

Work in Progress

Published monthly by Michele Crawford

Work in Progress is an electronic newsletter intended to assist individuals seeking optimum well-being.

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Work in Progress February 2007 Volume II Issue II

Feature Article: Forgiveness: Choosing Happiness over Righteousness  
Part Two

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1) Note from Michele

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Dear Reader

In Part two of the forgiveness series, I reveal the importance of consensus in semantics to better enhance understanding. The essential steps of forgiveness cannot be entangled with a vague understanding that limits choices.

There are four possible options when confronted with an offence against us. Cheap forgiveness or the refusal to forgive as choices following an act of betrayal were addressed in Part one. The two other choices involving forgiveness follows here.

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## 2) Feature Article: Forgiveness: Choosing Happiness over Righteousness Part Two

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Semantics are very important in this process. First of all, forgiveness needs to be addressed as a process, not an event; that takes time and effort. The process requires diligent attention, focus and time. It does not proceed forward in a straight line but rather as a complex movement in many directions.

It is also very critical to address the wrongful behaviour as separate from an individual. We can judge much behaviour as wrong (that is why we have prisons and detention rooms). As a separate issue, we then decide what we want to do about the transgressor. People are not the total of their worst behaviour and need not to be reduced to that.

The semantics of acceptance means to be able to acknowledge reality. It does not mean to like, condone, enjoy or approve of a violation ...only to acknowledge it has happened. A guarantee of recovery can only occur when we accept what happened so we can then focus on recovery and healing. By not accepting, we stay stuck on the transgressor and pain while looking backwards to the event.

At a deep emotional level, acceptance allows us to regain control again when we concentrate on our path to healing versus feeling out of control by focusing on the violation. Part of acceptance is honouring the full force of the damage. Acceptance insures safety from possible future acts of aggression. Acceptance allows us to see ourselves and the transgressor with honesty and objectivity.

Acceptance means giving up the need for revenge and obsessing about the injury to reengage with life. And finally, acceptance is forgiving our self for ANY role we may have played (for example, demonstrating accident-enhancing behaviour, ignoring our own radar, or placing ourselves in high risk situations).

Forgiveness can be accomplished in two ways: each on parallel planes and equally rewarding. One is when the transgressor makes amends and the other is when the transgressor does not. He or she is unremorseful, unrepentant or unavailable. This second choice is called letting go and is just as powerful.

The other parallel choice is genuine forgiveness. It is a process accomplished in tandem, requiring the sincere participation of both parties leading to the restitution of two souls.

When the transgressor is fully aware of the extent of the damage inflicted, demonstrates empathy and vows to never repeat the offence, there is a profound shift in focus so the injured party can heal and actually flourish.

True forgiveness occurs when you can focus on and appreciate the knowledge and gifts that result from the offense.

For more information, please contact:
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3) About Michele  
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Michele Crawford is a therapist who assists individuals who are struggling with trauma, anxiety or depression. Her passion for her work remains embedded in being able to connect with you in your suffering, helping you find real solutions no matter how complex the issue may be.

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4) Counselling Services  
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Are you prepared to live with more happiness, optimism, confidence, self-worth and hope? If your answer is "yes," then your next step is to contact me for a free 20-minute phone consultation. We can then discuss how I might best help you resolve your problems of Trauma, Depression and Anxiety.

The benefits of counselling with Michele include: significantly reduced stress levels, an optimistic outlook in life, increased confidence and hope.

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