Clarion Review

Body, Mind & Spirit

Forgiveness
Gita Bellin
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Four Stars (out of Five)

Alexander Pope got it right when he wrote, “To err is human, to forgive divine.” Forgiveness may be difficult, but we mortals can do the soul searching necessary to achieve this goal. The willingness to forgive lies deep within a person’s psyche, and it must be coaxed to the surface through reflection, the awakening of compassion, and finally, the desire for and declaration of forgiveness.

The first two books in Gita Bellin’s Amazing Grace Series cover reflection and compassion, subjects that prepare readers for her third book, Forgiveness. Like the first two works, this one consists of short affirmations and analogies to assist readers as they meditate on forgiveness. A longer book, it contains sections of prose instruction intended to help readers “work through,” on their own, the people and situations they want to forgive. The techniques, developed by the author over a period of forty years, can be used to forgive family members, co-workers, governments, organizations, and even natural disasters. She encourages readers to keep personal journals while engaged in the process and emphasizes that forgiveness of self is also important.

Bellin has engaged in a long career of learning and teaching spirituality and other topics related to self improvement. On her first trip to South Africa in 1972, she assisted a friend in teaching meditation and behavioral modification. Years later she returned to facilitate seminars designed to help that country’s citizens find healing, through forgiveness, from the trauma of apartheid.

Holding onto past distress punishes both the wronged and the wrong-doer. People who let go of long-held hurts and resentments learn that achieving forgiveness frees them to enjoy greater peace of mind from that point forward. “The coin of life has two sides,” Bellin writes. “The unforgiven and the Forgiven.”

Instructions are described in stages and guide readers as they work on their specific goals for forgiveness. The author suggests completing the process for each individual involved in a situation or, for governments or organizations, the collective group of people concerned. “Work systematically through each area of Forgiveness until there is no person, event, or circumstance that is not Forgiven,” she writes.

Readers should devote considerable time and effort to completing this process. But once they have allowed all feelings of resentment and self interest to dissolve, they will feel a new sense of honesty about their lives. “Begin by telling the truth unflinchingly,” Bellin advises. “Anything less than the truth is a lie.”

This book contains more instructional narrative than the previous books, which may not be as easy to follow, without a teacher, for some readers. Occasional grammatical errors found in these sections confound the problem. Those who endeavor to work on these techniques alone, without benefit of a supportive friend or group, can order a recording of guided meditation, with background music, related to the text.

The author plans additional books in this series. Her insights will benefit all readers searching for ways to achieve a sense of the divine through forgiveness.

Margaret Cullison