

# HURTS, HABITS AND HANGUPS

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*12 Steps to Healing the Natural Man and Woman*

## ***Step 9- Make a list of all people who might have hurt you and through the Atonement of Christ, frankly forgive them.***

To his son Corianton, Alma explained that as we repent, we are delivered out of “endless night of darkness” and that men and women become “their own judges...” (Alma 41:7). When we heal, much of our pain and regret comes from things we have done to others. In this light, we might cringe at judging our self, fearing we will be overly harsh and judgmental about our past behaviors.



What we really desire on judgment day is more mercy and less judgment!

Yet, Alma was very clear about the criteria to be used on resurrection morning. “Therefore, my son, see that you are 1) merciful unto your brethren; 2) deal justly, 3) judge righteously, and 4) do good continually...” These four actions, based largely on how we feel and act towards others, appear to constitute much of the basis for our future judgment. So how is it that we will judge ourselves? Alma explains:

*...and if ye do all these things then shall ye receive your reward; yea, ye shall 1) have mercy restored unto you again; 2) ye shall have justice restored unto you again; 3) ye shall have a righteous judgment restored unto you again; and 4) ye shall have good restored unto you again. For that which ye do send out shall return unto you again... (Alma 41:14,15)*

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The powerful, eternal Law of Restoration suggests that by the power of the Atonement, the mercy we extend to others constitutes the mercy we are judged by; the righteous judgment we extend to those around us becomes the judgment by which we are judged. “Forgive us our debts,” the Lord asked, “as we forgive our debtors.” (Matt 6:12) We have become our own judges because the mercy and goodness we extend to others is restored to us.

This mercy and goodness is critical because many of our hurts and habits had their start with the way others treated us in the past. Abuse, unkind comments, addictions; all can negatively impact our self-image and lead to destructive self behaviors.

When we recall the past offenses of others toward us, we might be tempted to cry out, “it’s not fair!” And we would be right. Pain and cruelty, inflicted on the innocent, is among earthlife’s harshest realities. Unflinchingly, they occur, perhaps scarring us for years to come.

For many of us, then, frankly forgiving those who may have hurt us might constitute the greatest challenge to our overall healing. By the same token, releasing that bitterness is just as critical to our growth. Said Marion D. Hanks:

*The withholding of love, [holding a grudge] is the negation of the spirit of Christ, the proof that we never knew him, that for us he lived in vain.*

*It means that he suggested nothing in all our thoughts, that he inspired nothing in all our lives, that we were not once near enough to him to be seized with the spell of his compassion for the world. (Forgiveness: The Ultimate Form of Love)*

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In forgiving, we follow the Master who said simply, “Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.” (Luke 6:37) In the Plan of Restoration, all things are eventually restored back to us, including our forgiveness and our mercy.

Ironically, the amount of the Savior’s mercy towards us—grace—always exceeds what we deserve. The cosmic scales of justice always tip in our favor. Yet we do not complain about this gross ‘unfairness’!

In much the same way, those we forgive may not appear to merit our forgiveness. Their attitude or view of events may be unsympathetic to our pain. They might even continue to be prideful or unrepentant. The simple fact is that they hurt us and we need to forgive them so that we can replace destructive bitterness with peace and gratitude. We do so, leaving justice in the hands of their Creator; frankly praying he will be merciful to them.

It should be noted that forgiving someone is not the same as immediately trusting them once more. We are to pray for the Lord’s mercy to help remove any bitterness that may linger in our hearts due to their actions. At the same time, the Lord does not expect us to immediately place ourselves in a position to be hurt with someone who may not have taken the necessary steps to change their lives and their behaviors.

Prudence dictates that we allow a person who has harmed us the time to rebuild violated trust. For instance, it would be foolish to immediately reinvest money with someone who defrauded us out of our life’s savings under the guise of ‘forgiveness’.

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Finally, we might hesitate to forgive, fearing that letting go of a grudge would somehow diminish the size or the severity of the offense against us. Forgiving might appear to be saying, “it was not that bad!” The truth is that forgiveness is not predicated on the size or severity of the pain. It does not excuse or diminish what was done. It simply places justice and mercy with a kind Heavenly Father who is better able to weigh all circumstances and factors in the balance.

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## Read and Ponder

**Elder Marion D. Hanks**

*“Not only does our eternal salvation depend upon our willingness and capacity to forgive wrongs committed against us. Our joy and satisfaction in this life, and our true freedom, depend upon our doing so. When Christ bade us turn the other cheek, walk the second mile, give our cloak to him who takes our coat, was it to be chiefly out of consideration for the bully, the brute, the thief? Or was it to relieve the one aggrieved of the destructive burden that resentment and anger lay upon us?” (Forgiveness: The Ultimate Form of Love”, Ensign, Jan. 1974, 20)*

- *After their conversion, the Sons of Mosiah and Alma the Younger first strove to undo any damage they had caused because of their rebelliousness. How difficult a task will this be for you?*

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**“Verily I say unto you, notwithstanding their sins, my bowels are filled with compassion towards them. I will not utterly cast them off; and in the day of wrath I will remember mercy.” (D&C 101:9)**

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- *If you forgive a past hurt or offense and extend mercy, what effect might that have on your daily life? How would being filled ‘with compassion’ help you with your own weaknesses?*

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### Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

*I am most amazed at the moment when Jesus, after staggering under His load to the crest of Calvary, said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).*

*If ever there is a moment when I indeed stand all amazed, it is this one. When I consider Him bearing the weight of all our sins and forgiving those who would nail Him to the cross, I ask not “How did He do it?” but “Why did He do it?” As I examine my life against the mercifulness of His, I find how I fail to do as much as I should in following the Master.*

*For me, this is a higher order of amazement. I am startled enough by His ability to heal the sick and raise the dead, but I have had some experience with healing in a limited way. We are all lesser vessels, but we have seen the miracles of the Lord repeated in our own lives and in our own homes and with our own portion of the priesthood. But mercy? Forgiveness? Atonement? Reconciliation? Too often, that is a different matter.*

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*How could He forgive His tormenters at that moment? With all that pain, with blood having fallen from every pore, still He was thinking of others. This is yet one more amazing evidence that He really was perfect and intends us to be also. In the Sermon on the Mount, before He stated that perfection is our goal, He gave something of a last requirement. He said all must “love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).*

*This is one of the most difficult things to do.*

- *What will be the most difficult aspect of forgiving others for you?*

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