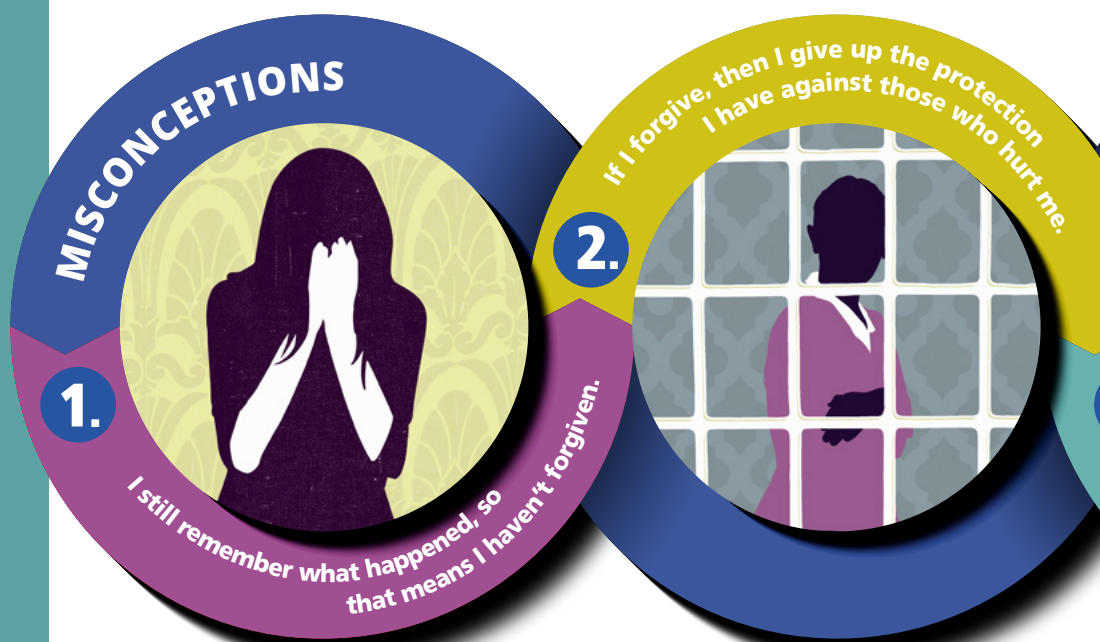


# Forgiving Others

## Misconceptions and Tips

By Elizabeth Lloyd Lund

**E**ach of us has experienced the anxious, frustrated feeling of being offended or hurt. In my work as a counselor for LDS Family Services, I have found that the issue of not forgiving others arises repeatedly. Not forgiving prevents true healing. We know that we must forgive (see D&C 64:10) and that forgiveness is healthy for us, yet when it comes down to the work and effort it takes to forgive, many continue to hold on to the pain. As I've worked with families and individuals, I've found several common misconceptions about forgiveness and several ideas we can apply to help us as we seek to forgive.



**O**ur brains are programmed to remember in order for us to learn. There is a difference between occasionally remembering an event and ruminating on it. Once we forgive, we won't need to continually think about and analyze the event.

"The past is to be learned from but not lived in. We look back to claim the embers from glowing experiences but not the ashes. . . .

". . . To be tied to earlier mistakes is the worst kind of wallowing in the past from which we are called to cease and desist."<sup>1</sup>

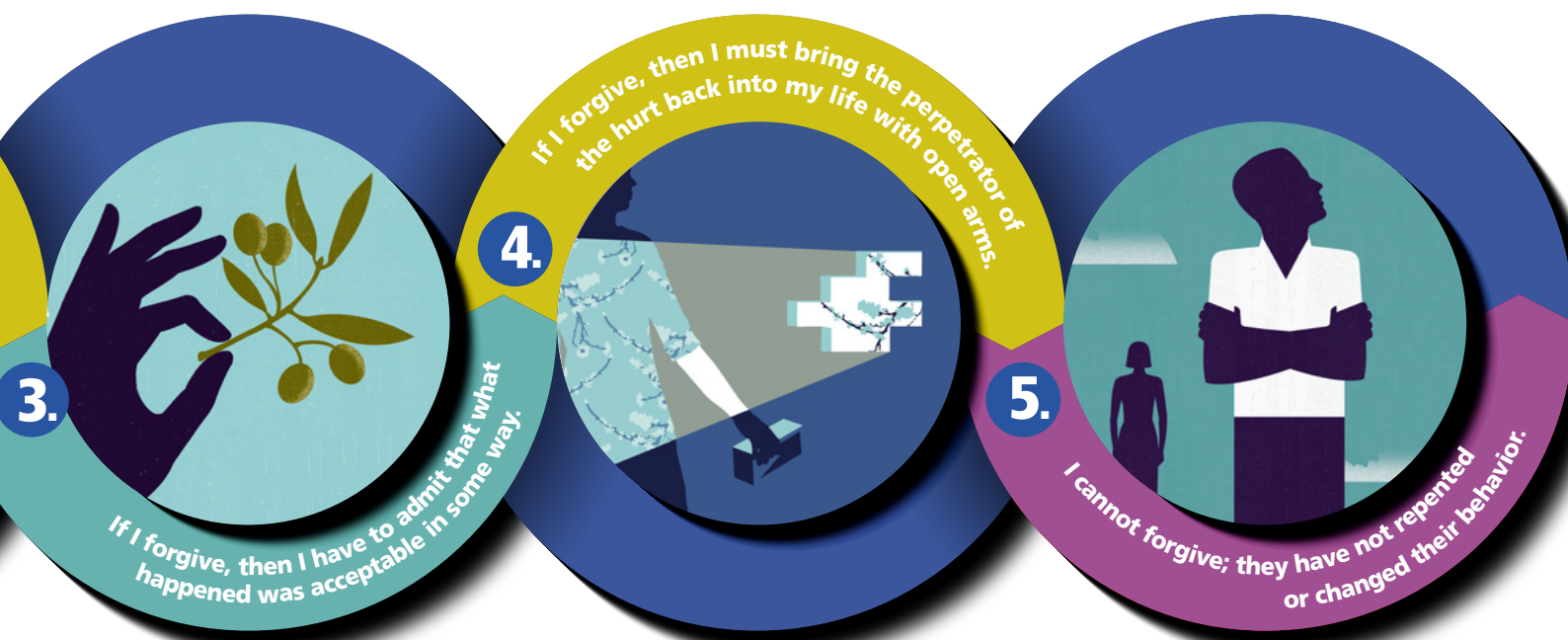
—Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

**H**olding on to pain and hurt sometimes helps victims feel more secure. By withholding forgiveness, we protect the wound, but it also won't heal because we are constantly thinking about the hurt and reopening the wound.

"Let us bind up the wounds . . . that have been caused by cutting words, by stubbornly cultivated grievances, by scheming plans to 'get even' with those who may have wronged us. . . . Fortunately, we all have the power to rise above it, if we will 'clothe [ourselves] with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace.' (D&C 88:125.)"<sup>2</sup>

—President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)

We can find healing and peace as we better understand and apply the principle of forgiveness.



**F**orgiveness means pardon-ing an offense. To forgive, we must first acknowledge that what happened was wrong and caused pain. We pardon the fault because we too are imperfect. We turn the judgment over to God and allow Him to relieve the burden.

“To forgive is not to condone. We do not rationalize bad behavior or allow others to mistreat us *because* of their struggles, pains, or weaknesses.”<sup>3</sup>  
—Elder Kevin R. Duncan



**F**orgiveness and trust are two different things. We can forgive without developing a trusting relationship. If someone continually hurts us, God commands us to forgive, but we are also responsible to set boundaries to keep ourselves safe.

“The Savior asks us to forsake and combat evil in all its forms, and although we must forgive a neighbor who injures us, we should still work constructively to prevent that injury from being repeated.”<sup>4</sup>  
—Elder David E. Sorensen



**F**orgiveness is not earned. It is given. God—not us—will judge whether a person has repented. Regardless of how unrepentant a person is, we can move forward and seek peace.

“I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.

“And ye ought to say in your hearts—let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee according to thy deeds.”  
—Doctrine and Covenants 64:10–11



Often we know we need to forgive but we feel overwhelmed by the task and aren't ready to let go of the hurt. We must work at our own pace and recognize that healing may come slowly.

"As impossible as it may seem to you now, in time the healing you can receive from the Savior will allow you to truly forgive."<sup>5</sup>  
—Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015)



Without the gift of the Savior's Atonement, we would all be fallen and unable to return to our Heavenly Father. We all need the forgiveness that the Lord willingly gives to those who repent.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."  
—Romans 3:23



## Five Ideas to HELP US FORGIVE

The atoning power of the Savior is available to each of us. As we access that power, we become more empathetic toward others and understanding of each other's faults.

"Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ all will be made right according to God's timing."<sup>6</sup>  
—Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015)



Once you have forgiven and you have accepted peace into your life, thoughts of the hurt may occasionally return. When this happens, don't let Satan convince you that you haven't forgiven. Recognize that you have forgiven, say it aloud to yourself, and let the memory go.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

—Matthew 11:28

When we truly forgive, we find greater peace and comfort. We admit our reliance on God and allow Him to take our heaviest burdens.

"The Savior's Atonement is not just for those who need to repent; it is also for those who need to forgive. If you are having trouble forgiving another person or even yourself, ask God to help you. Forgiveness is a glorious, healing principle."<sup>7</sup>

—Elder Kevin R. Duncan

When we forgive, we invite the Savior's hope and peace into our life, which allows us greater capacity to develop our strengths and virtues. As we learn to forgive, we have greater freedom, greater ability to share the gospel, and greater strength to manage trials. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

#### NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Best Is Yet to Be," *Ensign*, Jan. 2010, 24, 25.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Of You It Is Required to Forgive," *Ensign*, June 1991, 5.
3. Kevin R. Duncan, "The Healing Ointment of Forgiveness," *Ensign*, May 2016, 35.
4. David E. Sorensen, "Forgiveness Will Change Bitterness to Love," *Ensign*, May 2003, 12.
5. Richard G. Scott, "To Heal the Shattering Consequences of Abuse," *Ensign*, May 2008, 42.
6. Richard G. Scott, "Make the Exercise of Faith Your First Priority," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 94.
7. Kevin R. Duncan, "The Healing Ointment of Forgiveness," 35.