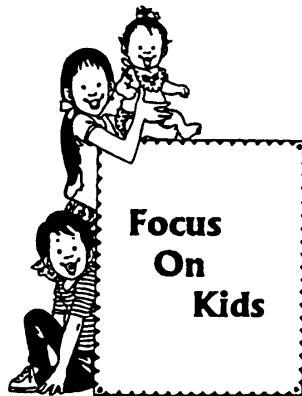


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MOVING?

Please update your mailing information so you can continue to receive this important newsletter. Contact the Specialist listed above in the County where you attended FOK.

Forgiveness is the First Step

Nina Chen, Ph.D.
Human Development Specialist

What is forgiveness? Webster's New World Dictionary defines "forgive" as "(1) to give up resentment against or the desire to punish; stop being angry with and (2) to give up all claim to punish . . .; (3) to cancel or remit (a debt)."

Forgiveness is a process to help people release their pain and anger and feel stronger and less vulnerable to others.

Forgiveness is not forgetting or meaning you agree with what the other person did to you. Forgiveness means letting go of blame, hurt and resentments. Forgiveness can break the cycle of hate and resentment and provide opportunities to bring peace of mind, joy, love and positive outlooks. Forgiving someone or forgiving self gives people more time and energy to achieve their goals and help create harmony. Forgiveness also means that even if we cannot get along or love each other any more, we can forgive each other.

Forgiving someone can be good for your emotional, psychological, and physical well-being. Several studies have shown the benefits of forgiveness. For instance, forgiveness is linked to lower blood pressure, improved health, more life satisfaction and less associated with anger and depression than people who have not forgiven.

You may ask yourself, "I was hurt so deeply, how can I forgive

anger, burdens, resentment and hurt." If you want to move forward and for the sake of your children, it is critical to forgive and ask for forgiveness when you have offended your ex-spouse. Forgiveness can be the real turning point in recovery from a divorce.

References:

Enright, R.D. (2001). *Forgiveness is a choice: A step by step process for resolving anger and restoring hope*. Washington, DC: American

Divorce and Anger

Anger is a natural human emotion. Everyone experiences anger from time to time. Anger can be a sign to tell us that something is not right that we need to take care of, protect from harm, or make a change. Anger also can be harmful to us and those around us. Our responses can turn into constructive or destructive behavior depending on how we deal with anger.

Going through a divorce can be painful with a lot of mixed emotions and feelings. Expressing anger in a constructive way helps you go through the healing process after your divorce and helps your children cope with parental divorce positively.

It's important to identify and acknowledge your anger, understand what triggers it, and learn how to handle your anger.

Divorce and Anger (cont . from page 1)

If you are the type of person who doesn't manage anger constructively or if you remain angry long-term, you may feel unhappy, helpless, bitter, lonely and hopeless. It may "drive you crazy" and become a major barrier for you to move forward in your life.

If you have a hard time letting go of anger, it is important to consider how your children might be affected by your anger. When anger, fighting and conflicts continue even after the divorce, negative effects show up in children's behavior and they may remain

wounded psychologically. Try to learn techniques to deal with your anger and bitterness. Remember, this anger can be destructive to you and your children.



Tips on Dealing with Divorce and Anger



Identify your anger triggers and ask yourself what makes you angry, why you feel this way, and how you can respond differently.

Consider these coping tips:

- ◆ Stop and think before you respond or act.
- ◆ Stay calm and explore ways to solve problems.
- ◆ Keep your children out of conflicts and avoid putting your children in the middle.

- ◆ Discuss one issue at a time and let the small issues go.
- ◆ Try to avoid taking your ex-spouse's statements personally. Listen to your ex-spouse's point of view with an open mind. Respect your ex-spouse's right to have a different opinion. Treat your ex-spouse as a business partner.
- ◆ Explain how you feel without blaming your ex-spouse.
- ◆ Praise more than criticize.
- ◆ Forgive, let go and work to move on.

If you are extremely angry . .

- ◆ Take a deep breath, then count to 10.
- ◆ Splash water on your face, or take a walk.
- ◆ Shout it out when you are the only one who can hear it.
- ◆ Take a time out from the place of tension until you cool off. (If you are watching your children, make sure they are safe).
- ◆ Write in a journal or on a sheet of paper to express your current feelings.
- ◆ Talk with someone who you can share and whom you trust.



Questions and Answers

Q. How can I help myself go through divorce?

A. Divorce is a big loss and can be painful to go through. You need to take time to think about your future, goals, resources and how you can take control of your life. To help rebuild your confidence, hope, and self-esteem and to move forward to your future, take care of yourself, exercise regularly, get enough sleep, eat healthy, talk with trusted friends or family members and/or join a support group.

Web Resources

Divorce Matters: Coping with Stress and Change...<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/publications/PM1637.pdf>

Divorce Matters: A Child's View.....<http://www.nncc.org/Parent/childview.html>

Helping Children Manage Anger at Parents.....<http://missourifamilies.org/features/divorcearticles/>