



Sandra Owen Creative

By Sandra Owen

The 7 Secrets to Emotional Freedom

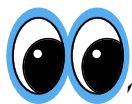
Secret #1 Forgiveness

BEFORE WE START I WANT TO MAKE SOMETHING ABSOLUTELY CLEAR. **FORGIVENESS DOES NOT MEAN CONDONEMENT. THIS IS NOT ABOUT ACCEPTING ANY NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS YOU AS RIGHT OR ACCEPTABLE.**

Forgiveness can be a tough subject when you have been deeply hurt. If someone else's actions or words have cut deep emotionally, it is natural to think that they caused you to feel hurt. While this may be absolutely true, you have a choice whether to hold onto the negative emotions or not.

Replaying negative memories over and over in your mind is actually causing you to experience the same emotional pain again and again. Your brain doesn't differentiate between an imagined or real experience. The same chemical peptides such as cortisol and adrenaline are released in the brain, which long term, is harmful to your body.

Over the next few months we will cover different topic areas that can help you reframe things that may be keeping you stuck in an emotional loop.



"When **YOU** change the way **YOU** look at things,
the things **YOU** look at change."

Dr Wayne Dyer



Changing the way you look at situations, circumstances and people can be easier said than done because our brain is a powerful, complex mechanism of neural pathways. As I've mentioned, when we have a thought, chemical peptides are released in the brain. Over time we can become addicted to these peptides and we will subconsciously create situations to get our 'chemical fix.' This makes it hard to change the way we look at things because our subconscious programming is so strong.

What I want you to focus on this month is that **this is about you**, not anyone who has hurt you, left you or died. Forgiveness is about **setting your HEART free** from emotional pain.

To free yourself from past hurt you need to find a way of processing and releasing the pain in order to break the emotional and mental chains that are holding you back. **Unforgiveness is an invisible mental prison** and the only person who holds **the key to the lock is YOU**. The Seven Secrets to Emotional Freedom program is a journey through the seven major areas that I discovered on my own journey of emotional healing. We will be covering each secret over the next few months.

I used to think forgiveness was a feeling that would come in time. If I could simply distract myself enough and not think about the things that hurt my heart emotionally I would eventually feel forgiveness. What I learnt was that forgiveness is a choice not a feeling. You have to decide to forgive, then do the work necessary to release negative emotions. It takes far more energy to hold onto painful memories and emotions than it does to let them go.

Another important point to mention here is that telling someone you forgive them to their face is not a good idea when you are doing your own inner healing. The reason is because forgiveness can be seen as a form of attack by the other person. They would likely feel offended, especially if they don't believe they've done anything wrong, and probably respond negatively. Putting our emotional pain onto others is not helpful to either person.

It can be extremely hard to contemplate forgiving someone who has deeply hurt you physically, emotionally or mentally. However, believing others need to change in order for you to feel better is simply giving away your power and abdicating responsibility for your own happiness.

You can choose to righteously hold onto unforgiveness and forever blame others, but in the long term you are the one weighed down with grief and anger, not the other person.

We probably all know of someone who has become bitter, angry and miserable over the years because they are still carrying around resentment, unforgiveness and emotional pain. They've become so identified with their pain that they don't know who they would be without it.



The crazy this is, holding onto negative energy is like drinking poison yourself and hoping the other person will get sick!

Our power comes through managing our own thoughts, feelings, emotional responses and expectations.

It is important to discuss this topic with our children too. They learn to handle their own emotional pain by example and they need to know that it is safe for them to share their feelings no matter what.

It's so easy to overthink past incidents, reconstructing conversations and rehearsing what we should have said or done! These mental rehearsals may make us feel better in the short term, but long term they don't really solve anything. I know because I've done it!

I've spend hours going over conversations, trying to figure out what was meant, why someone did what they did and how I was going to deal with it next time. It was exhausting and kept me in an unforgiveness holding pattern.

FREE YOURSELF

Forgiveness releases your mind and HEART. It doesn't matter if the person you are forgiving acknowledges their behaviour or not and it doesn't matter if they are still living or not. All that matters is that **you** acknowledge **your** feelings and find a way to let them go.

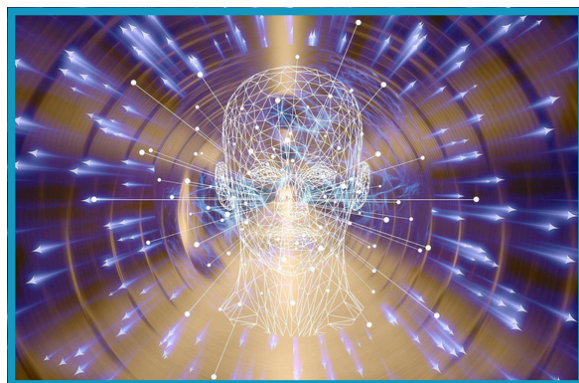
Some people try to do this quietly on their own, others seek help and support through the process. I know I did. We are all different and there is no one size fits all when it comes to our self development journey, but one thing I know for sure is we need each other.

The most important thing is you reach a place within your HEART and mind where you are no longer triggered by the thought of someone or a circumstance in your past.

We can all identify people or situations that have hurt us, and thoughts of them can evoke tears, anger and sadness, as well as laughter, joy and happiness. Emotional pain and grief are negatively cumulative. Which is why it's so important to process and release unresolved emotions. Most of us are not taught how to do this.

We are vibrational beings. Our thoughts and feelings cause energy to move and it attracts back to us things of a similar vibration. Like attracts like.

This concept may seem strange, especially when things aren't going so well and we don't know why. No one deliberately sets out to attract problems, broken relationships, negative experiences, or financial difficulty!



Again this was something I've learnt through my own journey. When we have been through traumatic life experiences such as death of a loved one, divorce or any form of abuse, it can cause us to get emotionally stuck if we don't understand how to process our thoughts and feelings. Through the next few months I want to share with you the things I've learnt with the intention of helping you to move forward and let go of your own emotional or mental blocks. Holding onto them will eventually take its toll physically so it's really important.

To do nothing is still a choice! Use your ability to choose wisely.

It took me awhile to understand that consciously I may think one thing, but subconsciously believe something different. How you feel (HEART) is more powerful than what you think (BRAIN). Your mission (*if you wish to accept it*) is to discover your subconscious beliefs so you can limit self-sabotaging patterns and make changes where necessary.

I thought I wasn't bothered by a particular person or situation any more and tried to ignore my feelings. But deep down I still held powerful beliefs that were trying to get my attention through my feelings, which I was ignoring. It isn't easy for our brain to see new perspectives and ideas. We are conditioned to evaluate our world through our five physical senses and if we can't see something then often we are not conscious of it.

You can't change anything if you're not conscious of its existence and you can't make a different choice if you aren't aware of your options. We don't know what we don't know. Edward de Bono says, "*the brain is unable to see new patterns and ideas unless it is first prepared.*"



Let me prove this to you right now!

Take a look at these two images.

Do you know who they are?

I'm pretty sure you can name both these people. Right!

Now turn to the next page.





**Now look at the next image.
Can you identify this person?**

How is it possible for you to name the first two people from broken black and white images, yet be unable to name the guy in the complete, in colour photo?

The answer is simply that you have information already in your brain cells about the first two people. Your brain was able to reconstruct the broken images and pull up names instantly, even though you were likely not remotely thinking about them a moment ago. How amazing is that!

The third person was impossible to name regardless of the clarity of the image, because you have no previous information on which to draw. When you apply this same logic to our everyday lives it's easy to see why we're unable to see solutions until we first open our mind to see new ideas.

Awareness is the beginning of change.

HOW DOES SELF AWARENESS AFFECT FORGIVENESS?

Being able to forgive others and ourselves requires us to see things differently. And we can only see things differently if we are prepared to open our mind to new ideas, new possibilities and new perspectives.

In *'The Speed of Trust'* Stephen Covey explains that most people do what they do because they believe they are right. When we dig deeper into this concept we begin to understand that everyone does and says the things they do because they believe it is in their best interests or the best interests of those they care about.

Their beliefs may be totally opposite to yours, or even society in general, but to them it is their truth. Forgiveness sets you free from the mental and emotional turmoil being created within yourself through your thoughts about a person or circumstance. You unlock the door to your mental prison by allowing yourself to see things from a different perspective.

TRUE STORY

Let me give you a quick example from my own life to illustrate my point.

Years ago I joined a Network Marketing Company that specialised in health products. After trying the products myself I felt ok with sharing them but I was new to this business concept. Because I didn't want to get things wrong, I invested a huge amount of time trying to learn the best way to introduce myself and the products to help people.

I had picked up a handful of business cards from a pop-up shop and thought maybe the people displaying their products here might be interested in what I had to share. I plucked up the courage to phone the shop and spoke to a gentleman. I tried my best to explain what I was offering to see if he was interested to know more. He wasn't!!!!!!

Later I spoke to a couple of the people whose business cards I had picked up, who said the shop owner had phoned everyone involved in the pop-up shop and told them not to speak to me. I was shocked and stunned. My intention was only to offer something good if anyone was interested and if they weren't then that was fine with me. I was extremely hurt, offended, angry and confused as to why someone who didn't know me would be so aggressive?

What was his thinking in taking it upon himself to warn others against talking to me? I have to admit I shed a few tears. I had never been treated like that before and it really hurt.

I decided Network Marketing was NOT for me! I felt so embarrassed, hurt and confused.. What on earth did this man think I was doing? How could my attempt to genuinely help people be so horrendously misunderstood? What had I done wrong? I took it personally and allowed my default belief that I was not good enough to consume me.

A few weeks later I read *'The Speed of Trust'* by Stephen Covey and his explanation really opened my eyes to what had happened. The guy from the shop had clearly had a really bad experience either with someone else who did Network Marketing or he had tried this type of work himself and lost loads of money and was very angry.

I understood that he must have believed he was protecting his colleagues from something or someone he considered harmful. It had nothing to do with me personally. It couldn't have because he didn't know me. We'd never met or had any other communication. However, his perspective led him to come to certain conclusions and he acted on them in good faith.

The truth from my perspective was I'd tried to offer something to help people and believed it was good, and it had been totally misunderstood. I then mentally labelled him as rude, small minded and aggressive. Yet I had never met him either!

I understood then that both myself and the shop owner had acted based on our beliefs and perspective, and neither took the time to find out if there was another side to the story. The only thing I could do was forgive and release the pain in my HEART.

Forgive Yourself

As you explore your thoughts about forgiveness, remember it is often ourselves we need to forgive most. We can be more judgmental and scathing of ourselves than anyone. So many of us believe we are not good enough and we project these beliefs onto others without even realizing it. Only when things fall apart do we actually stop to question who we are.

Do you recall times when you didn't stand up for yourself and let others take advantage? Have there been times when you've denied your skills and abilities out of fear of being criticised or judged? Maybe you couldn't or didn't fulfil a promise and berated yourself for being useless, a rubbish friend etc. Honestly, if we spoke to others the way we speak to ourselves in our minds it is unlikely we would have any friends.

If your past thinking created your now, then logic tells you what you are thinking now is creating your future. What do you want your future to look like? Your imagination is hugely powerful. Learn to use it wisely.

The creative project for this topic is a decorative HEART plaque made from corrugated cardboard and tissue napkins. Hang it on the wall as a visual reminder to look after your HEART, physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually by releasing emotional pain from the past through the power of forgiveness.

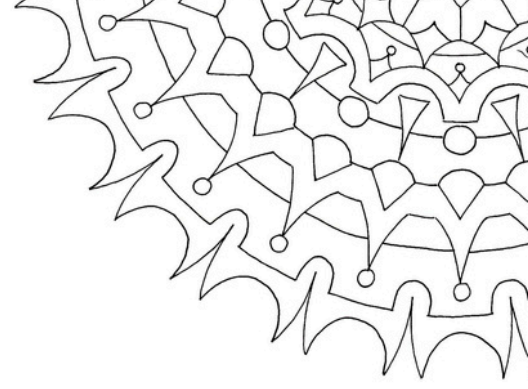
Make the project on your own, with your children, grandchildren or with friends and talk about the importance of releasing painful feelings. Talking and listening without judgement is so important. If things are of a more serious nature, speak to a counsellor, grief coach or therapist. There is always help available.

Be more 'Child Like.' Children don't hold grudges or 'unforgiveness.' They express their emotions fully in the moment and then release them unless they are taught not to. Most of us subconsciously learn to judge and compare ourselves and keep painful emotions to ourselves. We have all heard phrases like, 'Don't air your dirty laundry in public' meaning don't talk to others about your problems.

This type of thinking causes so many more problems. We need to talk and listen to each other. Now more than ever! Life has been tough for everyone these last few years. I believe there is also a huge amount of good that can come from what we've experienced too. For everything there is an equal opposite.



"Creativity involves breaking out of established patterns in order to look at things in a different way." - (Edward De Bono)



Why Creative Art?

Doing the creative projects and exercises by yourself, or with others, helps embed what you've been learning in a fun and novel way, which is the very best way to learn, for both adults and children alike.

Scrap cardboard is often discarded as rubbish, but it can become a fun creative project that acts as a visual reminder of this topic. Creative Art opens your heart and mind to see different perspectives. Follow my project demo, or create a heart using your own ideas and specific creative talents. It's not important how you do it, only that you create a heart that will remind you about the importance of forgiveness when it comes to healing our emotional pain.

Enjoy the creative process and let solutions and ideas come to you. Explore and challenge preconceived ideas and reignite your amazing imagination.

It is important for your mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing to do things you love. Because it is fun, it taps into the right brain hemisphere, it helps you relax and refocus your mind. Reconnect with the person you were as a child.

Most people are unaware just how powerful they really are and cannot see the link between what they think and feel and the life they are experiencing.

Life is all about choice. The choices you make each and every moment will either move you closer or further away from your dreams. Unforgiveness tethers you to the past, like an anchor prevents a boat from sailing away.

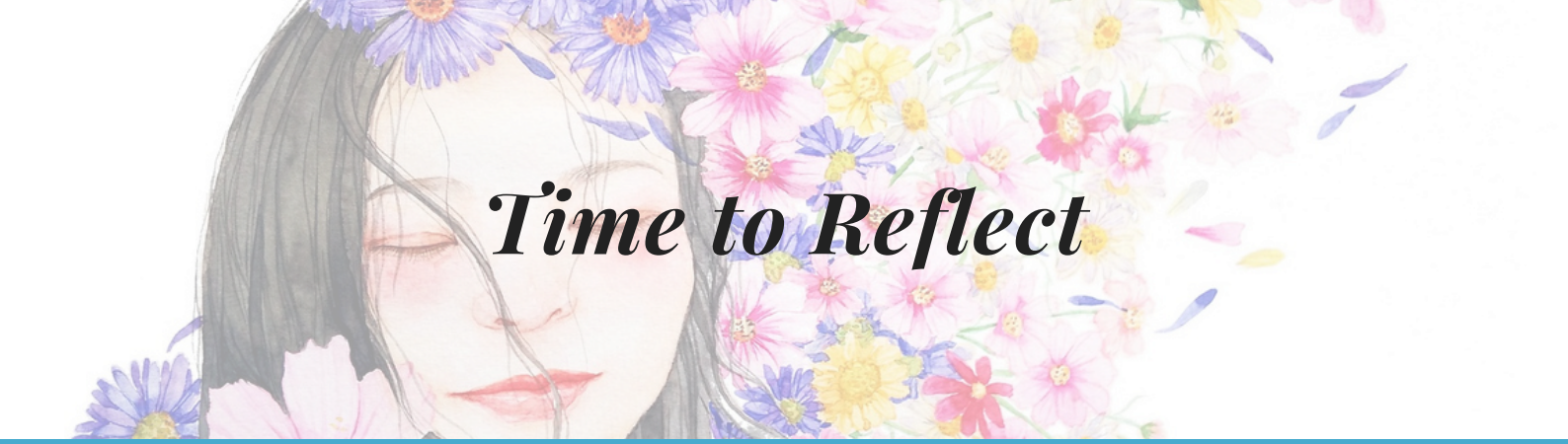
Are you willing to let go of painful memories so they can no longer trigger the release of chemical peptides that harm your body over time? Becoming self-aware is the greatest gift you can give to yourself. You cannot change something if you're not aware of it.

Unlock your potential and open your mind to new perspectives. Remember, we all do the things we do with the belief and understanding we have at the time. That does not mean your life and future are set in stone. You can change it.

Your future is yours to shape and mould through the power of your thoughts.

***“The world cannot change until you change your conception of it. ‘As within, so without’.
(Neville Goddard – Feeling is the Secret)***

Work through the reflective worksheet questions that follow to help process your thoughts. Questions are written in ‘first person’ to tap into your heart rather than just your logical mind.



Time to Reflect

What are the top three negative beliefs about myself that I struggle with?

1.

2.

3.

When or how did these negative beliefs start?

1.

2.

3.

Forgiveness

What does the word 'Forgiveness' mean to me?

Why do I think people hold on to anger, resentment, frustration and fear?

Forgiveness

Who, from my past or present, creates a negative feeling in me when I think about them? What feelings come up when I think about them?

Forgiveness

What have I already done or tried to help myself move forward from heartache or emotional pain?

What assumptions am I making about someone else that is perpetuating negative emotions in me?

Forgiveness

What would it mean to me if I could be free from the hurt, anger, frustration, hopelessness, anxiety?

What subliminal messages could my children be picking up from the way I deal with my emotional pain?

Forgiveness

Re-write one painful memory from another person's perspective and identify what truth they may have been telling themselves?

Did the above exercise help me to view things differently, even a little bit, and acknowledge most of us act or think based on knowledge we have at the time?



Hi There,

Use your creative time to relax and let your mind wander and ideas flow. You can follow these topics on your own or with family and friends. If the reflective journaling questions have brought up anything you would like help with, please email me at sandra@sandraowen.com

The topics and creative projects are designed to challenge preconceived ideas by turning something that appears to have little value into something that is meaningful and beautiful. Having fun while you learn and explore your subconscious thoughts and behaviours is a brilliant way to approach what for many can be difficult topics.

All ebooks and creative teaching materials are for personal use only. If you wish to use any of these resources for teaching in schools or your own workshops please email me to discuss. Thank you.

Recommended Reading:

'When the Body Says No' by Gabor Mate

'The Speed of Trust' by Stephen Covey

With Best Wishes,

Sandra xxx