

FORGIVENESS AS A CHOICE

University of Wisconsin-Madison professor Robert Enright and his students developed a series of guideposts that help a person arrive at forgiveness. There are four phases with questions and suggestions that help to measure progress. They're listed in Enright's 2001 book, "Forgiveness Is a Choice."

Phase 1: "Uncovering your anger"

It requires that participants ask themselves a series of questions:

- How have you avoided dealing with anger?
- Have you faced your anger?
- Are you afraid to expose your shame or guilt?
- Has your anger affected your health?
- Have you been obsessed about the injury you received or the offender?
- Do you compare your situation with that of the offender?
- Has the injury caused a permanent change in your life?
- Has the injury changed your world view?

Phase 2: "Deciding to forgive"

- Decide that what you have been doing hasn't worked.
- Be willing to begin the forgiveness process.
- Decide to forgive.

Phase 3: "Working on forgiveness"

- Work toward understanding.
- Work toward compassion.
- Accept the pain.
- Give the offender a gift.

Phase 4: "Discovery and release from emotional prison"

- Discover the meaning of suffering.
- Discover your need for forgiveness.
- Discover that you are not alone.
- Discover the purpose of your life.
- Discover the freedom of forgiveness.