

Forgiveness Vs. Stuffing

Often when we think we have forgiven someone who has hurt us, we have actually just swept our emotions under the rug. Rather than dealing with our feelings, we ignore them. Here is a comparison of forgiveness and emotional “stuffing”:

Forgiveness	Stuffing
Acknowledges and sits with the hurt	Minimizes the hurt
Reflects sadness for a time	Reflects “toughness” – “I’m fine”
Can be a long process	Happens quickly
Keeps you from repeating mistakes (learning)	Allows the action to happen again
Comes from God	Comes from yourself
Is a sacrifice of your “right” to remain angry	Finds a distraction to avoid anger
Allows you to respond to today	Causes you to respond today + the past

How does addiction or codependency come into play?

- We avoid feeling feelings – this makes true forgiveness difficult because you push away the hurt rather than allowing it for a season.
- We are quickly in and out of relationships – there is no sense of restoration or learning from mistakes when we “cut and run”.
- We may not want to look in our pasts to acknowledge who/what has hurt us.
- We have learned street smarts that cause us to want to seem unbreakable.

How do I take steps to forgive?

- Use writing or talking to feel all the hurt, anger, and sadness until you get all the way through these feelings.
- Use prayer as a tool to allow God to restore your heart to enable you to forgive.
- Do not rush through the process – sit with your feelings without pushing them away. After a period of time your feelings will decrease and you will be ready to forgive.
- Do not fan the flames of anger as you sit with it. This is simply an avoidance of a deeper sadness.

Forgiveness Worksheet

Tell the story (what happened that caused you pain?):

List all the feelings that you have felt about your story:

What feeling(s) do you tend to avoid?

What do you fear will happen if you sit with these unpleasant feelings?

What are some ways you can allow these feelings to safely move through your heart?
