

Religion and Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the central focus of many religions – Christianity, in particular. In most religions, forgiveness is practiced without expectations of justice or reconciliation or any apology on the part of the offender. Some religions also preach forgiveness of those who have passed on and therefore, can't respond.

Religious teachings supply the basis for the psychological findings of today. Studies indicate that there aren't only spiritual benefits from forgiveness – there's also the mental and physical benefits you can enjoy by lowering your stress level and warding off depression and anxiety.

Here are some religions of the world and how they view forgiveness:

- **Buddhism** – Teaches that meditation and insight can quell anger and that anger and resentment are emotions we can release by practicing forgiveness. The Buddha said, "Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else, but you're the one who gets burned."
- **Christianity** – Forgiveness plays a very important part in the spiritual life of a Christian. One of the best-known quotes of the Christian Bible is found in "The Lord's Prayer": "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."
- **Judaism** – In the Jewish faith, a person who commits a wrong should apologize and the person who is wronged should forgive. The Jewish religion has a day of atonement called "Yom Kippur," where the faithful ask for and give forgiveness. The Mishneh Torah states: "When asked by an offender for forgiveness, one should forgive with a sincere mind and a willing spirit."
- **Sikhism** – Forgiveness is taught as a solution to anger and that compassion brings peace and tranquility to a forgiving spirit. "Where there is forgiveness, there God resides" ...Kabir.

As you can see, forgiveness is at the crux of many popular religions of the world. Through the media, you've likely witnessed acts of which were so heinous that you couldn't see how forgiveness could be possible.

Yet, some victims of these criminal acts come through with forgiveness that shocks and makes you wonder how it was possible. But, true forgiveness doesn't mean that the victim must condone or release the person from any responsibility of the act.

True forgiveness means that you let go of the pain and anger it's causing in your life and go on with your life to do something positive. Without forgiveness, you run the risk of the negative emotions taking over control of your life and preventing you from experiencing future love, success and personal power.