OUR EIGHTH COMMITMENT: FORGIVENESS
“Forgiveness is the full release of wrongdoing against us by others, and the full acceptance of release of our own wrongdoing.”

- Retaliation, in all forms, is absent in the workplace, in regard to both children and staff.
- The SELFing skill of forgiveness is integrated into counseling methodologies.
- Staff and/or child failures, within the parameters of safety, are viewed as growth areas rather than permanent deficiencies.
Other Definitions:

“A cognitive, emotional, and behavioral response to interpersonal conflict...Letting go of negative affect.” Lawler, Younger, et al.

“Forgiveness is a complex of motivational changes that occurs in the aftermath of a significant interpersonal offense.” McCullough, Bellah, et al.

“Forgiveness is an emotion-focused coping process or style that can help people manage negative psychological and emotional experiences.” Strelan and Covic
Other Definitions continued...

“Forgiveness can be defined as a freely made choice to give up revenge, resentment, or harsh judgments toward a person who caused a hurt, and to strive to respond with generosity, compassion, and kindness toward that person.” Enright, et al.

“Forgiveness is a cognitive and emotional process that eradicates chronic hostility, rumination, and their adverse effects.” Ricciardi, Rota, et al.

“Forgiveness is the release of negative—and the potential enhancement of positive—feelings, emotions, and behaviors toward an offender.” Enright
What Forgiveness Is Not:

1. Relieving the offender of responsibility
2. It is NOT a feeling, it IS a decision
3. Pretending, hiding, or forgetting
4. An automatic rebuilding of trust
5. A guarantee of reconciliation
Future is what guides us through life. Contemplate the social, mental, emotional and physical consequences of forgiveness (and lack thereof).
SOCIAL

• We keep the offender in mind when we wonder if he will attend a gathering we plan to attend.

• The offender is in our mind if we try to avoid him at a gathering.

• Our minds aren't only on our friends and purpose of the group.

• The offender continues to affect how we engage with events and people due to not forgiving.

• As long as I do not forgive, the grudge and resentment can affect my experiences with friends and events.
Mental

- The offense occurred once. Maybe more than once.
- How we define the offense determines how deeply it penetrates our minds.
- Do we blame the offender for a failed life? Do I rehearse the offense adding to the pain? Do I hurt other people because I refuse to experience being taken advantage again?
- *Refusing to forgive will affect how I plan my future. It can limit my goals and belief in what is possible.*
How I think about the offender affects my *emotions*. My *emotions* will affect my social life and relationships. People may not feel safe around me or relax if I am *emotionally* preoccupied due to being in the same area as the offender or if I'm ruminating on the offense.
Physical

• high blood pressure
• anxiety
• depression
• aggression
Obstacles to Forgiving:

1. Desire for vengeance/retaliation (Nonviolence)
2. Avoidance (Social Responsibility)
3. Retention of victim status (Growth and Change)
4. “I can’t” (Social Learning)
5. Pride
“...while I was chained to a wall and being tortured. I realized, somehow, through the screaming in my mind, that even in that shackled, bloody helplessness, I was still free: free to hate the men who were torturing me, or to forgive them. It doesn’t sound like much, I know. But in the flinch and bite of the chain, when it’s all you’ve got, that freedom is a universe of possibility. And the choice you make, between hating and forgiving, can become the story of your life.”

Gregory David Roberts
Chantaram