and "Where Forgiveness Leads."

The author, whose life-altering brush nearly twenty years ago with chronic fatigue immune deficiency syndrome changed his way of thinking about living, is the author of several books with a spiritual aspect, such as 1999's *The Book of Practical Faith*. He specializes in the "journalism of consciousness"—reporting on psychological and spiritual matters that he believes are often ignored by the mainstream media.

In Miller's view, the act of forgiving, either oneself or another, actually does a number of things: it releases trapped energy, brings order to the mind, increases competence, and broadens one's point of view. In the third, and perhaps best, section, he advises, "Beware of hating the man who hates," pointing out that some individuals seem to "inspire hatred within other persons."

Miller occasionally describes his own experiences and those passages seem to work a little better than when his words become a bit more preachy and ethereal. The audio version is read by nationally recognized voiceover artist Gene Bogart with music provided by Michael Masley's unique hammered dulcimer; the combination sometimes comes across as monotonous and over-eager.

This presentation doesn't detract, however, from the content of the CD, especially the "Seven Steps of Forgiving." These are: to select a bitter sorrow or grievance and review it in great detail; to hold it in the mind and say, "I release you from my grip of sadness, disapproval, or condemnation"; to imagine life without the grievance; to make amends and tell someone about it; to ask for help from God, or from nature or some other channel through which aid is sent; to have patience, because it does produce healing; and to repeat steps one through six as often as necessary for life.

The author writes that when a person forgives, he or she yields their grip on misery, which results in a feeling similar to a "long night walk by the ocean at ebb tide with the surf only murmuring."

ROBIN FARRELL EDMUNDS (August 18, 2009)

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