



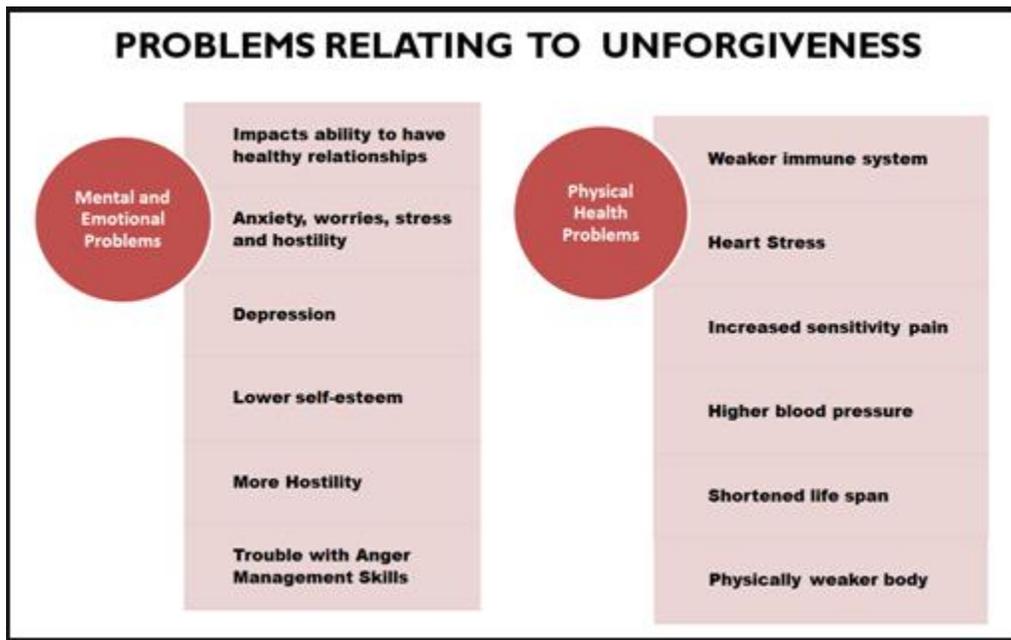
## Mental Health Musings

### Tip of the Day:

#### The Benefits of Forgiveness

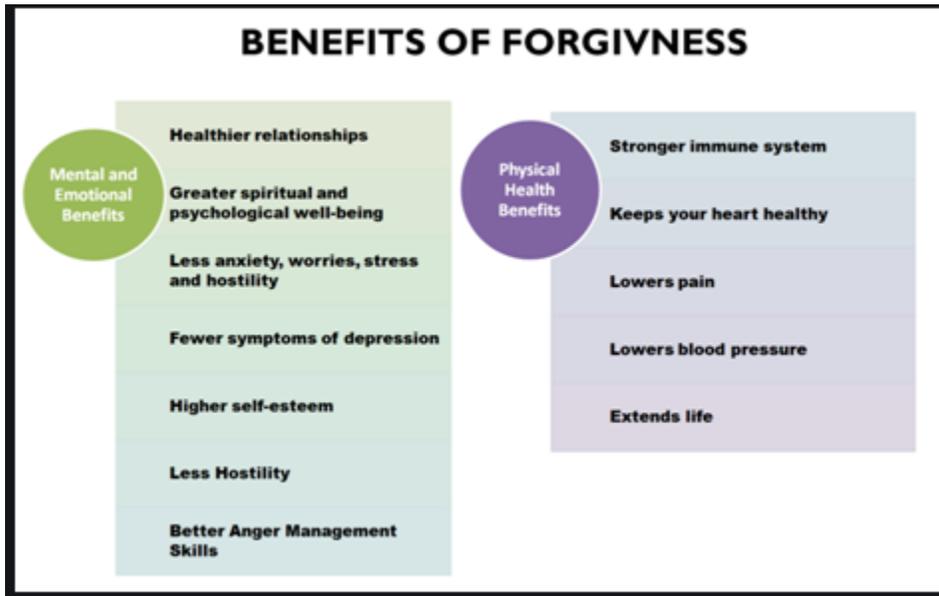
What is forgiveness? According the article *The Science Behind Forgiveness and How it Affects our Mental Health*, written by David Puder, MD [<https://psychiatrypodcast.com/psychiatry-psychotherapy-podcast/2019/4/10/what-is-forgiveness>] it is a process: Being emotionally authentic about how you feel you have been wronged and then releasing it so that you are no longer consumed by resentment.

How do you know you may be stuck in feelings of resentment and bitterness? The article suggests you may be playing a past hurt over and over, waiting for the thing that you feel hurt by to change or end when it most likely won't, talking 'trash' about someone or some situation over and over, holding onto pain, having a repeated temper about the focus of your resentment, etc...



The author reasons why it is good to forgive and also states what forgiveness is not: Blind approval, denying your feelings, turning away coldly and indifferently, bargaining, just being calm, etc... Forgiveness may not mean allowing someone or some situation to harm you. It may just be that you remove yourself from harm and find a way to compassion and acceptance. Puder states studies have shown that bitterness and resentment increase adrenaline, cortisol, and cytokine which are linked to the body's inflammatory responses. Sustained periods of anger are also linked to physical pain. Forgiveness has been found to lower blood pressure; reduce

depression, anger, paranoia, and anxiety; decrease physical symptoms stored in the body that are an effect of resentment; and increase self-esteem and emotional maturity.



How to forgive? The article recommends the authentic emotional process of allowing yourself your feelings, clarifying them, and finding a way to let go by handing it over either to a higher power, a judicial system, or some other way and continuing this process until negative feelings are eventually replaced with peace, acceptance, and compassion.

What are some ways you have learned to forgive? Who taught them to you? How can you honor your own unique ability to forgive today?

Written by: Myra Hage, LCSW 7/1/20

Substance Abuse Counselor/Clinical Supervisor • 775-757-2403 ext.: 4231

Owyhee Community Health Facility • Behavioral Health Department • PO Box 130 Owyhee NV 89832