Forgiveness Stories

6th annual edition

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Mai nana 'ino 'ino Na hewa o kanaka Aka e huikala A ma 'ema 'e no...
"Behold not with anger the sins of man, but forgive and cleanse...
Queen Lili'uokalani

Forgiveness Stories: The best from 2004 – 2009

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Petroglyphs at Waikoloa, Hawai'i

Introduction

"'Thou shalt not' is soon forgotten, but 'Once upon a time' lasts forever."
—Philip Pullman (1996 Carnegie Medal acceptance speech)

From ancient times, storytellers have spoken to us over campfires, in festivals, in song, scripture, ritual, dance and art. The wisdom of each generation's experience has been passed to us in stories from father to son, from mother to daughter. This book of Forgiveness Stories attempts to continue that ancient way.

Through an immense effort of will and skill, the original Hawaiians came to the Islands across vast waters. They brought with them a family and social system that prized sharing, respect, truth-telling and the life of the land. For the original Hawaiians, forgiveness was like breathing.

We respect that tradition, and offer this small book as a living re-connection of all the peoples of modern Hawai'i and the first Hawaiians. We seek to share their original wisdom with the world. It is part of our earth, ocean and sky, part of our heritage, and has been expanded by the people of many nations who have also made Hawai'i their home in the past three centuries.

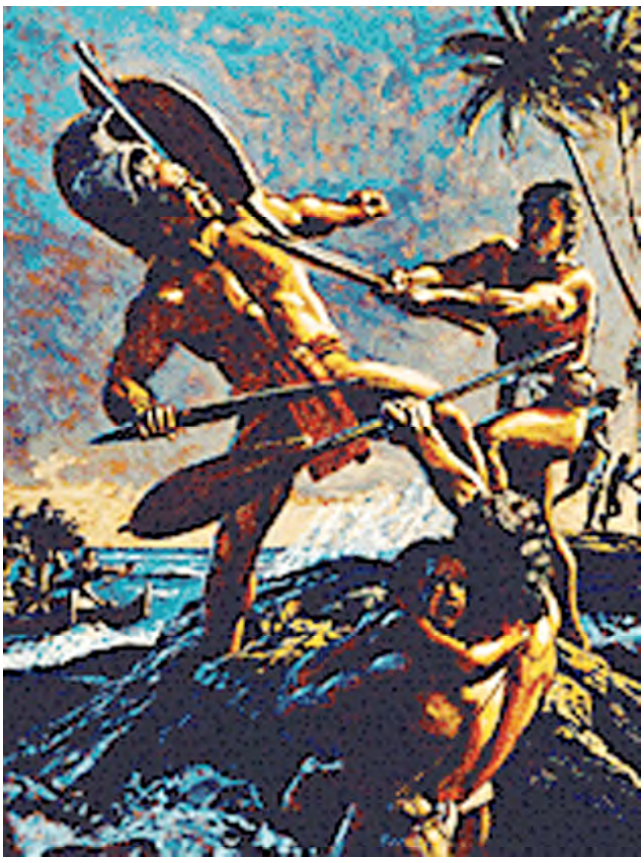
And so these stories come from Hawai'i, and from all continents.

In this time of destruction and rebirth, for our Islands, for America and for the world – forgiveness is a practical connection to traditional Hawaiian ideals, and a key to the future.

"Australian Aborigines say that the *big* stories—the stories worth telling and retelling, the ones in which you may find the meaning of your life—are forever stalking the right teller, sniffing and tracking like predators hunting their prey in the bush."
—Robert Moss, Dreamgates

from the editor, Michael North

Law of the Splintered Paddle
King Kamehameha's Story: Hawai'i



King Kamehameha I, the first ruler of all the Hawaiian Islands, lived before European influence became strong in the central Pacific, from 1758 to 1819.

He had a reputation for independence, strength, justice and compassion -- combined with a fierce determination to unite the people of Hawai'i.

Kamehameha's proclamation of Mamalahoe -- the "Law of the Splintered Paddle," came about in a unique way. His story of compassion and forgiveness has been passed down through nearly two centuries, from Kingdom to Republic to Territory to State, and is included today in the Constitution of the State of Hawai'i.

The story goes like this:

The young royal warrior Kamehameha, headstrong with youth, was paddling a war canoe with his men near the shoreline of Ke'eau, in Puna, Maui. Seeking a place to rest, they came upon some commoners fishing on a beach, and attacked them. All escaped, except for two men who stayed behind to defend a man carrying a child on his back.

During the struggle, the young chief's foot caught in some lava rocks, and he was trapped there. One of the fishermen struck Kamehameha on the head with a paddle, and the paddle splintered. It was a blow that could have killed the young future King.

The man who hit him, in defending the child, allowed Kamehameha to survive. The young chief never forgot this act of forgiveness. This commoner taught

Kamehameha that all human life is precious and deserves respect, that the strong must not mistreat the weak.

Kamehameha could have taken revenge on the fisherman, but he learned from the experience instead, and made forgiveness part of Hawai'i's heritage, and its future.

Years later, King Kamehameha I proclaimed Mamalahoe, the Law of the Splintered Paddle. It provides that any old person, woman or child may "lie by the roadside in safety." This means that anyone who is weak is entitled to protection and assistance, and to respect, even from the King.

story suggested by Ramsay Taum, researched and written by the Hawai'i Forgiveness Project, from online sources at Kamehameha Schools, the University of Hawai'i Law School, and the State Constitution.

For detailed references, see
http://www.hawaiiforgivenessproject.org/stories.htm#sources

"We cannot live with broken hearts. In time we have to accept these things have happened to us. To stay with the past will only bring you into turmoil."

Christo Brand & Vusumzi Mcongo:
South Africa

Christo Brand was one of the warders directly assigned to guard Nelson Mandela at Robben Island prison between 1978 and 1987. At the same time Vusumzi Mcongo was a political prisoner serving a 12-year sentence. Following the collapse of the apartheid regime, both men now work for the Robben Island Museum in Cape Town.

Christo Brand
The first time I saw Vusumzi was on our way to Robben Island. We both arrived on the same day in 1978. I was a warder. He was a prisoner in chains, on his way to maximum security. We did not speak to one another. The first time we spoke properly was nearly 20 years later when we were both applying for a job at Robben Island Museum. We embraced each other warmly. Now that we work together we talk about what was wrong in the past. Sometimes we have a laugh about things that happened then. There is no bitterness between us.

When I started on Robben Island I was told that the men we guarded were no better than animals. Some warders hated the prisoners and were very cruel. But I could never hate because these political prisoners were far more polite and friendly than any prisoner I'd met before.

Eventually I was put in charge of the educational studies of Nelson Mandela and a few other prisoners. Mr. Mandela was determined to turn Robben Island into a university. It meant that prisoners who arrived with no education at all left as powerfully educated men. He kept saying that as long as you're alive, they can't take away your education. He was even determined to learn how to speak and write Afrikaans.

Mr. Mandela is the epitome of forgiveness, able to reach out to all people. While he was in prison, the man who was the architect of apartheid, Hendrik Verwoerd, died. When Mandela was finally released, one of the first people he visited was Verwoerd's widow, Betsie. She received him with open arms in their house in a white suburb.

Vusumzi Mcongo

I was arrested in 1976 for being a member of the South African Student Movement (SASM) during a school boycott in Port Elizabeth. The charges laid against me under the Internal Security Act were for incitement, sabotage and terrorist activities. I was detained for six months, during which time I was interrogated and tortured. I was lucky to survive. Many died in detention.

In prison I noticed Christo, but prisoners didn't talk to officers. I tried to keep out of his way, as it was my job to carry information from one section of the prison to another. It was a risky job, and to be found out would have meant having my studies curtailed. For us prisoners this was the ultimate punishment. Broadening our knowledge was about broadening our future.

Our relationship with the warders at Robben Island was often a stumbling block. We had to convince them we weren't violent men. But I never hated these warders. They were working for a system and the system was brutal. The people I hated were those who had tortured and interrogated me in detention. I used to dream of revenge.

And yet, after I was released, that hatred diminished. All I wanted was to meet these people again to show them that I'd survived. And what's more, survived with a smile.

By chance, during Steve Biko's hearing at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), I met some of the security officers involved in his case. I greeted them and reminded them that they'd also interrogated and tortured me. Then I wished them luck in their case. I bore them no ill will. I knew then that the experience of Robben Island had not brutalised me. We had all learned different lessons in different ways.

We cannot live with broken hearts. In time we have to accept that these things have happened to us, that those years have been wasted. To stay with the past will only bring you into turmoil. No nation can survive without forgiveness.

Preaching reconciliation has become part of my daily task. For me this is a voluntary change, one that comes from within, even though the government has made me no reparation. But some former political prisoners are still very angry. They are not prepared to forgive. It's not hatred against the white man they feel, but anger at the government that has done nothing for them.

From The Forgiveness Project website
http://www.theforgivenessproject.com/stories/

First Nations People: Canada
Recounted by Lency Spezzano

The First Nations woman stood in the center of the seminar room, and trembled with fury.

She was enraged, and she wanted to fight for her dignity and her pride. There was a man in the room, a fellow Native, whom she saw as a transgressor in the extreme. She preached to us of her love for her family, and for her people who had suffered a holocaust of cultural genocide.

The man revealed that he had been a sex

offender during his youthful drinking days. He was so filled with regret and remorse that eleven years after the fact he turned himself in to the authorities, to begin a long series of rehabilitative seminars and counseling sessions.

He had been willing to convict himself with his guilt; his challenge now was to win back the truth. Regardless of the mistakes he had made in his life, his true nature as a child of the Creator was perfect innocence. He said that he hoped someday to be able to find forgiveness within himself.

He had abused others as he himself had been abused in the residential "Indian" schools the Canadian government had forced on the First Nations people for over a hundred years. There the children had been torn from their families, separated from their siblings, raped of their language, religion, and heritage, and were taught that everything "Indian" was evil or inferior. Without their families to protect them, the children were preyed upon by sexual predators who were hired by the churches to supervise the dormitories, and teach the classes.

When the children graduated from high school and returned to their villages, they brought the pattern of abuse home. Drugs and alcohol were used by many as an attempt to escape emotional suffering, which caused more damage to families and communities, especially due to their natural physical intolerance for alcohol. Violent death and suicide became common place, as did sexual and physical abuse.

I helped the woman recognize that her issue with this man was that she had not forgiven her own perpetrator for the violation, shame, and loss of innocence that occurred when she had been raped as a girl.

If she could find it in her to forgive her perpetrator, she could recover the innocence and joy she knew as a child. If she could allow this man in the seminar to stand for the one who had hurt her, she could forgive both of them at the same time. If she could free her mind of the judgment she had placed on them so that she could see them as innocent, she could win back their innocence as well as her own.

Without hesitation, she agreed to do the healing that would be required. The man crumpled forward from the torment of his guilt. For him to step to the front of the room to represent the woman's perpetrator would be the greatest act of courage and willingness of his life. With great effort, he was able to rise and face the woman in her pain.

My husband, Chuck, suggested that she choose two women friends to walk with her and support her as she crossed the room, each step representing a step forward in her forgiveness.

Clutching each other, the three faced the man, and wailing from pain, began their slow but steady progress toward joining him in the truth. As they came close to him, their faces brightened, and soon the tears were tears of joy and release.

As the woman reached him, she gave him the gift of his innocence and therefore was able to receive it as her own. When they embraced, they were filled with love and gratitude for each other.

During the remaining days of the seminar, whenever I saw her around the compound, she was skipping like a child, a big grin on her face. Forgiveness had made her so lighthearted that she proved the adage, "It's never too late to have a happy childhood."

Many people are convinced of personal guilt so great that it separates them from their Creator's love and acceptance. In the face of the miracle of forgiveness, Reality registers the only Truth in our minds: we are still just as God created us. We are perfectly innocent regardless of our mistakes, and we will one day share God's evaluation of who we are.

In the year following this seminar, the young man continued to work on self-forgiveness. He started a support group for sexual offenders, knowing that he was in a position to help others.

From http://www.psychologyofvision.com

"These boots are like my life - they've been healed, resoled and restored."

David: England

In 2003 David was released from prison after serving almost 17 years of a life sentence for a double domestic murder. During his prison sentence he spent four years at HMP Grendon Underwood, a prison run along therapeutic lines.

"In the 1980's I was convicted of a double murder. I cannot discuss the details here owing to the rights to anonymity of those still affected. However, I can say that circumstances at that time had conspired to take me to my lowest ebb. Everything I valued in life, I was about to lose. The night before the offences, I went to bed and washed down a fistful of pills with Southern Comfort. I didn't expect to wake up. When I did awake, 12 hours later, my head was all messed up with drugs. All sense of value for human life had dwindled to zero.

I spent the first part of my sentence on D Wing at Wormwood Scrubs: a hard, brutal place full of lifers. Then I heard about HMP Grendon, a prison run on group therapy lines. I knew that in order to make sense of my life I had to go there. In 1990 I arrived at Grendon. The therapy gave me insight into myself. As I started putting together the jigsaw pieces of my life, I took on board the wider consequences of the crime. For the first time I realised how much my actions had blighted my children's lives.

I have struggled with the concept of forgiveness. At first I was seeking forgiveness from others, then at Grendon I realised I had a real problem with forgiving myself. I had counseling with the Chaplain. He was a great guy. We had fierce debates. During one of our talks he went for me, pinning me up against the wall. "Who the fuck do you think you are?" he shouted. "If God can forgive you, why can't you forgive yourself? Do you think you're better than God?"

I still struggle with the issue of forgiveness, but since then I've been able to find a place within myself where my crime is easier to bear. I don't deserve forgiveness, but unless you can reach that point where you feel OK, you can never fully heal and move on.

When I was at Grendon I took part in a live Kilroy programme. I was sitting next to a couple who had lost their daughter in a violent unsolved murder. Having opened the programme with my story, the cameras then panned to the couple. They turned on me. Suddenly, in their eyes, I became the perpetrator. It was pretty ugly: their feelings were 'hang 'em and flog 'em'.

And yet from this encounter came the most precious friendship. The moment the cameras stopped rolling the three of us just embraced and cried. Later they started writing to me and visiting me in prison. They kept in contact until I was due to be released. Perhaps they couldn't handle contact beyond that point, but for all of us some sort of healing had been reached. It certainly gave me a valuable insight into what victims and extended families go through.

Grendon enabled me to shed my past and to grow. Although rehabilitating and finding a supportive employer is difficult, I've managed to change a negative into a positive – and I owe that to my victims. Recently, sorting through some of my belongings stored in a friend's loft, I've been reconnecting with my past. In one of the boxes I found my favourite boots. These boots are like my life – they've been healed, resoled and restored."

From The Forgiveness Project website
http://www.theforgivenessproject.com/stories/

"I learnt from practising martial arts that to overcome your opponent you should meet hardness with softness."

Camilla Carr & Jon James: Chechnya

In April 1997, Camilla Carr, 45, and her boyfriend, Jon James, 43, went to Chechnya to set up a rehabilitation centre for traumatised war-children. Three months later they were taken hostage by Chechnyan rebels. Their ordeal lasted 14 months, during which Camilla was repeatedly raped by one of her jailers.

Camilla Carr
Rape is a terrible violation of a human being. I will never forgive the act, yet I can forgive the man who raped me; I can feel compassion for him because I understand the desperate place he was coming from.

That's not to say I condone what our captors did to us (the physical and psychological abuse was appalling), and if I met them now I'd want to ask all of them, "Did you have any idea how much you were harming us?" But I still understand the desperation that caused them to do the things they did.

As soon as we were taken hostage we decided to take the line of least resistance, because our four captors were so clearly traumatised by the war. If we'd shown anger or sadness they could have reacted with violence.

After several weeks in captivity one of them – an ignorant and wounded person who we named Paunch – took the opportunity to rape me. The only way I could get through this horror was by thinking to myself, "You can never touch the essence of me – my body is only part of who I am."

He raped me many times, but mostly I was able to cling on to this detached state of being. He always did it when he was alone and I didn't dare tell the other captors in case it gave them the idea of gang rape. This went on until I got herpes, which gave me the strength to say no. Paunch asked me to explain why. With a dictionary I shakily pointed out, "No sex, no violence". I couldn't take any more. He said he just wanted to be my friend! In his own way he was apologising. He stopped raping me and instead he would talk about his dreams.

We were released in September 1998. Initially I seemed to be doing well. We were basking in the euphoria of freedom and love from our family and friends. Then two months later I collapsed. I couldn't stop crying and had no energy. This lasted a few weeks, but it wasn't until 2001, when Jon and I moved to Wales, that I found the space and silence to let go and surrender to weakness and vulnerability. Only this way could my nervous system finally heal.

Some of our Chechnyan friends can't understand how we can forgive. They feel tarnished with the guilt of their community. I tell them that I believe forgiveness begins with understanding, but you have to work through layers to obtain it. First you have to deal with anger, then with tears, and only once you reach the tears are you on the road to finding peace of mind.

Jon James

I had a horrible feeling as Paunch took Camilla next door. I heard a few muffled words, then silence, and an awful wave of realisation hit me. I felt sick. I was powerless to take any physical action since I was handcuffed to the heating pipes. The only tool available was prayer. I prayed that the invasion would be swift and painless.

Throughout our ordeal I continued to hold back my emotion, as I had learned from practising martial arts that to overcome your opponent you should meet hardness with softness. Knowing this saved my life. But in my dreams I murdered Paunch several times.

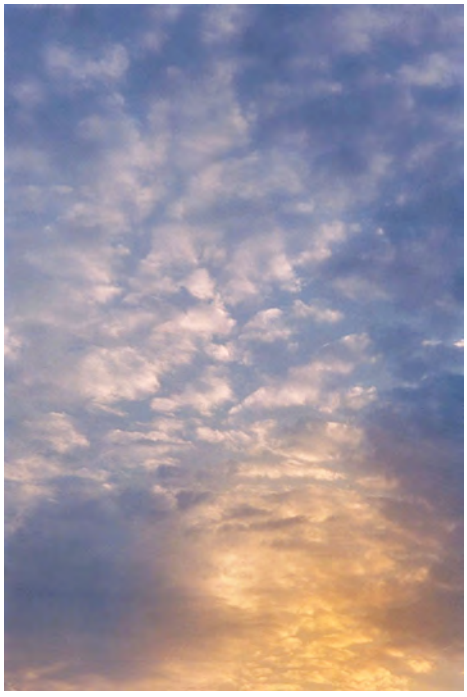
We'd do yoga and Tai Chi every morning and survived by the skin of our teeth. I got punched around and there was a lot of mental torture, even a mock execution at one point when we were certain we would die.

After our release we needed space. We'd been stuck together like glue for 14 months. We were both so used to supporting each other we had to learn to stand alone again. For a long time I experienced anxiety and a lot of physical pain. Like Camilla I've come to an understanding of where our captors, and where her violator, were coming from. Not many people in this world do stuff out of pure maliciousness. But it's taken me a long time to get to a point where I can think about what happened without feeling a charge of negative energy.

From The Forgiveness Project website
http://www.theforgivenessproject.com/stories/

George Ritchie and Wild Bill:
Germany, Poland

Recounted by Lency Spezzano



As a 20-year-old U.S. Army private going through basic training in 1943, George Ritchie "died" of pneumonia. At the hospital, his body was covered with a sheet, ready to be taken to the morgue.

Finding himself standing beside his own body, Ritchie encountered a "Man made out of Light," whom he recognized as Jesus. With certainty he knew that this Man loved him with an astonishing love. A love beyond his wildest imagining.

Ritchie then was shown every episode of his life, all seeming to take place at the same moment. At the end, the Man asked, "What have you done with your life to show Me?"

Ritchie realized that the question had to do with

love. How much have you loved with your life? Have you loved others as I am loving you? Totally? Unconditionally?

Ritchie thought, indignantly, "Why didn't I know that love like this is possible? Someone should have told me! A fine time to discover what life was all about – like coming to a final exam and discovering you were going to be tested on a subject you have never studied! If this was the point of everything, why didn't someone tell me?"

The Being then showed him fascinating glimpses of life after death before returning him to his body. Ritchie was terribly distressed to return to this life, wondering how he could live without the presence of the love.

After this encounter, as a World War II medic in Europe, Ritchie wanted to die, even wondering if he had been brought back to life as a punishment. Then one day he encountered a wounded officer with a familiar and beautiful look in his eyes.

Not recognizing at first what attracted him to this man, he finally realized that the look reminded him of the look of love that he had seen coming from the Man of Light. He could see "Christ" looking out at him through the wounded officer's eyes.

When the war in Europe ended in May, 1945, Ritchie's unit provided medical help to newly liberated prisoners at a concentration camp near Wuppertal, Germany. He met a Polish Jew nick-named "Wild Bill" by the Americans because of his long drooping handle-bar mustache. He had been one of the prisoners, but his posture was erect, his eyes were bright, his health was radiant. He worked up to 16 hours a day to help the Americans, but showed no sign of fatigue.

Wild Bill had actually been an inmate at that concentration camp for six years, performing the same work, eating the same starvation diet and exposed to the same diseases that had killed thousands of other men. Ritchie wondered what could have saved his life.

One day Wild Bill told Ritchie what it was that made him so different. It all came from a choice he had made years before.

Wild Bill had lived with his wife and five children in the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw. The Nazis came and forced everyone out of their houses, lined them up against the wall, and shot them with machine guns.

Wild Bill's family was murdered in front of his eyes, but the soldiers ignored his plea to be killed alongside them. Because of his ability to speak German, his life was spared and he was put in a work group.

The obvious response would have been for Wild Bill to hate the soldiers. Instead, a miracle occurred. Wild Bill was shown, in this most dire circumstance, that he had a *choice* in the matter.

He could hate the soldiers who had done this, thereby committing himself to a life of hate and a future that would be nothing but a product of hate; or he could choose love, and the life that would be love's outcome.

Wild Bill chose love, deciding that, for the rest of his life – however long or short it might be – he would love every single person with whom he came into contact with. He started with those Nazi soldiers.

In the concentration camp, love had kept him strong and well; love had given him life.

from George G. Ritchie, Return From Tomorrow, 1978

"I have come to believe passionately in restorative justice."

Linda Biehl & Easy Nofemela: America, South Africa

On August 25 1993, Amy Biehl, an American Fulbright scholar working in South Africa against apartheid, was beaten and stabbed to death in a black township near Cape Town.

In 1998 the four youths convicted of her murder were granted amnesty by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) after serving five years of their sentence – a decision that was supported by Amy's parents. Easy Nofemela and Ntobeko Peni, two of the convicted men, now work for the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust in Cape Town, a charity which dedicates its work to putting up barriers against violence. Since Peter Biehl's sudden death in 2002, Linda still regularly returns to Cape Town to carry on her work with the Foundation.

Linda: When we heard the terrible news about Amy the whole family was devastated, but at the same time we wanted to understand the circumstances surrounding her death. Soon afterwards we left for Cape Town.

We took our strength in handling the situation directly from Amy. She was intensely involved in South African politics and even though the violence leading up to free elections had caused her death, we didn't want to say anything negative about South Africa's journey to democracy. Therefore, in 1998, when the four men

convicted of her murder applied for amnesty, we did not oppose it. At the amnesty hearing we shook hands with the families of the perpetrators. Peter spoke for both of us when he quoted from an editorial Amy had written for the Cape Times: "the most important vehicle of reconciliation is open and honest dialogue," he said.

"We are here to reconcile a human life which was taken without an opportunity for dialogue. When we are finished with this process we must move forward with linked arms." A year after Easy and Ntobeko were released from prison, an anthropologist who was interviewing them sent us a message to say they'd like to meet with us. They were running a youth club in Guguletu Township where Amy had been killed and wanted to show us their work.

We wanted to meet them. It wasn't about pity or blame, but about understanding. We wanted to know what it would take to make things better. Some time later we took them out to dinner. We talked about their lives and our lives, but we didn't ask about the past. We were all looking to the future.

I've grown fond of these boys. I enjoy them. They're like my own kids. It may sound strange, but I tend to think there's a little bit of Amy's spirit in them. Some people think we are supporting criminals, but the Foundation that we started in her name is all about preventing crime among youth.

I have come to believe passionately in restorative justice. It's what Desmond Tutu calls 'ubuntu': to choose to forgive rather than demand retribution, a belief that "my humanity is inextricably caught up in yours." I can't look at myself as a victim – it diminishes me as a person.

And Easy and Ntobeko don't see themselves as killers. They didn't set out to kill Amy Biehl. But Easy has told me that it's one thing to reconcile what happened as a political activist, quite another to reconcile it in your heart.

Easy: When the anthropologist suggested bringing the Biehls to meet me my mind was racing. This was a big challenge. I'd grown up being taught never to trust a white person, and I didn't know what to make of them. Yet I thought that if I could meet them face to face, then perhaps they might see that I was sorry. "Yes, bring them," I said.

The next day Peter came to Guguletu. I was very nervous, but my first thought was to protect him because there was violence outside. I took him inside my home and told him about the youth club. He was very and said Linda would love to see what

me and Ntobeko were doing. The next day they came bringing us T-shirts and tickets for Robben Island. I remember Peter was very strong and Linda very shy.

Later we became involved in the Amy Biehl Foundation because they were having trouble in Guguletu where they ran a community baking project. Crime had become so bad in the township that drivers were getting shot at every day. We helped them by talking to the community.

Not until I met Linda and Peter Biehl did I understand that white people are human beings too. I was a member of APLA – the armed wing of the PAC. Our slogan was "one settler, one bullet". The first time I saw them on TV I hated them. I thought this was the strategy of the whites, to come to South Africa to call for capital punishment. But they didn't even mention wanting to hang us. I was very confused. They seemed to understand that the youth of the townships had carried this crisis – this fight for liberation – on their shoulders.

At first I didn't want to go to the TRC to give my testimony. I thought it was a sell-out, but then I read in the press that Linda and Peter had said that it was not up to them to forgive: it was up to the people in South Africa to learn to forgive each other. I decided to go and tell our story and show remorse. Amnesty wasn't my motivation. I just wanted to ask for forgiveness. I wanted to say in front of Linda and Peter, face to face, "I am sorry, can you forgive me?" I wanted to be free in my mind and body. It must have been so painful for them to lose their daughter, but by coming to South Africa – not to speak of recrimination, but to speak of the pain of our struggle – they gave me back my freedom.

I am not a killer, I have never thought of myself as such, but I will never belong to a political organisation again because such organisations dictate your thoughts and actions. I now passionately believe that things will only change through dialogue. People are shocked I work for the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust. I tell them that I work here because Peter and Linda came to South Africa to talk about forgiveness.

Peter was a lovely man. He kept us all happy. It was a great shock when he died. He would say to Ntobeko and me, "I love you guys. Are you happy, guys?" He tried to avoid things that would upset us. He was like a grandfather to us.

From The Forgiveness Project website
http://www.theforgivenessproject.com/stories/

"The act of friendship invites forgiveness."

Tom Tate: Germany & England

In March 1945, airman Tom Tate was on special duties over Germany when his B17 Flying Fortress was hit by fire. The crew bailed out. Seven of them were captured a few hours later near the village of Huchenfeld, close to the town of Pforzheim. A month earlier Pforzheim had been destroyed in a massive RAF bombing raid killing 18,000 people. Revenge was in the air. The British airmen were dragged to a nearby cemetery to be executed by a Hitler Youth lynch mob. Only Tom and one other crewmember escaped.

They wanted to kill us in the school, but the mayor of the village refused, saying that blood would be on the heads of the children for all time. So we were dragged outside and down the hill. When I realised we were about to be killed, a sudden burst of energy overcame me and I ran for it. I was barefoot and exhausted, but somehow I got away. The next day I was recaptured by the German army and taken to a POW camp by two Luftwaffe escorts. I was treated according to the Geneva Convention and assured that my comrades were safe. One of my escorts even handed me a pair of boots. He explained that a woman in Huchenfeld, hearing of my plight, had sent them to me.

After the war, back in England, the RAF asked me to return to Pforzheim to find out what had happened to the missing crew. So back I went, and turning into the cemetery in Huchenfeld I knew instantly what had happened, for there in front of me were five wooden crosses.

The perpetrators of the crime were brought to justice at the War Crimes trials in Essen the following year, and the ringleaders were sentenced to death. I had no compassion. I despised them and said to my wife that I was never going back to Germany.

But then, 50 years later, a fellow golf player mentioned a possible holiday to the Rhine. It was a SAGA holiday, and with their brochure came a magazine. For weeks it lay unopened by my fireplace, until I finally took it out of its plastic cover. It fell open at a double-page spread, which read: "The Village that asked Forgiveness." I couldn't believe it – it was all about Huchenfeld and the executions.

I read how Pastor Heinemann-Grüder had arranged a memorial plaque to the five British airmen murdered in his church. On the plaque was written "Vater Vergib" (father forgive). Many people still had that terrible event on their conscience. Only the widow of one of the murdered airmen had been traced, but press interest meant that the pilot, John Wynne, eventually contacted the village too. He had taken a rocking horse and presented it to the new kindergarten in Huchenfeld as a gesture of reconciliation. It was called Hoffnung – the rocking horse of hope.

I contacted John Wynne through the magazine. He couldn't believe we'd found each other after so many years. "You have to go to Pforzheim," he urged me. "For years people have longed to meet a survivor to express their shame and horror. They want forgiveness."

A short while later I received a letter from a couple, Renate and Gotthilf Beck-Ehninger, who were very involved in the reconciliation process but hadn't known I was still alive. They were so thrilled to find me, and invited me to the commemoration ceremony in 1995. Renate wrote: "I was only nine when Pforzheim was raided, and you were in your youth when you saw the abyss, the darkest depth of human nature."

I didn't attend the actual ceremony because I still felt in danger, imagining someone might want to finish the job off. But when I arrived the following week I was given such an enthusiastic welcome. It was clear I had become a symbol of

reconciliation. I was greeted by so many people, all of whom wanted to shake my hand. I've never been hugged by so many ladies in all my life! I also met Emilie, the woman who in 1945 had sent me the boots.

Guilt had hung over the village for years, but by going there it somehow changed things for them. I was so welcomed, and so well looked after, that suddenly I realised I'd made a mistake. I wish that I'd gone to Germany earlier to relieve these people of their guilt. When someone comes with arms open to embrace you, you can't feel enmity any more. The act of friendship invites forgiveness.

From The Forgiveness Project website
http://www.theforgivenessproject.com/stories/

Steven McDonald: New York City

When New York City policeman Steven McDonald stopped to question three youths in Central Park one day in 1986, he was shot and paralyzed from the neck down. Steve had been married less than a year, and his wife was two months pregnant.

Steven and his attacker, Shavod Jones, could not have been more different. Steven was white; Shavod was black. Steven came from the upper-middle class suburbs of Nassau County; Shavod from a Harlem housing project. Their brief encounter might have ended right there. But Steven wouldn't let it. Knowing that his attacker had just altered the course of both of their lives, he felt an uncanny connection to him, and began to write to him:

I was angry at him, but I was also puzzled, because I found I couldn't hate him. More often than not I felt sorry for him. I wanted him to turn his life to helping and

not hurting people. I wanted him to find peace and purpose in his life. That's why I forgave him. It was a way of moving on, a way of putting the terrible accident behind me.

Shavod didn't answer Steven's letters at first, and when he finally did, the exchange fizzled out because Steven declined his request for help in getting parole. Then, in late 1995, only three days after his release from prison, Shavod was killed in a motorcycle accident. But Steven has never regretted reaching out to him.

I was a badge to that kid, a uniform representing the government. I was the system that let landlords charge rent for squalid apartments in broken-down tenements; I was the city agency that fixed up poor neighborhoods and drove the residents out, through gentrification, regardless of whether they were law-abiding solid citizens, or pushers and criminals; I was the Irish cop who showed up at a domestic dispute and left without doing anything, because no law had been broken.

To Shavod Jones, I was the enemy. He didn't see me as a person, as a man with loved ones, as a husband and father-to-be. He'd bought into all the stereotypes of his community: the police are racist, they'll turn violent, so arm yourself against them. No, I couldn't blame Jones. Society – his family, the social agencies responsible for him, the people who'd made it impossible for his parents to be together – had failed him way before he had met me in Central Park...

Over the last several years I have met Steven many times, and spoken with him on numerous occasions. A highlight of our friendship was an appearance we made in June 1999 at an event in Belfast – I as a Protestant, and Steven as a Catholic. In a joint address delivered to members of the new government, we urged them to work for reconciliation and against revenge.

When visiting Steven in his Long Island home, I am always struck by the extent of his incapacitation. Life in a wheelchair is hard enough for an elderly person to accept, but to be plucked out of an active, fun-loving life at the age of twenty-nine is devastating. Add to that a tracheostomy to breathe through, a personal nurse to hover over you twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week – and a son you have never been able to hug, let alone play ball with – and you have Steven McDonald.

Still, I have never sensed any anger or bitterness. Steven speaks quietly, almost timidly, but his words reveal the pillar of his strength: a forgiving spirit that prevents him from wallowing in self-pity and allows him to see his confinement in a positive light. A speaker at elementary schools and high schools throughout New

York, Steven has given meaning to his suffering by using it to teach others about the importance of forgiving.

Of course, I have my ups and downs. Some days, when I am not feeling very well, I can get angry. I get depressed. There have been times when I even felt like killing myself. But I have come to realize that anger is a wasted emotion...

Though Steven's story is remarkable in many ways, it is his honesty about his ups and downs that I find most significant. Steven chose to forgive rather quickly, as did many others whose stories we have already examined. Like many of them, he says he forgave so as to be able to move on, to heal, to get on with life. But Steven also says that no matter how sincerely you decide to forgive, your decision must be reaffirmed every day. And he admits that, far from being a magical key to serenity and relief, the act of forgiving carries its own measure of anguish and pain. To borrow from Dostoevsky's oft-quoted reminder about love, forgiveness in action is a "harsh and dreadful thing" compared to forgiveness in dreams.

Bud Welch: Oklahoma City

When Bud Welch lost his 23-year-old daughter Julie, he lost the pride of his life, and to this day he cannot say he has forgiven the man who killed her. Still, he refuses to give resentment and despair the upper hand, and tries instead to keep her memory alive by sharing his pride in her with others.

I'm the third of eight children and grew up on a dairy farm, and I've run a service station in Oklahoma City for the last thirty-four years. Until April 19, 1995 – the day Julie and 167 others were killed in the bomb blast that destroyed the Alfred P. Murrah Building - my life was very simple. I had a little girl and loved her a lot.

Julie had a rough start; she was born premature, but she survived and grew healthy and strong. She had just graduated from Marquette with a degree in Spanish and started a job as a translator for the Social Security Administration. At the time of her death she was dating an Air Force lieutenant named Eric. The day after Julie was killed I found out that they had decided to announce their engagement in two weeks.

All my life I have opposed the death penalty. Friends used to tell me that if anyone ever killed one of my family members, I would change. "What if Julie got raped and murdered?" But I always said I'd stick to my guns. Until April 19.

The first four or five weeks after the bombing I had so much anger, pain, hatred, and revenge, that I realized why, when someone is charged with a violent crime, they transport him in a bullet-proof vest. It's because people like me would try to kill him.

By the end of 1995 I was in such bad shape, I was drinking heavily and smoking three packs of cigarettes a day. I was stuck, emotionally, on April 19. I just couldn't get over it. But I knew I had to do something about it. That's when I went down to the bombing site.

It was a cold January afternoon, and I stood there watching hundreds of people walking along the chain link fence that surrounded the lot where the Murrah Building had stood. I was thinking about the death penalty, and how I wanted nothing more than to see Timothy McVeigh (and anyone else responsible for the bombing) fried. But I was also beginning to wonder whether I would really feel any better once they were executed. Every time I asked myself that question, I got the same answer: No. Nothing positive would come from it. It wouldn't bring Julie back. After all, it was hatred and revenge that made me want to see them dead, and those two things were the very reason that Julie and 167 others were dead...

Once he arrived at this realization, Bud returned to his original belief that executing criminals was wrong, and he has since become a leading opponent of the death penalty. Sought across the country as a speaker on the futility of capital punishment, he makes appearances in churches and town meetings, on campuses and at activist gatherings. He is always on the go. But nothing he has done means as much to him as his meeting with Timothy's father:

A person like Bill McVeigh is as much a victim as I am, if not more. I can't imagine the pain he and his family have been through. I've lost a daughter, and when Timothy is executed he's going to lose a son. I have a son myself, and if he was convicted of killing 168 people, I don't know how I'd deal with that. Bill has to live with that for the rest of his life.

I first saw Bill McVeigh on television a few weeks after the bombing. He was working in his flower bed, and he looked up at the camera for a couple seconds. When he did I saw a father with deep, deep pain in his eyes. I could recognize it, because I was living that pain. I knew right then that someday I had to go tell him that I truly cared how he felt.

So I did. The day I visited him he was out in his garden again, and we spent about half an hour just getting acquainted, kicking dirt and pulling weeds. Then we went into the house so I could meet Jennifer, his 24-year-old daughter. As we walked in I noticed a few family photos on the wall over the kitchen table. The largest one was of Timothy. I kept glancing up at that picture. I knew that they were watching me, so I said, "Gosh, what a good-looking kid." Bill had told me outdoors that he was having a lot of trouble showing emotion – that he couldn't cry. But when I commented on that photograph he said, "That's Tim's high school graduation picture," and a great big tear rolled down his cheek.

We talked for another hour and a half. When I got ready to leave I shook Bill's hand and extended my hand to Jennifer. She didn't take it. She hugged me around the neck. I don't know who started crying first as we embraced, but we were both in tears. Finally I said, "Honey, we're in this together for the rest of our lives. And we can make the most of it, if we choose. I don't want your brother to die, and I'll do everything in my power to prevent it." Never in my life have I felt closer to God than I did at that time. I felt like a thousand pounds had been lifted off my shoulders.

Still, Bud says he has no desire to meet his daughter's killer. Sometimes he's not even sure he's really forgiven him:

At least I don't think I have forgiven him. I was speaking at Oklahoma State University one time, and the Bishop of Tulsa was there. I was telling the group about my struggle, and that I didn't feel that I had forgiven him. Anyway, the bishop chimed in and said, "But I think you have forgiven him." And he started quoting some verse from Scripture, which I'm not very good at doing. But he's a

bishop, and I suppose he's qualified. I guess he was trying to convince me that I have forgiven Timothy, and maybe I have.

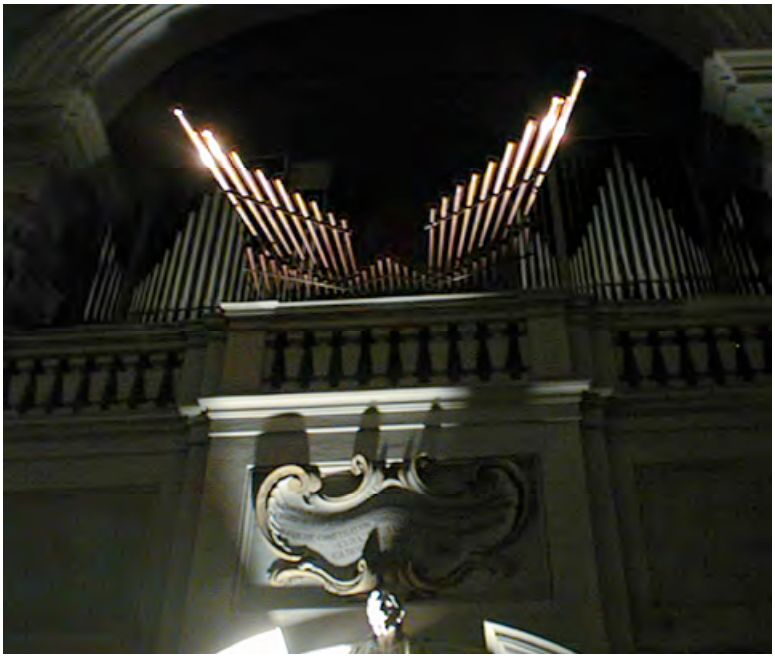
I still have my moments of rage. I remember crossing the campus of a high school in California, on my way to speak to an all-school assembly, and looking around as I walked. The place reminded me of Julie's high school. Suddenly this rage just hit me. So here I was, getting ready to speak to a whole auditorium full of kids about my opposition to the death penalty, and I was thinking to myself, "That bastard doesn't even deserve to live."

I know I don't want Timothy executed, because once he's gone, it will be too late to choose to forgive him. As long as he's alive, I have to deal with my feelings and emotions. But I do have setbacks, even when I'm sure I want to forgive. That's probably why I can't handle that word "closure." I get sick of hearing it. The first time someone asked me about closure was the day after Julie's burial. Of course I was still in hell then. In a way, I still am. How can there ever be true closure? A part of my heart is gone.

Bud has been an inspiration to me from the very first time we met, and each time I see him, I sense an increased determination to make the best he can of the tragedy that hit him. While it was grief that first led him to visit the family of his daughter's killer, it is her life-affirming spirit that drives him now. And even if he hasn't yet found the full measure of healing he seeks, his journey – like every journey of forgiveness – is one of hope:

It's a struggle, but it's one I need to wage. In any case, forgiving is not something you just wake up one morning and decide to do. You have to work through your anger and your hatred as long as it's there. You try to live each day a little better than the one before.

Bill Chadwick: Louisiana



Bill Chadwick of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, makes the distinction between forgiving and excusing quite clearly in writing about the death of his son, Michael. Never tempted simply to excuse the boy responsible for Michael's death, Bill felt a compelling need to see justice done. In the end, however, he discovered that justice by itself couldn't bring him the satisfaction and peace he was looking for:

My twenty-one-year-old son Michael was killed instantly on October 23, 1993, in a car crash. His best friend, who was in the back seat, was also killed. The driver, who had been drinking heavily and was speeding recklessly, received minor injuries he was subsequently charged with two counts of vehicular homicide. Michael had only a trace of alcohol in his system, and his best friend had none.

The wheels of justice grind very slowly. The courts took more than a year to find the case against the driver. We attended hearing after hearing, and each time the case was delayed. There was even an attempt by the defense attorney to discredit the findings of the blood-alcohol tests, although this was unsuccessful. Finally, the defendant pleaded guilty and was sentenced to six years per count, to be served concurrently.

We suggested to the probation office that a bootcamp-style program might be of benefit to him – we really weren't out to hurt him, but we believed he needed to pay for what he had done. All the same, we received a pretty ugly letter from his mother suggesting that we had somehow pushed for the maximum sentence. She said that if it had been her son who died, with Michael driving, she would not have held a grudge. I suggested that until her son were actually dead, she should not talk about what she would or wouldn't do.

Her son was finally sentenced to six months in bootcamp, with the rest of his six-year sentence to be served on intensive parole. In six months, her son was coming home. Ours was not.

I guess I had bought into the belief that, somehow, things would be different after the driver had been brought to justice. I think that is what people mean when they talk about "getting closure." We think that if there is someone to blame, then we can put the matter to rest. It's sort of like thinking that if it somehow makes sense, or if the victims get some sort of justice, then the pain will finally go away. In the years since Michael's death, I have read countless accounts of bereaved people who are looking for closure of this sort.

I have even seen them on the Oprah Winfrey show, shouting for the death penalty, as if having the perpetrator dead would somehow help.

I was angry at the driver, of course. But I was angry at Michael, too. After all, he had made some really bad decisions that night he had put his life in jeopardy. I had to go through this anger in order to come to grips with my feelings. However, even after the sentencing, I did not find closure. What I did find was the same big hole in my soul – and nothing to fill it with.

It was some months later that it hit me: until I could forgive the driver, I would not get the closure I was looking for. Forgiving is different from removing responsibility.

The driver was still responsible for Michael's death, but I had to forgive him before I could let the incident go. No amount of punishment could ever even the score.

I had to be willing to forgive without the score being even. And this process of forgiveness did not really involve the driver – it involved me. It was a process that I had to go through I had to change, no matter what he did.

The road to forgiveness was long and painful. I had to forgive more than just the driver. I had to forgive Michael, and God (for allowing it to happen), and myself.

Ultimately, it was my inability to forgive myself that was the most difficult. There were many times in my own life I had driven Michael places when I myself was under the influence of alcohol. But that was the key to my forgiveness – to forgive myself. My anger at other people was just my own fear turned outward. I had projected my own guilt onto others – the driver, the courts, God, Michael - so that I

would not have to look at myself. And it wasn't until I could see my part in this that my outlook could change.

This is what I learned: that the closure we seek comes in forgiving. And this closure is really up to us, because the power to forgive lies not outside us, but within our own souls.

Michael's father learned what may be the most painful lesson for any parent. Yet it is one that each of us needs to learn, whatever our situation in life. Unless we have forgiveness in our hearts toward those who harm us, we will find no peace, however "right" we may be in claiming retribution.

In a society that places a premium on revenge, this is hardly a popular idea. Increasingly, sentencing by a court is no longer enough people want a personal role in the act of retribution. Several states have even introduced legislation that gives murder victims' families the right to be present at executions. Yet these families never seem to find the peace they are looking for. Their desire to see others hurt by the same violence that has hurt them is never satisfied. Instead of healing their wounds, their quest for revenge leaves them disillusioned and angry.

Forgiving is not condoning. In some cases, "forgiving and forgetting" is not only impossible, but immoral. How can anyone forget a child? Pain, indignation and anger are perfectly understandable, and perhaps even necessary, but ultimately these must yield to a longing for reconciliation.

Chris Spezzano: Hawai'i
Recounted by Lency Spezzano

I witnessed one of my son Christopher's first heartbreaks when he was about three years old.

He loved one of my friends, and he courted her with great devotion. When she visited, he would take her by the hand and romantically lead her into his bedroom to play. She was the apple of his eye, his sunshine, his Girlfriend.

One evening we went to her home for a dinner party. Children were running about the house excitedly when she decided to get everyone seated for dinner. As my son trotted past her with a prized toy in his hand she stopped him, removed the toy from his grasp and ordered him to sit down at the children's table. She was stressed by the pressure of cooking a dinner and pulling off a successful party, and her attention was focused on her situation, not on Christopher.

From across the room I could see my son's face as it shattered. His Beloved had treated him just like another kid! He would never have treated her so indifferently, without consideration for her feelings. The realization dawned in his mind: she was not in love with him. She did not feel for him what he felt for her.

This understanding hit him and with such a wallop of shock and pain he screamed, and then looked wildly about for me. He ran to me in horror, the emotion too strong for him to talk. My heart went to him, and I felt a pain so sharp and clear, it was like his heart had been opened with a butcher's cleaver. He clung to me as I carried him to another room.

Small as the incident was, I could feel its devastating effect. All I could do was hold him, feel with him, and say, "I know, I know." Within a couple of minutes enough of the pain had burned away for him to be able to speak.

"Mommy, she made a mistake!" he gasped. "She needs a Time Out!" As he pictured her sitting in her room by herself, taking a Time Out, he said with some satisfaction, "Then she would cry."

Within moments he brightened, purity and openness returning to his face. "But *I* would save her!" he exclaimed as he jumped from my lap to run and join the others. The heartbreak was over, just like that.

I was floored by the beauty of the process I had witnessed. By simply allowing the natural completion of an emotional experience, my son was not only saved from a broken heart, he had benefited from the experience of forgiving a friend when she made a mistake. He actually had a better self-image after the experience, and he had tasted the love and lies at the end of every heartbreak.

By the time most of us reach adulthood, we are full of broken hearts. Some of these broken hearts are easy to remember; others have slipped into the subconscious mind. There, forgotten pain and loss lie hidden, seemingly unimportant.

In truth, these heartbreaks are constantly affecting us. They determine how we see the world; they make decisions for us; they control our relationships. But if we experience our emotions fully at the times we create them, those feelings move through us without causing any damage. We emerge stronger and wiser. This is how, and perhaps why, we were made.

Recounted by Lency Spezzano
From http://www.psychologyofvision.com

Hela Ehrlich, Josef Ben-Eliezer:
Nazi Germany

Hela Ehrlich, a Bruderhof member of Jewish descent, grew up in Nazi Germany. Her family managed to emigrate just before the outbreak of World War II and so escaped the death camps. But they suffered greatly, nevertheless. Her father died at the age of just forty-two, and she lost grandparents on both sides as well as all her childhood friends in the Holocaust.

She tells of her long struggle with bitterness and her continued unwillingness to forgive, which came to a head one day during a meeting of the whole community:

I sat down trembling, and as I did it dawned on me that if I looked into my own heart I could find seeds of hatred there, too. I realized that they are there in every human being. Arrogant thoughts, feelings of irritation toward others, coldness, anger, envy, even indifference – these are the roots of what happened in Nazi Germany. I recognized more clearly than ever before that I myself stood in desperate need of forgiveness, and finally I felt completely free.

Josef Ben-Eliezer, another member of the Bruderhof, was born in 1929 in Frankfurt, Germany, to Jewish parents of East European descent. Like thousands of others, his parents had emigrated from Poland to escape persecution and poverty. There was little respite from either.

My first encounter with anti-Semitism came when I was only three years old. We were watching from our window at the *Ostendstrasse* when a formation of the Hitler Youth marched past, singing a song that even I understood: *Wenn Judenblut vom Messer spritzt* ("When Jewish blood runs from our knives"). I still remember the horror on my parents' faces.

Very soon, our family decided to leave the country, and at the end of 1933 we had moved back to Rozwadow, Poland, on the River San. Most of its inhabitants were

Jews: artisans, tailors, carpenters, and merchants. There was a great deal of poverty, but under the circumstances we were considered middle-class. We lived in Rozwadow for the next six years.

In 1939 the war started, and within weeks the Germans entered our town. My father and older brother hid in the attic, and whenever someone knocked at our door and asked for them, we said they were not at home.

Then came the dreaded public announcement: all Jews had to gather in the town square. We were given only a few hours. We took whatever we could carry – just tied things in bundles to carry on our backs. From the square, the SS forced us to march toward the San, several miles from the village. Uniformed men rode alongside us on motorcycles. I will never forget how one of them stopped and shouted at us to hurry up then he came up to my father and struck him.

At the riverbank other uniformed men were waiting for us. They searched us for valuables – money, jewelry, and watches. (They did not find the sum of money my parents had hidden in my little sister's clothing.) Then they ordered us to cross the river, into a no-man's-land. We were not instructed what to do, so we found lodging in a village across the river.

A few days later we suddenly heard that this area was also going to be occupied by the Germans. We panicked, and with the little money we had hidden, my parents, together with two or three other families, bought a horse and wagon to carry the younger children and what little we had managed to bring along on our backs.

We traveled east toward Russia, hoping to reach the border before dark, but found ourselves in a large forest when night fell. There we were attacked by armed men who demanded we hand over everything we had. It was a frightening moment, but there were a few men in our group who had the courage to resist them. In the end they left with a bicycle and a few other small items.

Josef's family spent the war years in Siberia. Miraculously, he managed to escape to Palestine in 1943. After the war he met Jews who had survived the concentration camps:

The first children freed from Bergen-Belsen and Buchenwald began to arrive in Palestine in 1945. I was horrified to hear what those young boys, some of them only twelve, thirteen, or fourteen, had gone through. They looked like old men. I was devastated...

I struggled with the British colonial occupation over the next three years. I was filled with hatred for the British, especially after they began to restrict the immigration of Holocaust survivors to Palestine. We Jews said that we would never again go like sheep to slaughter, at least not without putting up a good fight. We felt we lived in a world of wild beasts, and to survive, we would become like them.

When the British mandate in Palestine came to an end, there was more fighting for land between the Jews and the Arabs. I joined the army because I was convinced that I could no longer allow myself to be trampled on...

During a campaign in Ramla and Lod, my unit ordered the Palestinians to leave within hours. We didn't allow them to leave in peace but turned on them out of sheer hatred. We beat them and interrogated them brutally. Some were even murdered. We had not been ordered to do this but acted on our own initiative. Our lowest instincts had been released.

Suddenly, my childhood in wartime Poland flashed before my eyes. In my mind I relived my own experience as a ten-year-old, driven from my hometown. Here, too, were people - men, women, and children -fleeing with whatever they could carry. And there was fear in their eyes, a fear that I myself knew all too well.

I was terribly distressed, but I was under orders, and I continued to search them for valuables. I knew that I was no longer a victim. I was now in power.

Josef soon left the army, but he still wasn't happy. He abandoned Judaism, and then religion as a whole, and tried to make sense of the world by rationalizing its evils. But that didn't seem to work. Eventually he came to the Bruderhof.

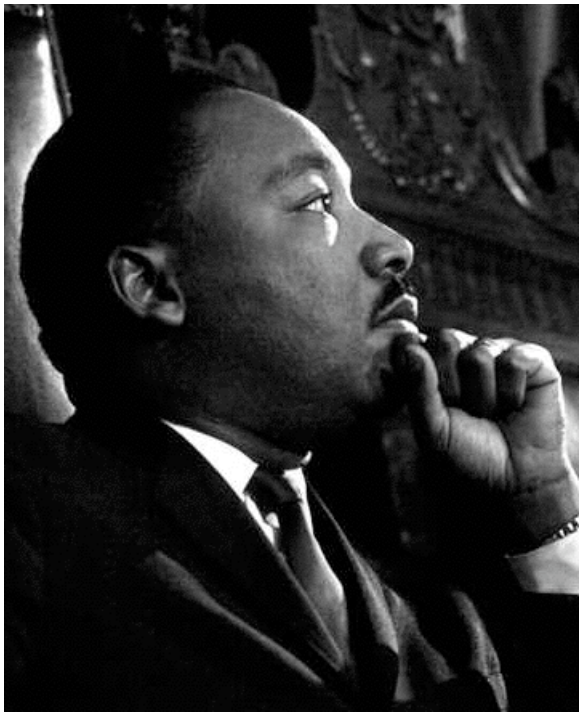
Here I experienced, for the first time, the reality of forgiveness. And I ask myself, how can I not forgive others when I myself need so much forgiveness again and again? Most of all, I am filled with the hope that one day people all over the world might be gripped by the same spirit that has saved me.

Hela and Josef had good reasons for not forgiving their enemies. Humanly speaking, they were innocent. The burdens they carried were the result of other people's prejudices and hatreds, not their own. In a sense, they had every right to feel the way they did.

I'm not trying for a moment to suggest that it is easy to forgive those who have massacred your family, friends and neighbors, but my overwhelming experience as a pastor and counselor is that those who are unable to forgive their persecutors remain their victims long after the physical pain or danger is over.

What's more, Hela and Josef could feel themselves becoming just like the people under whom they and their families had suffered so much. They all found, as many others have found, that only by forgiving could they end the terrible cycle of hatred and free themselves from the horrors of their past.

Dr. Martin Luther King: Alabama



In the spring of 1965 I marched with King in Marion, Alabama, and experienced firsthand his deep love and humility in the face of injustice. I was visiting the Tuskegee Institute with colleagues from New York when we heard about the death of Jimmie Lee Jackson, a young man who had been shot eight days earlier when a rally at a church in Marion was broken up by police. State troopers from all over central Alabama had converged on the town and beaten the protesters with clubs as they poured out onto the streets.

Bystanders later described a scene of utter chaos: white onlookers smashed cameras and shot out street lights, while police officers brutally attacked black men and women, some of whom were kneeling and praying on the steps of their church.

Jimmie's crime was to tackle a state trooper who was mercilessly beating his mother. His punishment: to be shot in the stomach and clubbed over the head until

almost dead. Denied admission at the local hospital, he was taken to Selma, where he was able to tell his story to reporters. He died several days later.

At the news of Jimmie's death, we drove to Selma immediately. The viewing, at Brown Chapel, was open-casket, and although the mortician had done his best to cover his injuries, the wounds on Jimmie's head could not be hidden: three murderous blows, each an inch wide and three inches long, ran above his ear, at the base of his skull, and on the top of his head.

Deeply shaken, we attended a memorial service there. The room was packed with about three thousand people (many more stood outside), and we sat on a window sill at the back. We never heard one note of anger or revenge in the service. Instead, a spirit of courage emanated from the men and women of the congregation, especially as they rose to sing the old slave song, "Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round."

Later, at a second service in Marion, the atmosphere was decidedly more subdued. Lining the veranda of the county court house across the street stood a long row of state troopers, hands on their night sticks, looking straight at us. These were the same men who had attacked Marion's blacks only days before. The crowd of whites gathered at nearby City Hall was no less intimidating. Armed with binoculars and cameras, they scanned and photographed us so thoroughly that we felt every one of us had been marked.

Afterwards, at the cemetery, King spoke about forgiveness and love. He pleaded with his people to pray for the police, to forgive the murderer, and to forgive those who were persecuting them. Then we held hands and sang, "We shall overcome." It was an unforgettable moment. If there was ever cause for hatred or vengeance, it was here. But none was to be felt, not even from Jimmie's parents.

Not long ago I read about a remarkable act of forgiveness by the children of Selma in those same days of early 1965. Local students had organized a peaceful after-school march when the town's notorious Sheriff Clark arrived. Clark's deputies began to push and prod the children, and soon they were running. Initially the boys and girls thought the sheriff was marching them toward the county jail, but it soon became clear that they were headed for a prison camp almost five miles out of town. The men did not relent until the children were retching and vomiting. Later they claimed they wanted to wear out Selma's "marching fever" for good.

A few days after this incident, Sheriff Clark was hospitalized with chest pains. Unbelievably, Selma's school children organized a second march outside the court house, chanting prayers for his recovery and carrying get-well signs.

Bishara Awad: Israel-Palestine

Like so many others on both sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Bishara Awad, a Palestinian acquaintance of mine, has been wounded by his share of injustices. Speaking recently about his life-long struggle to forgive, he told me:

In 1948, during the terrible war between the Arabs and the Jewish settlers, thousands of Palestinians died and many more became homeless. Our own family was not spared. My father was shot dead by a stray bullet, and there was no decent burial place. No one could leave the area for fear of getting shot at by either side; there was not a priest nor a minister to say a prayer. So Mother read to us from the Bible, and the men who were present buried my father in the courtyard. There was no way they could have taken him to the regular cemetery in the city.

Mother thus became a widow at the age of twenty-nine, and she was left with seven children. I was only nine years old. For weeks we were caught up in the crossfire and were unable to leave our basement room. Then one night, the Jordanian army forced us to run to the Old City. That was the last time we ever

saw our home and our furniture. We ran away with nothing but the clothes on our backs, some of us only in pajamas...

In the Old City we were refugees. We were put in a kerosene storage room that had no furniture. A Muslim family gave us some blankets and some food. Life was very hard; I still remember nights when we went to sleep without any food.

Mother had been trained as a nurse, and she got a job at a hospital for $25 a month. She worked at night and continued her studies during the day, and we children were put in orphanages.

My sisters were accepted in a Muslim school, and we boys were placed in a home run by a British woman. To me, this was a real blow. First I had lost my father, and now I was away from my mother and my family. We were allowed to visit home once a month, but otherwise we stayed at the boys' home for the next twelve years. Here, with my two brothers and eighty other boys, my suffering continued. We never had enough to eat. The food was terrible and the treatment harsh.

As an adult, Bishara went to school in the United States and became an American citizen. Later he returned to Israel and took a job teaching in a Christian school. Looking back, he says:

That first year I was very frustrated. I did not accomplish much and I felt defeated...There was mounting hatred against the Jewish oppressors: all of my students were Palestinians, and all had suffered in the same way I had...I wasn't able to help my students, because of the overriding hatred in me. I had harbored it since childhood without even realizing it.

One night I prayed to God in tears. I asked forgiveness for hating the Jews and for allowing hatred to control my life...Instantly he took away my frustration, hopelessness, and hatred and replaced it with love.

John Plummer: Vietnam

John Plummer lives the quiet life of a Methodist pastor in a sleepy Virginia town these days, but things weren't always so. A helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War, he helped organize a napalm raid on the village of Trang Bang in 1972 – a bombing immortalized by the prize-winning photograph of one of its victims, Phan Thi Kim Phuc.

For the next twenty-four years, John was haunted by the photograph – an image that for many people captured the essence of the war: a naked and burned nine-year-old running toward the camera, with plumes of black smoke billowing in the sky behind her.

For twenty-four years John's conscience tormented him. He badly wanted to find the girl to tell her that he was sorry – but he could not. Turning in on himself, he grew more and more depressed (the collapse of two marriages didn't help), and he began to drink.

Then, in an almost unbelievable coincidence, John met Kim during an event at the Vietnam War Memorial on Veterans Day, 1996. Kim had come to Washington, D.C., to lay a wreath for peace; John had come with a group of former pilots unable to come to terms with their shared past, but determined to stick together anyway.

In a speech to the crowd, Kim introduced herself as the girl in the famous photograph. She still suffered immensely from her burns, she said, but she was not bitter, and she wanted people to know that others had suffered even more than she had: "Behind that picture of me, thousands and thousands of people...died. They lost parts of their bodies. Their whole lives were destroyed, and nobody took their picture."

Kim went on to say that although she could not change the past, she had forgiven the men who had bombed her village, and that she felt a calling to promote peace by fostering goodwill between America and Vietnam. John, beside himself, pushed through the crowds and managed to catch her attention before she was whisked away by a police escort. He identified himself as a former pilot in Vietnam and said that he felt responsible for the bombing of her village twenty-four years before. He says:

Kim saw my grief, my pain, my sorrow...She held out her arms to me and embraced me. All I could say was "I'm sorry; I'm sorry" – over and over again. And at the same time she was saying, "It's all right, I forgive you."

John says that it was vital for him to meet face to face with Kim, and to tell her that he had agonized for years over her injuries. Without having had the chance to get that off his chest, he is not sure he could have ever forgiven himself. As it turned out, of course, he got even more than he hoped for: Kim forgave him.

Reflecting on the way the incident changed his life, John maintains that forgiveness is "neither earned nor even deserved, but a gift." It is also a mystery. He still can't quite grasp how a short conversation could wipe away a twenty-four-year nightmare.

Jackie Young: Hawai'i

Jackie Young harbored the burden of her deepest betrayal for almost half a century.

Her third marriage was breaking up as she underwent chemotherapy for breast cancer. She lost her hair. She began radiation, and she became reflective.

In a guided imagery therapy session, she visualized the thing that would bring her peace. She imagined herself in a beautiful garden with her grandchildren. But she also visualized something darker.

"I sort of blurted it out," she said. "I said I think the only way I could heal myself was to forgive the person who raped me when I was 18."

She imagined meeting the man who raped her 46 years earlier, when she was a student at the University of Hawai'i. She imagined what she would wear and what she would say. She imagined her father appearing behind the rapist and saying: "It doesn't matter what he says. Just tell him how he hurt you." So she did.

"That day," the 68-year-old Kailua woman said, "I felt as if a plug came out of my heart."

While none of the research indicates forgiveness can cure cancer, Jackie Young is sure that at least it can't hurt. She is a breast cancer survivor. Young, director of marketing for the American Cancer Society, has a long list of achievements in addition to being a survivor. She served as a Hawai'i state representative from 1990 to 1994, was the first female vice speaker of the Hawai'i House of Representatives and at the time was the highest Korean American elected official in the nation.

Though her forgiveness brought her a sense of peace, it also sparked her drive to be an activist in life instead of a spectator. But to get that point, her forgiveness didn't end with her rapist. She also sent a letter to her first husband and met with her two other exes. She told them she was sorry she wasn't as present in the

relationships as she might have been if she hadn't carried around the feeling that she didn't deserve to be loved in a relationship.

"It was brought on by my knowing I had to heal myself," she said. "It's given me an uplift in my life."

Before her cancer diagnosis, she was commissioned to write a Korean book of her memoirs. She thought she had a finished version. But it was just a rough draft.

Edited version reprinted from July 14, 2002, The Honolulu Advertiser article: "Is forgiveness the key to your survival?" by Tanya Bricking.

How Forgiveness Affected My Life;
Waiawa, Hawai'i

My name is Larry K. Brown, Jr. I am 33 years old, and currently an inmate at Waiawa Correctional Facility participating in the Kash Box Program. I'm getting treatment to learn more about my addiction (crystal meth) and my criminal conduct, but most importantly to learn more about myself.

During my childhood and early adult years, forgiveness was a way to get back at someone. If someone did something to me, I would forgive them until they thought everything was alright, then I would turn around and do it back to them twice as bad. For me, forgiveness was a tool for retaliation.

On January 1, 1981, my dad mom and aunty all got shot. My dad and aunty died. My mom luckily survived. It was a house warming party my dad had thrown for our new house in Waialua.

The party started off well. Everyone was having a good time. Family, friends, all together, celebrating the new year to come. I remember sleeping on the parlor floor. Then all I heard was BANG.

I heard my mom screaming. I woke up and saw my dad laying on the floor. Then another BANG went off. That's when I got up and ran over to my dad. At that time, I thought the bang sounds were coming from the plastic bag bombs that my dad use to tie at the end of a strand of fireworks.

When I ran over to my dad, I thought he was sleeping. He was still alive and breathing at the time, so I tried shaking him to wake him up. He grabbed me in his arms and told me he loved me. I fell back asleep in his arms.

The next thing I remember was paramedics lifting me off of him. Then later on that morning, I found out my dad and aunty got shot and died, and that mom was in the hospital fighting for her life.

Since my father's death, I have felt nothing but hatred for the man who did this to me and my family. As a child, I carried this bitter anger and frustration through my adult life. My ultimate purpose for living was to meet up with this man someday and pay him back for the pain he had caused.

The feelings that I've been carrying with me throughout the years have caused one heartache after another, not only for myself but also for the people who love me. My negative thoughts led to negative behaviors, which led to crime and prison.

Today I consider myself lucky to be alive. I was caught up in a vicious cycle of hate that would have almost certainly resulted in death. I have been in the Kash Box program for almost a year and have taken full advantage of its purpose . It has given me the opportunity to tell my story and express my feelings. I have come to realize that the cycle of hate can be broken and that the power to do this lies within me.

Forgiveness is a virtue I have never processed until now. My desire is to finally be free of the hate that has prevented me from pursuing the life I was meant to live. Anger has been my greatest obstacle; forgiving the man who took my family from me may be the hardest thing that I will ever do.

Larry Brown, Waiawa State Correctional Facility; O'ahu, Hawai'i; July 2005
Interviewed by Lorenn Walker

Forgiveness is a Gift to the Giver;
Waiawa, Hawai'i

No human being escapes misfortune.

When I was ten years old my father committed suicide by pistol. Then, shortly after my thirteenth birthday, my mother committed suicide by a drug overdose.

I was devastated. Many people at the time tried to help me—social workers, teachers. Police officers, judges—but I didn't want help. I was too busy rehashing both suicides in my mind and imagining how I could have prevented them.

I also spent quite a bit of time wondering where God was when I needed him.

To deal with my pain, I found alcohol and drugs. To fuel my addictions, I turned to crime. I was busy feeling sorry for myself and I had a ready-made excuse for my behavior; at the height of my insanity I was addicted to heroin and robbing banks. My actions led to repeated incarceration — and a cycle of drugs, crime and prison that spanned 30 years of my life.

2005 found me in prison once again at 50 years old — bitter with the belief that there was no hope for me. The difference was that I at Waiawa Correctional Facility in the Kashbox Treatment Program. I began to talk about my experiences with the death of my parents; I saw the mistakes I had made in life and felt the pain and blame that was still there.

In one particular session I broke down and finally grieved, 40 years after the fact. I learned that grief is a process.

My first introduction to the "Forgiveness Project" came while attending a program on Restorative Justice. In the class I found closure for my grief though voicing my forgiveness to my parents, to myself, and finally by making peace with God. My soul felt a lot lighter once I forgave—I lost the baggage of resenting, bitterness and self-pity. I now understood that forgiveness freely given is truly a gift to the giver—*I felt new*.

I think back and regret my actions as a drug abuser and criminal -- the people I've hurt, how I've affected the community. Today instead of taking, discouraging and using people -- I can do the opposite. I can care about, help and encourage others, be kind and decent—make a difference for the better; rejoin the "Brotherhood of Man."

I'm especially grateful to Lorenn and Diane who taught all of us that caring makes a difference—as they showed by example.

Stephen Baker; Waiawa State Correctional Facility, O'ahu, Hawai'i; July 2005
Interviewed by Lorenn Walker

Terrorism: A decision to forgive; UK and Ireland

In 1984, the Irish Republican Army tried to assassinate British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her entire Cabinet, as they met at the Grand Hotel in Brighton, England.

The huge bomb killed five innocent people.

Jo Berry is the daughter of Sir Anthony Berry, one of the five who died that day. Harvey Thomas was Thatcher's press secretary at the time, and barely survived.

And Patrick Magee was the IRA terrorist who planted the 100-pound bomb behind a bathroom panel
in the hotel and remotely detonated it, changing the lives of Jo Berry and Harvey Thomas forever.

Not long ago, the three met at the historic St. James' Church near Piccadilly Circus in London. They talked about the lessons they have learned from terrorism.

"The fact that the three of us will stand side by side as friends is a story in and of itself. It shows that true reconciliation is possible," said Thomas. "Reconciliation isn't easy. But how do we move forward if we
cannot forgive our enemies?"

Reconciliation means convincing hostile armies of true believers to treat each other with respect, if not tolerance. What is the alternative?

"What happens if nothing is done is almost certainly global warfare," said Thomas. "We have to ask ourselves: What are we willing to do to try to head that off?" Berry asks the same question.

Two days after the bombing, although she was a non-believer, she fled to the sanctuary at St. James and prayed for peace to deal with her grief. Her journey ultimately led to a meeting with the terrorist, who was caught and served 14 years of a life sentence in prison. Magee was released as a peacemaking gesture as part of the Good Friday peace agreements in Northern Ireland. The two first met privately. Then they talked in public about forgiveness, this time before the cameras of the BBC.

Then Berry and Magee held a public forum with Thomas, as the next stage in the bridge-building process. That forum on forgiveness drew political activists, therapists, diplomats, and believers from many different sanctuaries.

"I dream of a world in which we have choices to resolve conflict other than violence," says Berry. "Talking with Patrick Magee is a way of learning from the past, which may give insight for creating a different future. I am learning about the effects of blame and looking at how we make choices not to blame."

Thomas made a similar pilgrimage, to connect with the terrorist who seriously wounded him. Millions of people remember one indelible image from this bombing: rescue workers pulling the 6-foot-4, 280-pound Thomas out of tons of concrete rubble. His own memories center on hours of frantic prayers for his family.

Now Thomas has created new memories. His started exchanging letters with Magee while the bomber was still in prison. After his release a few years later, Magee was invited into the Thomas family kitchen, sharing baked beans, stories and regrets. They talked about decades of oppression, the bitter choices of civil war, and the dehumanizing effects of violence.

And one of Thomas' youngest daughters asked Magee: "You do realize that if you had succeeded in killing Daddy, I wouldn't be here?"

Magee wept and so did Thomas and his family.

"I have no doubt that I needed to forgive Patrick Magee," he said. "It's what God wanted me to do. So I did it."

based on a story by Terry Mattingly, Scripps Howard News Service

Delores -- The Choice To Forgive

Delores was good natured and attractive, but I could see the hurt in her eyes and the sorrow in the way she held herself. Though her parents were successful business people who raised her in an upper middle-class neighborhood, her mother was cold and critical, while her father was quiet and aloof.

Delores grew up feeling unattractive and uncared for, and she struggled to create strong relationships.

When Delores was thirty, her fiance Skip decided he was more interested in sleeping with local waitresses than remaining faithful to her. One day she came home and found him in bed with someone else. She saw this betrayal as an example of how unfair the world was—as proof that she never got a break. She was angry, hurt, confused, scared, and lonely. Skip moved out, but Delores constantly thought of begging him to return.

I met Delores when she came to a class I teach to help people learn to forgive others. She rarely spoke without mentioning at least one of the many people who had done her wrong. When she began the forgiveness training, she doubted it would do her any good. She was there because her therapist had recommended the class.

I've known many people like Delores. There's no shortage of people in the world who've been hurt—by someone they love, by a friend, by someone they didn't know at all. My classes rest on the simple and radical notion that how we react to these hurts is up to us.

Delores had mastered the first step to forgiveness before we even met: She

determined what she did not like about her fiance's behavior and knew in gruesome detail how she felt about it. She told anyone willing to listen what a louse Skip was.

Learning the second and third steps of forgiveness was more difficult. Even a year after Skip had cheated on her, Delores was in so much pain that she could not think straight. At first, healing meant only that she would revive her relationship with Skip. It was a struggle for her to want to heal just for her own well-being. In fact, Delores considered taking her fiance back because she did not think other men would ever find her attractive. In her mind, Skip was both the cause of and the solution to her problem.

Delores thought forgiving condemned her to being a doormat her entire life. She thought it meant staying with Skip and overlooking his cheating. She suffered under the misconception that forgiving Skip meant condoning his actions, or that it meant forgetting the painful things that had happened.

I emphasized to Delores that she could not change the hurtful parts of the past, but only how much space she rented to them in her mind. By putting less blame on the past, she could change the way she felt in the present.

Delores got her first glimpse at an alternate way of living when she started to practice stress management every time she thought of Skip. She saw, if only for an instant, that breathing slowly and deeply affected how she felt. It gave her body and mind a break and a glimmer of peace. When she did not practice, she remained in a state of upset and continually blamed her ex-fiance for how she felt. After a few weeks of this pattern, she started to understand that she could reclaim her emotional life.

Delores also started to examine her theory that her parents had ruined her life. She noticed that she had an "unenforceable rule" that her parents must love her and treat her with kindness. Her parents had treated Delores the best they could, which included some cruelty and lack of care. Her parents' behavior was a reminder that no matter how much Delores wanted things to go her way, she did not have the power to control either the past or other people's behavior.

By continuing to insist that her past should somehow change, Delores was dooming herself to endless blame, offense, and suffering.

As the forgiveness training progressed, Delores began to look at her suffering

and ask herself what "unenforceable rule" she was trying to enforce. I reminded her that she would not be so upset unless she was trying to change something that was impossible for her to change. Delores saw that trying to change her ex-fiance's behavior would always lead to pain and helplessness. She saw that just because she hoped for something, it did not have to come true. She understood that she would not be continuously upset if her rules for life were more in line with reality.

Therefore, Delores took it upon herself to create more enforceable rules. She was finally able to ask herself the revealing question, "What do I really want?" What she wanted was happiness, confidence, and peace of mind—things only she could provide for herself. Through asking this question, she saw that Skip and her parents did not have to remain in control of her life. Because of this insight, she started to work on her "positive intention," or life goals described only in positive terms.

In response, she concentrated on learning about herself and approving of herself. She talked about blaming other people and holding onto the past as impediments to her goal of healing. She told me how she was entering counseling, looking for male friends and not lovers, and appreciating her good qualities. She did not gloss over the difficulties she faced—there is no miracle cure for life's struggles.

Delores found this strategy helped her free up mental space so she could uncover other ways to meet her needs. She realized that neither Skip nor her parents were ever going to approve of her in the way she wanted. She was going to have to find that in herself. Her old habit had been to see her glass as empty. She started retraining her mind to see where her cup might already be full.

Delores also practiced gratitude when doing ordinary, everyday tasks. She found that one can be thankful for anything at any time, whether it's the beauty of the trees one passes while driving, the phenomenon of one's breathing, or the embarrassing riches of 21st century America. When shopping, she made it a point to marvel at the opportunities she had to purchase a stupendous array of items. She learned to stop for a minute at the local shopping mall and say thanks to all of the people working there. She would walk into her local supermarket and take a moment to appreciate the abundance of food choices in front of her.

When I bumped into Delores a year after her forgiveness classes ended, it was rewarding to see the changes in her. She was filled with energy and showed a lovely smile. When I asked her about Skip, she almost responded, "Skip who?"

Instead of Skip, she wanted to talk about how much she had learned about herself. When I asked about her parents, she said her relationship with them had improved. Delores accepted what they could offer and realized their enormous emotional limitations. As an adult she understood she was the one with the best chance to create a good life for herself. She was learning to let her parents off the hook. She forgave them for their mistakes.

The biggest change in Delores was the way she turned her grievances into more positive stories about herself. She talked with pride of forgiving Skip and learning how to take care of herself. Delores was a woman who took her forgiveness training to heart.

Fred Luskin, Ph.D., is the director of the Stanford Forgiveness Projects and an associate professor at the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology; he is also author of Forgive for Good: A Proven Prescription for Health and Happiness.

A Gesture of Reconciliation
Israel, Palestinian Authority

Ahmed Al-Khatib was a 12-year-old Palestinian boy, playing in the streets of the West Bank town of Jenin, in June 2005. He was accidentally killed by Israeli troops, who mistook his toy gun for the real thing.

The grieving parents donated their son's organs for transplant, in a public bid to promote peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Several thousand people, including hundreds of children from Ahmed Al-Khatib's

school, flooded the streets of Jenin for his funeral, with many holding up photographs of other youngsters killed during the conflict.

Ablah Al-Khatib, the boy's mother, said, “We have no problem whether it is an Israeli or a Palestinian (who receives his organs) because it will give them life.”

The boy's father, Ismail Al-Khatib, said the family decided to donate his son’s organs out of a desire to answer violence with a concrete gesture of peace.

“I have taken this decision because I have a message for the world: That the Palestinian people want peace — for everyone,” he said. He said the donated heart, lung, kidneys and liver would save Jewish lives. "I had an older brother who suffered from kidney failure and there were no transplants available. When the doctor told me that my boy was clinically dead, I remembered my brother and thought of ways to help."

The boy's organs did help save to save the lives of six people at Rambam Medical Center in Haifa. His heart was given to a 12-year-old girl; his liver was divided in two and given to two patients, a six-month old baby and a 56-year-old woman; his kidneys were given to a 5-year-old boy and his lungs were given to a 5-year-old boy and a 4-year-old girl.

Shots were fired at Israeli soldiers from the western part of the Jenin camp, and bullets hit one of their jeeps. Islamic Jihad and Fatah gunmen both participated in the exchange of fire, and teenagers threw rocks at the jeeps. Khatib was apparently not one of the boys who had been throwing rocks at the soldiers, but Israeli Army spokesmen showed photographs of the toy M-16 assault rifle, to demonstrate how real it looked.

"Despite the pain, they made a very courageous decision," the boy's uncle, Jamal Khatib, said. "This is part of our culture. As Muslims," he said, "we can tell the world that we are not terrorists."

"Israeli children are our children," he added. "We are doing this because we believe in peace."

sources: Arab News, Ha'aretz, Voice of America

Courage, Loyalty, Compassion
Hawai'i in World War II

This is the little-known story of the US 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT) and the 100th Infantry Battalion.

This team of courageous Japanese-Americans was subjected to hatred, degradation, insults and loss of civil rights because of their race. They rose above the racism, forgave those who treated them unfairly and served their country with the highest valor and love.

When the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii was attacked by Japan in 1941, all Americans eligible for military duty were called upon to fight -- except Japanese Americans. They were categorized as non-draftable; many of them and their families were placed into concentration camps.

But in 1943, the government reversed this decision and announced the formation of the 442nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team, initially consisting of 4500 Japanese American volunteers from the mainland United States and the Hawaiian Islands. Despite the racism of those days, they volunteered because they believed that, if there was to be any future for Japanese in the United States, they had to demonstrate their patriotism by fighting for their country.

Initially, the young men of the 442nd had to prove their loyalty to other American soldiers and to their commanders. And they showed immense courage in liberating the small town of Bruyeres in Southern France; they rescued the "Lost Battalion" (141st), a large group of Texas soldiers trapped behind enemy lines who were being relentlessly encircled by the Germans.

They were also key to the liberation of the hellish concentration camp at Dachau;

their memories, accounts and photos form an important part of the historical record.

The stories of their heroism spread throughout the military as the war ended, until the 442nd became the most-decorated unit in United States history.

18,000 total awards were bestowed upon this relatively small group of soldiers, including 9,500 Purple Hearts, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses, Seven Distinguished Unit Citations, and 21 Congressional Medals of Honor. Many of these American heroes became pillars of postwar Hawaii, helping the nation to statehood and becoming key civic, business, educational and political leaders. **Senator Daniel Inouye**, one of the longest-serving United States Senators and the most senior Armed Services chair, was a decorated member of the 442nd. Senator Inouye's right arm was shattered by a grenade while successfully destroying three German machine gun nests; he was one of the recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor in a belated recognition bestowed by President Clinton in 2000.

The "No Japs Allowed" signs that the 442nd returned after the war have been replaced today by respect and honor in the modern State of Hawaii. These young men surmounted the abuse of themselves and their families and, by their dignity and forgiveness, exemplify true American heroism.

Their ranks have thinned, and the story of the 442nd remains relatively obscure to most people, even at home in Hawaii. The Forgiveness Project honored several living members of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 100th Infantry Battalion at its meetings in Honolulu, August 1, 2004.

Here are some key links to learn more:
history: http://www.katonk.com/442nd/232nd.html
links, bibliography: http://www.katonk.com/442nd/Bibli/bibli.html
more: http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0210341/442nd/splash442nd.htm?tqskip1=1
this story, more photos online at
http://www.hawaiiforgivenessproject.org/442nd.htm

Pain and Forgiveness: Boston, Massachusetts

It was April, 2006 -- a courtroom in Boston, Massachusetts.

A five-year old girl, paralyzed in a wheelchair, sat and looked directly at the man who had just pleaded guilty to firing the shot that paralyzed her.

At first, Kai Leigh Harriott broke down, crying harder than she ever had since the night nearly three years earlier, when Anthony Warren fired three rounds at the house where she was sitting on a porch.

After a sip of water and some consoling from her mother, Kai spoke.

"What you done to me was wrong," she said to the man seated just 10 feet away. "But I still forgive him."

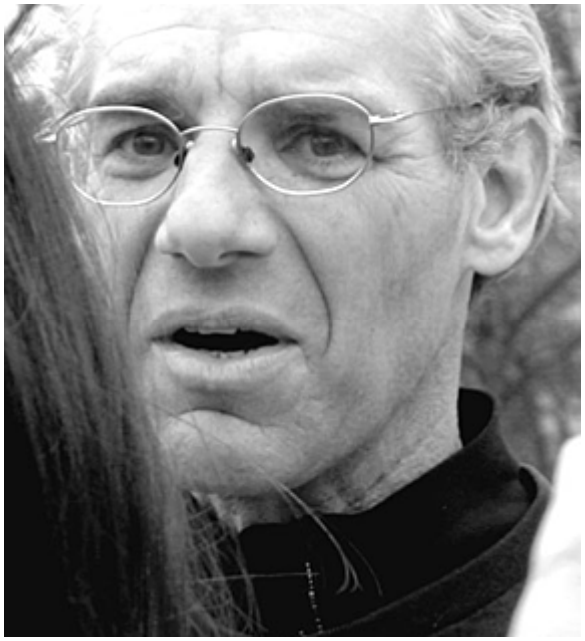
Prosecutors said Warren had an argument with people who lived in the same house where Kai lived with her family. They left, then Warren returned and fired three rounds at the house. One of the bullets hit Kai -- then 3 -- as she sat on a third-floor porch with an older sister. The bullet shattered her spine, permanently paralyzing her from the chest down.

After his guilty plea, the girl, her mother and two sisters gave emotional statements to the judge, who sentenced Warren to 13 to 15 years in prison and five years' probation.

Sources: Associated Press, CNN


CNN
CNN
"I forgive Anthony Warren.
What he has done to me was
wrong, but I still forgive him."
WCVB
CNN
CNN
CNN
CNN

Revenge Breeds Revenge
A Father Grieves his son, killed in Iraq



Michael Berg is the father of Nicholas Berg, the young businessman who was brutally beheaded in Iraq in May of 2004.

When the No. 1 wanted man in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, was killed in a U.S. airstrike, Michael Berg talked about the man who had publicly beheaded his son.

He said, "My reaction is I'm sorry whenever any human being dies. Zarqawi is a human being. He has a family who are reacting just as my family reacted when Nick was killed, and I feel bad for that.

"I feel doubly bad, though, because Zarqawi is also a political figure, and his death will re-ignite yet another wave of revenge, and revenge is something that I do not follow, that I do want ask for, that I do not wish for against anybody. And it can't end the cycle. As long as people use violence to combat violence, we will always have violence."

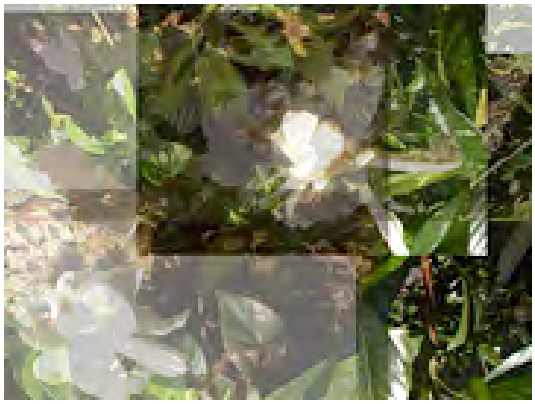
A reporter expressed surprise at this, since Berg's son was killed in such a horrible, and brutal and public way.

Berg added, "Well, you shouldn't be surprised, because I have never indicated anything but forgiveness and peace in any interview on the air. How can a human being be glad that another human being is dead?

"When Nick was killed, I felt that I had nothing left to lose. I'm a pacifist, so I wasn't going out murdering people. But I was not a risk-taking person, and yet now I've done things that have endangered me tremendously. I've been shot at. I've been showed horrible pictures. I've been called all kinds of names and threatened by all kinds of people, and yet I feel that I have nothing left to lose, so I do those things."

Source: CNN

The Forgiveness Party:
Chicago



Nine year old Bess Lyn Sannino was angry to find her house had been burglarized. Seventeen dollars in allowance money, her Valentine's Day candy, and a tape player were gone. The front door had been pelted with raw eggs. She felt sure the burglars were several young teenagers from her neighborhood who'd earlier sprayed graffiti on the garage.

Her mother, a Quaker, had doubts about calling the police. She called the father of one of the young suspects, who encouraged her to work with police to help this become a lesson for the teens.

A compassionate police officer took a week to locate the parents of all four suspects. One mother worked two jobs and wasn't home until after 11 pm. A father had been hospitalized for erratic, potentially violent behavior. These were stressed, troubled families.

In the conversations that followed, all the parents and the police officer agreed that no permanent record of the incident would be kept if the offenders would make up for their crime in more meaningful ways. In addition to curfews and other restrictions, creative forms of restitution were agreed to. One of the perpetrators wrote an essay on integrity and came to the house to read it to Bess. Others came and cleaned off the front door, did yard work and chores around the house. Everything that was taken was returned.

But Bess found she needed healing on a deeper level. With her mother's support, Bess hosted a Forgiveness Party for the young people who'd broken into her house. She made a piñata and decorated her house and yard. There was lots of music coming from the formerly stolen tape player. Not only did the young people come, so did their parents and siblings. It became quite a celebration. Anger and shame were transformed into joy and community. Healing happened for everyone.

Bess related this story in a very matter-of-fact tone. To her, it seemed like the most ordinary thing, to throw a party for people who came uninvited into her home to

vandalize and steal from her. She was surprised that so many adults were impressed by her idea.

source: http://www.co-intelligence.org/S-forgivenessparty.html

Adapted from "Nonviolence in the Arena: The Forgiveness Party" by Jo Clare Hartsig and Walter Wink, in Fellowship, July/August 1995, p. 31.

Militant poetry
Art and Tolerance in Yemen

Amin al-Mashreqi is taking on Al Qaeda -- with his poetry.

As the dusk call to prayer fades in Sanaa, Yemen, Amin al-Mashreqi glances at the expectant faces surrounding him and begins to read from his slim, handwritten book of verse that is helping to bring a measure of peace to this mountainous Arab country:

O, you who kidnap our guests,
Your house will refuse you,
These violations are against Islam

Crammed into a mud-brick shop, his audience, some with their hands resting on their gold-trimmed daggers, listen to his verse denouncing violence and Islamic militancy. When he finishes, there is silence. Then the room erupts in applause.

"Other countries fight terrorism with guns and bombs, but in Yemen we use poetry," says Mr. Mashreqi later. "Through my poetry I can convince people of the need for peace who would never be convinced by laws or by force."

For years Yemen has been known as a breeding ground for extremism. It is the ancestral homeland of Osama bin Laden and where Al Qaeda bombed the USS Cole in 2000. But today this country is quietly winning a reputation for using unorthodox tactics to take on Islamic militancy.

"Yemen has turned to poets because they are able to speak to diverse groups of

people who the literati and the elite cannot reach," explains W. Flagg Miller, professor of Anthropology and Religious Studies at the University of Wisconsin who has studied Yemeni poetry for about 20 years.

"There is a long tradition of leaders turning to poets right across the Arab world," explains Dr. Miller. "The prophet Muhammad himself worked with a poet, Hassan ibn Thabit, to spread the word and compose poetry against other poets and tribes who refused to acknowledge Islam."

After seeing the devastation and violence of the USS Cole bombing, the militant Mashreqi was troubled . His friend, Sanabani, saw him as a man transformed.

"He came back with the most beautiful poetry I have ever seen," says Sanabani, recalling his amazement at the poet's new verses that now condemned violence and promoted peace and tolerance.

Sanabani and Mashreqi realized that the historic respect accorded to poets gives them a unique power to win over illiterate tribesmen in remote areas where villagers are traditionally skeptical of all that the government has to say and offer.

"The Yemeni people are very sensitive to poetry - especially traditional poetry like this," says Mashreqi. "If poetry contains the right ideas and is used in the right context, then people will respond to it because this is heart of their culture."

O men of arms, why do you love injustice?
You must live in law and order
Get up, wake up, or be forever regretful,
Don't be infamous among the nations

adapted from an article by James Brandon, Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor; May, 2006

Transcendence and Genocide
Immaculée Ilibigaza, Rwanda

Imagine being cramped in a tiny room with seven other people, huddled in silence for more than three months while cold-blooded killers lurk nearby, calling your name.

> There were many voices, many killers. I could see them in my mind: my former friends and neighbors, who had always greeted me with love and kindness, moving through the house carrying spears and machetes and calling my name.
>
> "I have killed 399 cockroaches," they chanted. "'Immaculée will make 400. It's a good number to kill.

The Rwandan holocaust claimed the lives of nearly a million people. One brave and remarkable woman—Immaculée Ilibagiza—survived the slaughter by finding shelter in the confines of a small bathroom. She tells a triumphant story about faith, forgiveness, and endurance during one of modern time's most horrific events.

Her journey of survival is described in her book, Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust. Details at http://www.lefttotell.com

"I couldn't imagine how all of us could possible fit in this space, but the pastor herded us through the door and packed us in tight. "While you're in here, you must be absolutely quiet, and I mean silent," he said. "If you make any noise, you will die."

"Minutes felt like hours as Immaculée sat silently, staring in the sad, frightened, nervous and uncertain faces of the other women. And this was just the first day of what would feel like an eternity of confinement from the genocide.

"The pastor's repeated warnings to be quiet had burned into us. We sat in an uncomfortable heap, too afraid to adjust our positions or to even breathe too heavily. We waited for the gray light of dawn to fill the room, then carefully pried ourselves apart to take turns standing and stretching.

"This ritual would go one for many more hours, days, and even months, as these women would spend 91 days huddled in silence. Through a small window, Immaculée and her terrified companions listened with disbelief to the accounts of what was going on just inches away from them ...the slaughter of their families and the bloody massacre of their country.

"I stood on my tiptoes and peered out the window through a little hole in the curtain. The other ladies grabbed at me, trying to pull me down. "Get down! They're looking for us! Get down before they see you!"

"I ignored them, knocking their hands away and peering through the hole. I immediately regretted my decision because I was petrified by what I saw. It wasn't soldiers who were chanting chilling songs of genocide or doing dances of death, nor was it the trained militiamen who had been tormenting us for days. No, these were my neighbors, people I'd grown up and gone to school with. Some had even been to our house for dinner.

Immaculée transformed her life during this horrific event and even found the profound faith to forgive her family's murderers. "Immaculée's journey is a story of a love for God that was so strong that hatred and revenge were forced to dissolve in its presence," says Dr. Wayne W. Dyer, world-renowned inspirational speaker and best-selling author.

From reviews of "Left to Tell", 2006, Hay House, by Immaculée Ilibagiza; http://www.lefttotell.com/book/

Police Chief Grants Mercy
Michael Nakamura, Hawai'i

The driver who ran over former Honolulu Police Chief Mike Nakamura did not have to serve prison time -- because of Nakamura's message of mercy to the court.

Anthony Pearce II was charged with driving without a license and fleeing an accident in Mililani, O'ahu in 2004. His legs crushed, Chief Nakamura's ability to serve his community was over. However, he didn't take his anger out on Pearce, who hit him in his wheelchair in a crosswalk.

"I don't have any negative feelings against the man. I don't think it was anything personal," Nakamura said.

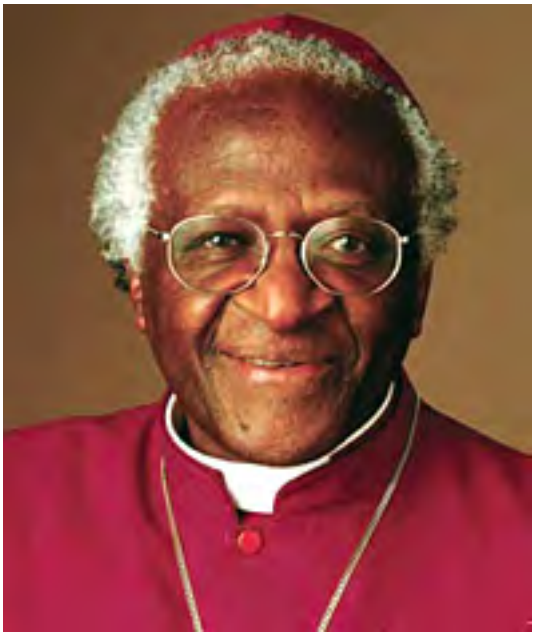
"There is not a day that goes by that I don't think about the chief and his family," Pearce said. Pearce went to the Nakamura family, confessed and personally apologized. "I hope that I have been able to bring peace and closure to Chief Nakamura's family."

In the end, Pearce's fate was in the hands of the Nakamura family, whose forgiveness meant that Pearce was able to avoid jail. The judge gave Pearce five years probation, community service and a $500 fine.

Soon after the sentencing, Chief Nakamura died of his injuries. He was recognized by the Hawai'i Forgiveness Project as a Hero of Forgiveness, 2006.

Written by the Forgiveness Project, based on local news accounts

Why to Forgive
Archibishop Desmond Tutu



Malusi Mpumlwana was a young enthusiastic anti-apartheid activist and a close associate of Steve Biko in South Africa's crucial Black Consciousness Movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s. He was involved in vital community development and health projects with impoverished and often demoralized rural communities.

As a result, he and his wife were under strict surveillance, constantly harassed by the ubiquitous security police. They were frequently held in detention without trial.

I remember well a day Malusi gave the security police the slip and came to my office in Johannesburg, where I was serving as general secretary of the South African Council of Churches. He told me that during his frequent stints in detention, when the security police routinely tortured him, he used to think, "These are God's children and yet they are behaving like animals. They need us to help them recover the humanity they have lost."

For our struggle against apartheid to be successful, it required remarkable young people like Malusi.

All South Africans were less than whole because of apartheid. Blacks suffered years of cruelty and oppression, while many privileged whites became more uncaring, less compassionate, less humane, and therefore less human. Yet during these years of suffering and inequality, each South African's humanity was still tied to that of all others, white or black, friend or enemy. For our own dignity can only be measured in the way we treat others. This was Malusi's extraordinary insight.

I saw the power of this idea when I was serving as chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. This was the commission that the post-apartheid government, headed by our president, Nelson Mandela, had established to move us beyond the cycles of retribution and violence that had plagued so many other countries during their transitions from oppression to

democracy.

The commission granted perpetrators of political crimes the opportunity to appeal for amnesty by giving a full and truthful account of their actions and, if they so chose, an opportunity to ask for forgiveness —- opportunities that some took and others did not. The commission also gave victims of political crimes a chance to tell their stories, hear confessions, and thus unburden themselves from the pain and suffering they had experienced.

For our nation to heal and become a more humane place, we had to embrace our enemies as well as our friends. The same is true the world over. True enduring peace -- between countries, within a country, within a community, within a family -- requires real reconciliation between former enemies and even between loved ones who have struggled with one another.

In our commission hearings, we required full disclosure for us to grant amnesty. Only then, we thought, would the process of requesting and receiving forgiveness be healing and transformative for all involved. The commission's record shows that its standards for disclosure and amnesty were high indeed: Of the more than 7,000 applications submitted to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, it granted amnesty to only 849 of them.

Forgiveness gives us the capacity to make a new start. That is the power, the rationale, of confession and forgiveness. It is to say, "I have fallen but I am not going to remain there. Please forgive me." And forgiveness is the grace by which you enable the other person to get up, and get up with dignity, to begin anew. Not to forgive leads to bitterness and hatred, which just like self-hatred and self-contempt, gnaw away at the vitals of one's being.

Whether hatred is projected out or projected in, it is always corrosive of the human spirit.

If peace is our goal, there can be no future without forgiveness.

Desmond Tutu received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 and retired as Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, in 1996. He then served as chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This essay, originally printed in Greater Good magazine (http://www.greatergood.com) and edited for length here, draws from Bishop Tutu's book, God Has a Dream (Doubleday, 2004).

Sadako Sasaki
A Symbol of Peace

The paper crane is an international symbol of peace, because of a young Japanese girl named Sadako Sasaki, born in Hiroshima in 1943.

Sadako was two years old when the atom bomb was dropped on her city.

As she grew up, Sadako was a strong, courageous and athletic girl. In 1955, at age 11, while practicing for a big race, she became dizzy and fell to the ground. Sadako was diagnosed with leukemia, which became known as "the atom bomb" disease; cancer of the blood.

Sadako's best friend told her of an old Japanese legend, that anyone who folds a thousand paper cranes would be granted a wish. Sadako hoped that her wish would be granted: to get well so that she could run again.

She folded 654 cranes before she died. Her classmates also folded 346 cranes, so she was buried with one thousand paper cranes in 1955, at the age of twelve.

She never gave up. She continued to make paper cranes until she died.

Inspired by her courage, Sadako's friends and classmates put together a book of her letters and published it. They began to dream of building a monument to Sadako and all of the children killed by the atom bomb. Young people all over Japan helped collect money for the project.

In 1958, a statue of Sadako holding a golden crane was unveiled in Hiroshima Peace Park. The children also made a wish which is inscribed at the bottom of the statue and reads:

"This is our cry,
This is our prayer,
Peace in the world".

Today, people all over the world fold paper cranes and send them to Sadako's monument in Hiroshima.

Read an illustrated children's version of a book about Sadako Asai:
http://www.amazon.com/Sadako-Eleanor-Coerr/dp/0698115880

Here is the original adult version of a Sadako's story, "A Thousand Paper Cranes":
http://www.amazon.com/Children-Paper-Crane-Struggle-Bomb/dp/1563248018

The Compassionate Monk
A story from the Dalai Lama

His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited Maui in April, 2007; thousands of people sat for hours in the tropical sun to hear his wisdom.

One story he told continues to resonate.

After the occupation of Tibet by the Chinese in 1949, many Buddhist monks were imprisoned for long years. They were sometimes subjected to great physical and mental hardships.

In 1962, as a gesture of goodwill, the Chinese released a senior monk who had been a close associate of the Dalai Lama. The old man made his way to Dharmsala, the city in northern India where the Dalai Lama maintains the Tibetan Buddhist tradition in exile.

The two men greeted each other warmly after such a long time apart, and the Dalai Lama said, "So, how are you, my friend?"

He responded, "Physically I am healthy. Mentally I am sound. But spiritually I was often in very great danger."

Concerned, the Dalai Lama inquired what was the source of this spiritual danger.

The old man replied, "I was often in danger of losing compassion for my captors."

The Dalai Lama nodded in silent understanding.

Recounted by Michael North, from the Hawai'i Forgiveness Project

Saira and her Grandmother
One moment for forgiveness

Saira was three when she was hit by a car while walking across a street in Troy, New York with her mother. Months of surgery, recuperation, and therapy followed, but she never fully recovered.

Today, despite her confinement to a wheelchair and her inability to walk or use her arms and hands, Saira is a spunky young lady who dreams of becoming lead vocalist in her own rock band and founding a home for disabled children.

"I'm trapped outside, but free on the inside," she wrote in a recent issue of her school newspaper. "I probably do more than anyone else that can walk. Overall, being paralyzed isn't so bad."

But if you talk to grandmother (and primary caregiver) Alice Calonga, you'll get another angle:

“Saira's an inspiration. She doesn't have any animosity at all. She is a very positive human being, and doesn't dwell on what happened to her or feel sorry for herself. She's just a normal kid, as far as she's concerned. As much as was taken from her, she's given that much back a thousand times in her short life to the people around her.

“I'll never forget the first couple of days after the accident. There were two young men in the pediatric ICU who were always there, watching me. Finally one of them approached me and asked me if I was related to the little girl who got hit by the car. I said yes, I was her grandmother.

“I asked who he was, and he said he was the man who had hit her. I was stunned. Then he asked me if I could forgive him. When I tried to put myself in this stranger's shoes and think how devastated I would feel if I were him, I right away knew I had to forgive him. So I did. And I hugged him.

“At that moment my daughter came out of the ICU. She was horrified to see me talking with this man, and very angry at me. She started telling me how the

accident had happened -- how the driver had been so impatient, he had driven around the vehicle in front of him, which had stopped for a traffic light, and run into her and Saira. Then, trying to flee the scene, he had accelerated and hit Saira a second time, breaking her neck and crushing her spine.

“At first I couldn't believe it. I said, ‘Nobody would do something like that.’ But I found out that my daughter was not exaggerating. I was so horrified, I felt like I had been raped. I had been robbed of my forgiveness by a man who wasn't the least bit entitled to it.”

Alice says that despite her shock -- and the fury of her daughter, who told her she had no right to forgive anyone for what happened -- she is certain she did the right thing.

“As angry as some people are that I did it, in my heart I know I forgave that driver for the right reason, even if I was just going on instinct. I can honestly say that if I had not forgiven him at that moment, I might never have been able to. It's so clear to me now that he didn't deserve it. But if I were him -- if I had done what he did -- I know I would still want forgiveness. That's how I was thinking when I originally forgave him.”

Edited and reprinted from Why Forgive?
Ebook by Johann Christoph Arnold; www.bruderhof.com.

"Circumcising us was their way of seeking revenge – repeating a crime which had been done to them."

Salimata Badji-Knight, Senegal
Forgiveness through the Pain

Salimata Badji-Knight, 37, was brought up in a Muslim community in Senegal, where she was circumcised at the age of five. She moved to Paris when she was nine, and has spent most of her adult life campaigning to prevent the practice of female circumcision in African cultures.

I was five when the women from my village said we were going into the forest. There was a whole group of us girls aged between five and 16; we were happy because we thought we were going for a picnic. But it wasn't a picnic.

Even more than the pain and the crying, I remember the shock of realising that they'd tricked us. I knew they had cut something from me, but I didn't know what. The women were kind in their way, giving us sweets and nice food; it was their way of asking for forgiveness. But it was also their way of seeking revenge – repeating a crime that had been done to them. Only later, when I was a teenager, did I realise what had happened. We had been circumcised, supposedly to make us cleaner and to stop us having boyfriends. For my parents it was like preparing me for marriage – they were doing it for my own good and I accepted this because circumcised Muslim women have stature and respect.

Later, when I came to live in Paris, it was a shock to discover that this was not something that happened to everyone. I was horrified to see Senegalese girls being told they were going on holiday to Africa, when in fact they were being taken back to be circumcised. For my mother it was a normal part of her culture, and in Paris she secretly had three of my younger sisters circumcised.

I was full of rage and was determined to stop this brutal practice. I started to talk to anyone who would listen: the social services, doctors, the police and other Africans living in Paris.

For a long time I blamed all the women in my community who had united to do this to me, and I blamed all the men for standing by and allowing it to happen. I blamed my mother because she condoned it, and my father because he had never been there to stop it.

When I discovered that most people believe female circumcision to be a terrible wrong, I felt suicidal. Circumcision takes away your identity and your dignity. It was only when I became a Buddhist and stopped viewing myself as a victim that I stopped feeling unworthy. Out of rage came compassion, and the realisation that this was not my mother's fault, nor the fault of the women who had done this to me. They were simply blinded by tradition.

If I'd held on to all that anger and blame, I'd be dead by now. But my anger has had great results, because it has made me fight to stop this practice. I now work with a campaign ground called Forward, and I speak at schools both in the UK and France.

Before he died six years ago, I was able to have a good talk with my father. I opened my heart to him and explained how female circumcision could affect you physically and mentally. He cried and said that no woman had ever explained the suffering to him. Then he apologised and asked for forgiveness.

The next day he called my relatives in Senegal and told them to stop the practice. As a result, a meeting that was scheduled for young girls to be circumcised was cancelled, and 50 girls were saved.

From The Forgiveness Project website
http://www.theforgivenessproject.com/stories/

Queen Lili'uokalani
The Dignity of a Prayer

Charged with treason by a group of businessmen from America and forcibly deposed by a landing of the United States Marines, Queen Lili'uokalani waited, imprisoned in her own home at 'Iolani Palace in Honolulu.

During this time she wrote a simple poem, which has become known as the Queen's Prayer -- and stands today as a witness to the strength and dignity of the Hawaiian people, and the power of forgiveness. Her words long outlive her captors.

Here is part of her story, written in the Queen's own words, from "Hawai'i's Story by Hawai'i's Queen" by Lili'uokalani, 1898

CHAPTER XLIV: IMPRISONMENT – FORCED ABDICATION

FOR the first few days nothing occurred to disturb the quiet of my apartments save the tread of the sentry. On the fourth day I received a visit from Mr. Paul Neumann, who asked me if, in the event that it should be decided that all the principal parties to the revolt must pay for it with their lives, I was prepared to die? I replied to this in the affirmative, telling him I had no anxiety for myself, and felt no dread of death. He then told me that six others besides myself had been selected to be shot for treason,

`O kou aloha nô	Your loving mercy
Aia i ka lani	Is as high as Heaven
A `o Kou `oia `i`o	And your truth
He hemolelo ho`i	So perfect
Ko`u noho mihi `ana	I live in sorrow
A pa`ahao `ia	Imprisoned
`O `oe ku`u lama	You are my light
Kou nani ko`u ko`o	Your glory, my support
Mai nânâ `ino`ino	Behold not with malevolence
Nâ hewa o kânaka	The sins of man
Akâ e huikala	But forgive
A ma`ema`e nô	And cleanse
No laila e ka Haku	And so, o Lord
Ma lalo o kou `êheu	Protect us beneath your wings
Kô mâkou maluhia	And let peace be our portion
A mau loa aku nô	Now and forever more

but that he would call again, and let me know further about our fate...

> The idea of abdicating never originated with me. I knew nothing at all about such a transaction until they sent to me, by the hands of Mr. Wilson, the insulting proposition written in abject terms. For myself, I would have chosen death rather than to have signed it; but it was represented to me that by my signing this paper all the persons who had been arrested, all my people now in trouble by reason of their love and loyalty towards me, would be immediately released. Think of my position – sick, a lone woman in prison, scarcely knowing who was my friend, or who listened to my words only to betray me, without legal advice or friendly counsel, and the stream of blood ready to flow unless it was stayed by my pen.
>
> My persecutors have stated, and at that time compelled me to state, that this paper was signed and acknowledged by me after consultation with my friends whose names appear at the foot of it as witnesses. Not the least opportunity was given to me to confer with any one; but for the purpose of making it appear to the outside world that I was under the guidance of others, friends who had known me well in better days were brought into the place of my imprisonment, and stood around to see a signature affixed by me....

> So far from the presence of these persons being evidence of a voluntary act on my part, was it not an assurance to me that they, too, knew that, unless I did the will of my jailers, what Mr. Neumann had threatened would be performed, and six prominent citizens immediately put to death. I so regarded it then, and I still believe that murder was the alternative. Be this as it may, it is certainly happier for me to reflect to-day that there is not a drop of the blood of my subjects, friends or foes, upon my soul...
>
> It is a rule of common law that the acts of any person deprived of civil rights have no force nor weight, either at law or in equity; and that was my situation. Although it was written in the document that it was my free act and deed, circumstances prove that it was not; it had been impressed upon me that only by its execution could the lives of those dear to me, those beloved by the people of Hawaii, be saved, and the shedding of blood be averted. ...

After those in my place of imprisonment had all affixed their signatures, they left, with the single exception of Mr. A. S. Hartwell. As he prepared to go, he came forward, shook me by the hand, and the tears streamed down his cheeks. This was a matter of great surprise to me. After this he left the room. If he had been engaged in a righteous and honorable action, why should he be affected? Was it the consciousness of a mean act which overcame him so?

All of the Queen's words, ***"Hawai'i's Story by Hawai'i's Queen"*** *– a vital witness to Hawaiian history, may be read here for free: http://snipurl.com/liliuokalani*
Here is a link to purchase the book: http://snipurl.com/hawaiisqueen

Nail in the Fence

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence.

The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper. The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence.

He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there."

Forgiveness is seeing the nail, drawing it out, and thanking the one who drove it in, for the valuable lesson he made possible. (*anonymous)*

What would Muhammad Do?
Edited from an original essay by Ibrahim Hooper

During the protests over publication of the Danish cartoons designed to insult the Prophet Muhammad, I wrote a commentary called "What Would Muhammad Do?" Perhaps it is time to remind us all how the Prophet himself reacted to insults, both real and perceived.

Islamic traditions include a number of instances in which the Prophet had the opportunity to retaliate against those who abused him, but refrained from doing so.

"You do not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you deal with them with forgiveness and kindness." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Muslims are taught the tradition of the woman who would regularly throw trash on the prophet as he walked down a particular path. The prophet never responded in kind to the woman's abuse. Instead, when she one day failed to attack him, he went to her home to inquire about her condition.

In another tradition, the prophet was offered the opportunity to have God punish the people of a town near Mecca who refused the message of Islam and attacked him with stones. Again, the prophet did not choose to respond in kind to the abuse.

A companion of the prophet noted his forgiving disposition. He said: "I served the prophet for ten years, and he never said 'uf' (a word indicating impatience) to me and never blamed me by saying, 'Why did you do so or why didn't you do so?'" (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Even when the prophet was in a position of power, he chose the path of kindness and reconciliation.

When he returned to Mecca after years of exile and personal attacks, he did not take revenge on the people of the city, but instead offered a general amnesty.

In the Quran, Islam's revealed text, God states: "When (the righteous) hear vain

talk, they withdraw from it saying: 'Our deeds are for us and yours for you; peace be on to you. We do not desire the way of the ignorant'. . .O Prophet (Muhammad), you cannot give guidance to whom you wish, it is God Who gives guidance to whom He pleases, and He is quite aware of those who are guided." (28:55-56)

Another verse tells the prophet to "show forgiveness, speak for justice and avoid the ignorant." (7:199)

These are the examples that Muslims should follow as they express concern at the publication of insulting cartoons or at misperceived actions of a well-meaning teacher. As the Quran states: "It may well be that God will bring about love (and friendship) between you and those with whom you are now at odds." (60:7)

Ibrahim Hooper is national communications director for the Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil liberties group.

Linda Apo
"Prison became a place of Transformation."

Linda Apo served two prison sentences for theft crimes in a woman's correctional gaol on the island of O'ahu, Hawai'i. As a result she became alienated from her family, especially her sister Marilyn Vierra who had supported Linda through many years of drug addiction.

Following a recovery program in the prison, Linda took part in a Restorative Circle and reconciled with her sister. A Restorative Circle is a group process for individual prisoners and their loved ones to assist with healing for families. It was developed by Lorenn Walker, an active member of the Hawai'i Forgiveness Project.

My past is full of pain – abuse, violent relationships, drug addiction and theft. I never had a childhood. As the eldest I cared for my brothers and sisters until we were taken from our mom and sent to the mainland to live with our father. Here I encountered prejudice for the first time and built up a lot of anger and resentment. I felt like a victim and learnt to shut down my feelings until I was numb inside.

I married four times – always looking for love outside of myself. I have five children and all of them have been affected by my lifestyle. Two of my children are in prison, and the other three were adopted. My children were my victims too, but I never intentionally wanted to hurt anyone.

Things just snowballed until eventually I was convicted of credit card fraud. When I first did time, I didn't want to change but during my second sentence the prison chaplain introduced me to the Total Life Recovery program which was the start of my healing. Prison became a place of transformation for me. On the program I made a promise to myself and to God that I would change. It was the hardest thing I've ever had to do but also the most important decision I've ever made in my life.

Having worked on myself I needed to heal the broken relationships in my family. My sister Marilyn, in particular, who had always supported me had finally been unable to take anymore and shut me out. It was suggested in prison that I should take part in a Restorative Circle -- a process intended to bring families back together. At first I didn't want to do it; I didn't want to feel the pain and I was scared of rejection again. I was so happy when Marilyn agreed to attend. The Circle lasted an hour and so much happened in that time. It was like an assessment of my entire life, and how I needed to change. It was also an opportunity for me to apologise to my family and for them to tell me how my actions had hurt them. It was very tough but I was happy in the end because Marilyn was so positive. It was the beginning of growth for me and helped me put everything back together

Forgiving myself is the hardest part. I never had the heart to hate anybody and yet before I didn't know how to behave in a real or loving way. For me love meant sex. Now I'm learning to love from inside and getting to know myself. The Restorative Circle helped me go places I've never been before, take steps I've never taken. Healing is a slow process but I'm getting there. I see miracles in my life every day and I am determined to be an example to my children.

Hawai'i death unites Pacific Island groups
By Lee Cataluna, Honolulu Advertiser Staff Writer; January 13, 2008

Members of the Kalihi Micronesian community stood outside the funeral of an 18-year-old Samoan yesterday and begged forgiveness from the teen's family.

In Samoan tradition, the ritual apology is called ifoga, but this was the Micronesian community following Samoan customs in an earnest effort of reconciliation following a crime that has broken hearts and strained community relations.

"We want to show you that we are with you," Pastor Sekap Esah said to the grieving relatives and friends. He stood in the parking lot of Moanalua Mortuary with members of his parish behind him. "Words are not enough just to stand here and say that we are so sorry."

Just after midnight on Dec. 26, 18-year-old Fusitogamala Iosefa Savea was stabbed in the heart outside Sunny's Market near Kuhio Park Terrace housing complex. A week later, 23-year-old RJ Ham was arrested and charged with the murder. Ham, who is Chuukese, is being held in lieu of $1 million bail.

Savea's death has all the marks of a tragedy, a young life suddenly, senselessly snuffed out.

He had just come to Hawai'i a few months ago, a young man starting his adult life. The stabbing happened on Christmas, midnight on Dec. 26, after Savea had celebrated the holiday with his cousins. It didn't happen in a fight. By witness

accounts, it was an unprovoked attack. It is the kind of thing that can make a close-knit community boil and turn the anguish of grief into thoughts of revenge.

Pastor To'o Paogofie of the Samoan Council of the United Church of Christ called a meeting of his friends and fellow pastors in the Samoan and Micronesian communities. He said it was time to be more than spiritual leaders, they had to be civic leaders. The ifoga ritual was agreed upon and worked out last week and presented yesterday at Savea's funeral.

"What happened happened," Paogofie said. "This is for reconciliation and closure."

In the Samoan tradition, an ifoga is a ritualized formal apology where those seeking forgiveness humble themselves before the person or family that was hurt. An ifoga can take days. Those seeking forgiveness may have to wait in the hot sun or through the rainy night and there is no guarantee that the apology will be accepted. There is no guarantee there won't be retaliation on the spot.

If the matter is very serious, the high chief from the village of the accused would perform the ifoga. It is a very humbling gesture on the part of those asking for mercy.

"We want to show you that we are with you," Esah said to Savea's family on behalf of the Micronesian community. "Life is so precious. Words cannot express how much we feel about what happened. We are very, very, very, very sorry. And we will keep praying for you."

An envelope of money collected from among the community was offered as part of the ifoga, as well as an 'ie toga, a fine mat, considered the most significant and sincere part of the ifoga ritual.

Savea's great-uncle Matuaiala Malivao, a chief from Samoa, accepted the apology on behalf of Savea's family. Savea's relatives had called for peace and forgiveness after his death. Today, his body is being taken home to his parents for burial in American Samoa.

Family members of the accused did not attend the ifoga, which is considered separate and unrelated to any judicial proceedings or legal statements of guilt.

In the middle of the ceremony, a young man, a friend of the teen who was killed, roared up to the crowd in his pickup truck and stopped cold in the middle of the parking lot, blocking any entrance or exit.

There was a moment of tension among the crowd as he jumped out of the truck with an air of aggression, but he took his place among the mourners and was comforted by a young woman who wiped at his tears as well as her own.

In the small chapel room inside Moanalua Mortuary, cousins stood around the white coffin holding Savea's body. They wore shirts with his handsome face airbrushed on the front and his name, birth date and the date of his death printed on the back. Cousin Ceenah Malivao softly stroked his hair and sobbed into the lace veil draped over the coffin lid. A grandmother lifted a small boy to place a pink rose on Savea's hands.

It is the kind of heartbreaking scene that could lead to more violence, but the UCC pastors believe that the earnest expression of regret and the grace of forgiveness will do much to bring healing and peace.

complete original story, with links and photographs, at
http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2008/Jan/13/ln/hawaii801130365.html

National Apology
To the Stolen Generations
made to the Indigenous People of Australia
Speech by the Prime Minister, February 13, 2008 (excerpts)

Mr RUDD (Griffith—Prime Minister) (9.00 a.m.)—

I move: That today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history. We reflect on their past mistreatment.

We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations—this blemished chapter in our nation's history. The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.

We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry. To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry. And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.

We the Parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation.

For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent can now be written.

We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians. A future where this Parliament resolves that the injustices of the past must never, never happen again. A future where we harness the determination of all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to close the gap that lies between us in life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity. A future where we embrace the possibility of new solutions to enduring problems where old approaches have failed.

A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility. A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter in the history of this great country, Australia.

Some have asked, 'Why apologise?' Let me begin to answer by telling the parliament just a little of one person's story—an elegant, eloquent and wonderful woman in her 80s, full of life, full of funny stories, despite what has happened in her life's journey, a woman who has travelled a long way to be with us today, a member of the stolen generation who shared some of her story with me when I called around to see her just a few days ago. Nanna Nungala Fejo, as she prefers to be called, was born in the late 1920s. She remembers her earliest childhood days living with her family and her community in a bush camp just outside Tennant Creek. She remembers the love and the warmth and the kinship of those days long ago, including traditional dancing around the camp fire at night. She loved the dancing. She remembers once getting into strife when, as a four-year-old girl, she insisted on dancing with the male tribal elders rather than just sitting and watching the men, as the girls were supposed to do.

But then, sometime around 1932, when she was about four, she remembers the coming of the welfare men. Her family had feared that day and had dug holes in the creek bank where the children could run and hide. What they had not expected was that the white welfare men did not come alone. They brought a truck, two white men and an Aboriginal stockman on horseback cracking his stockwhip. The kids were found; they ran for their mothers, screaming, but they could not get away. They were herded and piled onto the back of the truck. Tears flowing, her

mum tried clinging to the sides of the truck as her children were taken away to the Bungalow in Alice, all in the name of protection.

A few years later, government policy changed. Now the children would be handed over to the missions to be cared for by the churches. But which church would care for them? The kids were simply told to line up in three lines. Nanna Fejo and her sisters stood in the middle line, her older brother and cousin on her left. Those on the left were told that they had become Catholics, those in the middle Methodists and those on the right Church of England. That is how the complex questions of post-reformation theology were resolved in the Australian outback in the 1930s. It was as crude as that. She and her sister were sent to a Methodist mission on Goulburn Island and then Croker Island. Her Catholic brother was sent to work at a cattle station and her cousin to a Catholic mission.

Nanna Fejo's family had been broken up for a second time. She stayed at the mission until after the war, when she was allowed to leave for a prearranged job as a domestic in Darwin. She was 16. Nanna Fejo never saw her mum again. After she left the mission, her brother let her know that her mum had died years before, a broken woman fretting for the children that had literally been ripped away from her.

I asked Nanna Fejo what she would have me say today about her story. She thought for a few moments then said that what I should say today was that all mothers are important. And she added: 'Families—keeping them together is very important. It's a good thing that you are surrounded by love and that love is passed down the generations. That's what gives you happiness.' As I left, later on, Nanna Fejo took one of my staff aside, wanting to make sure that I was not too hard on the Aboriginal stockman who had hunted those kids down all those years ago. The stockman had found her again decades later, this time himself to say, 'Sorry.' And remarkably, extraordinarily, she had forgiven him.

Nanna Fejo's is just one story. There are thousands, tens of thousands, of them: stories of forced separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their mums and dads over the better part of a century. Some of these stories are

graphically told in Bringing them home, the report commissioned in 1995 by Prime Minister Keating and received in 1997 by Prime Minister Howard. There is something terribly primal about these firsthand accounts. The pain is searing; it screams from the pages. The hurt, the humiliation, the degradation and the sheer brutality of the act of physically separating a mother from her children is a deep assault on our senses and on our most elemental humanity.

These stories cry out to be heard; they cry out for an apology. Instead, from the nation's parliament there has been a stony and stubborn and deafening silence for more than a decade; a view that somehow we, the parliament, should suspend our most basic instincts of what is right and what is wrong; a view that, instead, we should look for any pretext to push this great wrong to one side, to leave it languishing with the historians, the academics and the cultural warriors, as if the stolen generations are little more than an interesting sociological phenomenon. But the stolen generations are not intellectual curiosities. They are human beings; human beings who have been damaged deeply by the decisions of parliaments and governments. But, as of today, the time for denial, the time for delay, has at last come to an end.

The nation is demanding of its political leadership to take us forward. Decency, human decency, universal human decency, demands that the nation now step forward to right a historical wrong. That is what we are doing in this place today. But should there still be doubts as to why we must now act, let the parliament reflect for a moment on the following facts: that, between 1910 and 1970, between 10 and 30 per cent of Indigenous children were forcibly taken from their mothers and fathers; that, as a result, up to 50,000 children were forcibly taken from their families; that this was the product of the deliberate, calculated policies of the state as reflected in the explicit powers given to them under statute; that this policy was taken to such extremes by some in administrative authority that the forced extractions of children of so-called 'mixed lineage' were seen as part of a broader policy of dealing with 'the problem of the Aboriginal population'.

One of the most notorious examples of this approach was from the Northern Territory Protector of Natives, who stated:

Generally by the fifth and invariably by the sixth generation, all native characteristics of the Australian aborigine are eradicated. The problem of our half-castes—to quote the Protector—"will quickly be eliminated by the complete disappearance of the black race, and the swift submergence of their progeny in the white ..."

These are uncomfortable things to be brought out into the light. They are not pleasant. They are profoundly disturbing. But we must acknowledge these facts if we are to deal once and for all with the argument that the policy of generic forced separation was somehow well motivated, justified by its historical context and, as a result, unworthy of any apology today.

Then we come to the argument of intergenerational responsibility, also used by some to argue against giving an apology today. But let us remember the fact that the forced removal of Aboriginal children was happening as late as the early 1970s. The 1970s is not exactly a point in remote antiquity. There are still serving members of this parliament who were first elected to this place in the early 1970s. It is well within the adult memory span of many of us. The uncomfortable truth for us all is that the parliaments of the nation, individually and collectively, enacted statutes and delegated authority under those statutes that made the forced removal of children on racial grounds fully lawful.

There is a further reason for an apology as well: it is that reconciliation is in fact an expression of a core value of our nation—and that value is a fair go for all. There is a deep and abiding belief in the Australian community that, for the stolen generations, there was no fair go at all. There is a pretty basic Aussie belief that says it is time to put right this most outrageous of wrongs. It is for these reasons, quite apart from concerns of fundamental human decency, that the governments and parliaments of this nation must make this apology—because, put simply, the laws that our parliaments enacted made the stolen generations possible. We, the parliaments of the nation, are ultimately responsible, not those who gave effect to our laws. The problem lay with the laws themselves. As has been said of settler societies elsewhere, we are the bearers of many blessings from our ancestors and therefore we must also be the bearer of their burdens as well.

Therefore, for our nation, the course of action is clear, and therefore, for our people, the course of action is clear: that is, to deal now with what has become one of the darkest chapters in Australia's history. In doing so, we are doing more than contending with the facts, the evidence and the often rancorous public debate. In

doing so, we are also wrestling with our own soul. This is not, as some would argue, a black-armband view of history; it is just the truth: the cold, confronting, uncomfortable truth—facing it, dealing with it, moving on from it. Until we fully confront that truth, there will always be a shadow hanging over us and our future as a fully united and fully reconciled people. It is time to reconcile. It is time to recognise the injustices of the past. It is time to say sorry. It is time to move forward together.

To the stolen generations, I say the following: as Prime Minister of Australia, I am sorry. On behalf of the government of Australia, I am sorry. On behalf of the parliament of Australia, I am sorry. I offer you this apology without qualification. We apologise for the hurt, the pain and suffering that we, the parliament, have caused you by the laws that previous parliaments have enacted. We apologise for the indignity, the degradation and the humiliation these laws embodied. We offer this apology to the mothers, the fathers, the brothers, the sisters, the families and the communities whose lives were ripped apart by the actions of successive governments under successive parliaments. In making this apology, I would also like to speak personally to the members of the stolen generations and their families: to those here today, so many of you; to those listening across the nation—from Yuendumu, in the central west of the Northern Territory, to Yabara, in North Queensland, and to Pitjantjatjara in South Australia.

I know that, in offering this apology on behalf of the government and the parliament, there is nothing I can say today that can take away the pain you have suffered personally. Whatever words I speak today, I cannot undo that. Words alone are not that powerful; grief is a very personal thing. I ask those non-Indigenous Australians listening today who may not fully understand why what we are doing is so important to imagine for a moment that this had happened to you. I say to honourable members here present: imagine if this had happened to us. Imagine the crippling effect. Imagine how hard it would be to forgive. My proposal is this: if the apology we extend today is accepted in the spirit of reconciliation in which it is offered, we can today resolve together that there be a new beginning for Australia. And it is to such a new beginning that I believe the nation is now calling us.

Let us resolve today to begin with the little children—a fitting place to start on this day of apology for the stolen generations. Let us resolve over the next five years to have every Indigenous four-year-old in a remote Aboriginal community enrolled in and attending a proper early childhood education centre or opportunity and engaged in proper preliteracy and prenumeracy programs. Let us resolve to build new educational opportunities for these little ones, year by year, step by step, following the completion of their crucial preschool year. Let us resolve to use this systematic approach to building future educational opportunities for Indigenous children and providing proper primary and preventive health care for the same children, to beginning the task of rolling back the obscenity that we find today in infant mortality rates in remote Indigenous communities—up to four times higher than in other communities.

None of this will be easy. Most of it will be hard, very hard. But none of it is impossible, and all of it is achievable with clear goals, clear thinking and by placing an absolute premium on respect, cooperation and mutual responsibility as the guiding principles of this new partnership on closing the gap. The mood of the nation is for reconciliation now, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Today the parliament has come together to right a great wrong. We have come together to deal with the past so that we might fully embrace the future. We have had sufficient audacity of faith to advance a pathway to that future, with arms extended rather than with fists still clenched. So let us seize the day. Let it not become a moment of mere sentimental reflection. Let us take it with both hands and allow this day, this day of national reconciliation, to become one of those rare

moments in which we might just be able to transform the way in which the nation thinks about itself, whereby the injustice administered to the stolen generations in the name of these our parliaments causes all of us to reappraise, at the deepest level of our beliefs, the real possibility of reconciliation writ large: reconciliation across all Indigenous Australia; reconciliation across the entire history of the often bloody encounter between those who emerged from the Dreamtime a thousand generations ago and those who, like me, came across the seas only yesterday; reconciliation which opens up whole new possibilities for the future.

It is for the nation to bring the first two centuries of our settled history to a close, as we begin a new chapter. We embrace with pride, admiration and awe these great and ancient cultures we are truly blessed to have among us—cultures that provide a unique, uninterrupted human thread linking our Australian continent to the most ancient prehistory of our planet. Growing from this new respect, we see our Indigenous brothers and sisters with fresh eyes, with new eyes, and we have our minds wide open as to how we might tackle, together, the great practical challenges that Indigenous Australia faces in the future.

Let us turn this page together, Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, government and opposition, Commonwealth and state, and write this new chapter in our nation's story together. First Australians, First Fleeters and those who first took the oath of allegiance just a few weeks ago—let us grasp this opportunity to craft a new future for this great land, Australia. Mr Speaker, I commend the motion to the House.

Honourable members applauding—

Full text of this historic document, with all details, is available here:
http://www.hawaiiforgivenessproject.org/library/Australia-Apology-Hansard.pdf

Video excerpts may be viewed here:
http://www.hawaiiforgivenessproject.org/video/Australia-Apology.htm

A Story of Pokai Bay
As told by Jeff Gere

Glen Kila was telling the kids of Waianae all about the Waianae Coast. He said to them: "Listen to the grass. Can you hear the voices of your ancestors?" We stopped all along that coast, and finally got to a place called Pokai Bay.

There a point that goes out and they have a heiau (temple) that has been rebuilt, on a piece of land like a finger. Glen said that when he was a kid, they'd swim, walk along that beach, take the rocks and skip 'em along.

He tells us this story.

One day when he was young, he's walkin' along and he comes to this big rock the size of like a table and it had this big puka (hole) in it. On top there was rock shaped like a shark fin, and he giggled the way young kids do -- "Here, you got the lady; there you got the man." To play a trick, he dug a little alcove and put the shark fin rock up above in the cliff, away from the table rock.

A couple of weeks later, he comes back, skippin' rocks again. He sees the big stone table rock, the female, and -- there's the shark-fin rock, the male, back on top again!

"How'd it get over der?" He takes the shark-fin rock away again, puts it up inside the alcove and this time puts stones in it, walls it in. Walks away.

A couple of weeks later he comes back again. There's the female rock, and the male rock, together again.

“Now, how’d that stone get out from where I put ‘em in the wall?” He puts the stone on top of the ledge, digging inside to make it really deep – and as he’s putting the shark-fin rock in, he hits it, and it breaks.

Broken into eight pieces -- cracked, ruined. “Oh, I done something bad,” he says right away. It shouldn’t have happened; he was thoughtless, careless.

He spoke to the rock, saying, “Hey, sorry, huh? Really sorry. I didn’t mean to. I was just careless, huh? Forgive me, OK?”

A couple of weeks later he came by again, and the stone table rock, the female, was gone.

Fifteen years later, he’s walkin’ with his fiance on the beach, showing her the places he grew up. They walk along the little finger of the heiau, Pokai Bay. And he tells his fiance the story of the two rocks.

They come around the corner -- and there’s a table-sized stone with a puka in it. He says the chicken skin starts goin’ up and down his spine, up and down. Tears start wellin’ up. “I gotta go! Oh oh!” He runs back to the payphone in the parking lot to call his tutu lady (grandmother). He tells her the whole story for the first time.

She says “OK. You call everybody in the family. You tell them they’ve got to get down to Pokai Bay. When the sun comes up -- they all gotta be there. We gonna make this good, we gonna make up for this. No can stay away.”

They called all their relatives, their whole ‘ohana, all day long.

When the sun was just beginning to come up, all the people were pullin’ in. In the early dawn light, he and his two cousins, big guys, walked down to that female table top rock. The three men stood around the stone and tried to pick it up. Couldn’t move it.

They walk back. Tutu lady was there, sixty of his family were there. She says, “Get behind me.” And she’s starts chanting; she starts walkin’ down to the rock; she’s walkin’, she’s talkin’, she’s prayin’. The chant is coming out. She gets to the stone.

She cries loud: “Auwe – Auwe – Auwe!!!” She lays down on the stone. She rubs her tears into the stone with her hand. She lays on the stone and screams, “Auwe!”

Tears!

Even the people in the family who didn't know what she was saying in Hawaiian were weeping. She finally gets up exhausted, wipes her face, turns around to one of the nieces, eight years old.

"Oh dear, help me. Get that stone and come with me."

And the little eight year old girl walks over, picks up the big stone, and slowly follows the tutu up the little path to higher ground.

True. A story of forgiveness and deep repentance.

Performed at Hawai'i International Forgivness Day, Honolulu; 2007

The People of the Sand
As told by Jeff Gere

This is a story of the people of the sand -- those geniuses, the anonymous people from a thousand years ago, from that place whose name translates as "abode of peace" -- the city of Bahgdad.

A thousand years ago, as the tale is told, there was a man. He was a good man because he gave what he had to those who needed it. If they needed a place to sleep, he would give his own home. He was a good man.

Between him and his neighbor there was just a thin wall. The neighbor, hearing about all these good deeds, said, "This man is so good -- he drives me nuts! Everything about him -- I don't like. "

The neighbor did everything he could to make the good man's life hell. He put little stones in his shoes, and what happens? The children came and dumped his shoes out. He crawled up to his roof and put a hole in it so that the rain would come in. And what happens? He fell down and broke his arm.

"He drives me nuts! He drives me nuts! He drives me… I envy him."

At length there was nothing the good man could do. The actions of his envious neighbor became so outrageous that he could no longer turn away.

What did he say? The good man said of his neighbor, "He is in a hell of his own creation. I will move away; I will not make this worse. I would rather sell this house, leave this city, and set up another abode."

And so he did. The good man went away and set up a new home in a new city. He moved into a mosque, started up a new life and began to devote himself to the worship of Allah. The wandering mendicants, the Sufis, the whirling dervishes, gathered around him and began to chant and sing and dance all day long:

"Allah hu Akbar… Il Allah ha il Allah!"

Oh, it was a wonderful celebration! They sang and danced day and night, and raised their voices in the praise of Allah.

One day the good man's words and deeds reached the ears of his old neighbor, which aroused his envy once again. He went to see the good man.

The good man said, "Ha -- my friend, I have not seen you in too long! Why have you been so far away? Never mind. Let's eat! We will eat together."

And they ate together.

From a hand-puppet presentation
Performed at Hawai'i International Forgivness Day, Honolulu; 2006

Chuck Spezzano
The Toothless Smile

If you get down to the very root of things -- there is nothing to forgive.

But most people don't get down to that very deep level. So when I say that there is nothing to forgive – I do not speak in a trivial or casual manner.

I've worked with murderers, and with people whose families were murdered. I've worked with people who have had the most horrendous things happen to them, on a national level and on a personal level.

My wife and I do a lot of work with the First Nations people in Canada. It was in northern British Columbia that we witnessed a great forgiveness stories.

In about 1885, Queen Victoria had a great idea: move the the aboriginal people into government schools to teach them. Children were taken from their parents from age 4 to 18, and it destroyed whole families; the parents were arrested if they resisted.

This destroyed the family structure of entire villages for over four generations, and led to deep physical problems, early death, accidents, diabetes, alcoholism, drug abuse, and prostitution. The schools were so badly run that sexual predators from all over North America headed to Canada. Many of these children were raped and molested on a daily basis for years.

We worked with one young man who had so much hate inside him that Lency and I could feel the hatred coming off him in waves. He asked me to feel his forehead. There was not a smooth spot on his forehead -- it was all bumps and lumps.

He said, "When I was nine years old I stood up to my teacher, who was molesting me, and said, 'Never again. You can kill me, but you won't do that ever again.'"

Within a couple of days a gang of kids came to kill him, and he was in the hospital for 6 months. He was in such despair as a young boy that he got drunk every day. He would walk along the edge of the roof on the fourth floor, blindfolded, just sensing when it was time to turn and take another step.

He did that every day for months. He said, “I wanted to die so badly, I went out onto the highway, brought my pillow and lay down in the road to take a nap. A lot of big trucks went through there. As they were going over me, I wouldn't even wake up. One of them tooted his horn as he passed; I looked up, saw the truck, and went back to sleep. I just wanted to die.”

In our healing process, he had to forgive his lawyer who had said he was going to take legal action against the school. It came to nothing so he had to forgive the lawyer, and he had to forgive the Queen.

At the end of this healing, after three long hours of release, he smiled for the first time in the whole workshop. He had only had two teeth, which we didn't know until he smiled. But with that toothless smile, he had reached at least the first, most important layer of forgiveness, which is releasing judgment.

What we learned from him is this: You cannot judge another human being. If you were completely whole, you would just bless them. You would bless them. You would say, “Oh poor baby, you need help.”

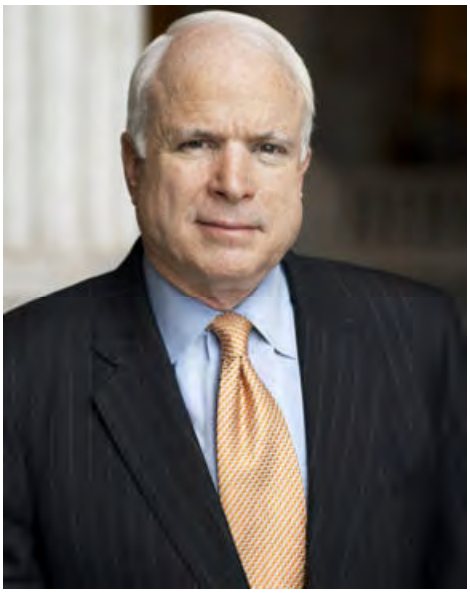
But if there is some kind of guilt inside, you say they deserve punishment, and so you judge, and attack. Judgment only arise because somehow inside you there is guilt. When you judge, your mind shuts down. The flow stops -- inspiration is closed off.

There is a lust-filled gorilla and he's chasing you. You are running through all the rooms in your house and the lust-filled gorilla is chasing you. You get into a room and you slam the door and lock it -- until the big hairy hand comes down onto your shoulders.

When you judge someone, you've locked yourself in a room with that gorilla.

When you judge, you get to be right about how you've perceived things – and that’s what needs healing. All healing begins with perception. People who have gone through layer after layer of of healing perception come back and say, “It's never too late to have a happy childhood.”

McCain's Radical Pal
Joe Klein, from a blog on TIME.com
October 18, 2008



One of the ways I got to know John McCain a decade or so ago was through a mutual friend—a fellow by the name of David Ifshin. I knew David through Democratic Party politics. He was a stalwart moderate, a member of the Democratic Leadership Council and an occasional adviser to Bill Clinton. Our wives were, and are, close friends. But McCain's relationship with David was far more interesting.

Ifshin, you see, had been a vehement anti-Vietnam radical. He had even gone to Hanoi at the height at the war and given a speech denouncing the American pilots dropping bombs on North Vietnamese civilians as "war criminals." The speech was broadcast repeatedly in the Hanoi Hilton, where McCain was being held captive. More than a few people thought Ifshin was guilty of treason.After McCain was tortured and broken by the North Vietnamese and signed a confession of "criminality," he was so ashamed that he attempted suicide—and later made a vow that he wouldn't question the decisions or statements made by anybody else about the war.

And so, when he arrived in the U.S. after his released and was asked about the antiwar protesters by Life magazine, he refused to condemn them. He kept to this policy, more or less, until 1984 when, as an ambitious young politician, he was asked by the Reagan campaign to deliver a speech slamming one of Walter Mondale's top advisors—his campaign counsel, David Ifshin—for going to Hanoi, and giving aid and comfort to the enemy during wartime.

McCain gave the speech but, he later told me, felt great remorse about it. "I didn't know the guy. I'd never met him," he told me.McCain and Ifshin met the following year at the annual AIPAC convention in Washington—and there is some disagreement what happened next: Both men later told me that the other initiated the conversation by apologizing. "McCain said, 'I'm sorry I gave that speech. I didn't even know you,'" Ifshin told me. "And I said to him, 'You're apologizing to

me?' I've been wanting to apologize to you for years. I feel so terrible about that speech I gave in Hanoi."

The two became fast friends. They did charitable work together in Vietnam and elsewhere. When Bill Clinton went to the Vietnam Memorial for Memorial Day 1993, both Ifshin and McCain were there, too. And when McCain saw a sign in the crowd—"Clinton: Tell Us About Ifshin"—McCain went to the floor of the Senate the next day and said, "Let me tell you about David Ifshin…David is a friend of mine."

And when David was diagnosed with cancer, John McCain was there for him. And when David died, McCain gave one of the eulogies at his funeral. His voice broke when he said, "David taught me a lot about the meaning of courage."

I've told this story many times, especially to veterans groups, because it says so much about the importance of forgiveness, of reconciliation...

From http://swampland.blogs.time.com/2008/10/18/mccains_radical_pal/

Bryan Yamashita, Honolulu
A Hand on my Back

Police officers swarmed the Ewa Town Center in February, 2009 following reports that a woman had been stabbed. She was identified as Asa Yamashita, a teacher at Waianae High School.

She was taken to Hawai'i Medical Center West in critical condition and passed away a short time later.

Her husband, Bryan Yamashita, recalled, "A police officer comes, a young guy. He's struggling. He says that line from the movies, you know – 'First, sir, you need to sit down.'

‘I really hate to tell you this sir, but your wife has died.’

“I said, ‘What?’

‘I'm really sorry, sir, but your wife is dead.’

"That's impossible."

‘Somebody attacked her. But we got him, he's in the cell block now.’

"I don't care, you just told me my wife is dead!"

“I couldn't believe it. After a while I said, I got to go -- you know, I look at my watch, it's Friday afternoon and it's 3:00 and traffic is backing up. Two girls are waiting for me at school, so I stagger out to the parking lot.

“I felt like throwing up. Here I am on my way to pick up my oldest daughter. What am I going to say? What am I going to tell her? How am I going to tell her? And the last question is, when am I going to tell her?

“I had all these questions I couldn't answer. I just walk up and sign her out and try to speak to the director if I can, tell her we're not going to be around for a while.

“So my daughter looks at me and she says, ‘Daddy, what's wrong?’

“And I say, ‘I can't tell you now. Something really bad happened.’ And she says, ‘Why, did mommy die?’ And I looked down at her, and I said, ‘I always want to be honest with you, kid.

“And I said, ‘Yeah, Mom died today.’

“So, the next morning, I wake up and I feel very alone. My question to God was, ‘How am I going to take care of the girls?’ I asked God, ‘How can I do it? I cannot do it. How can I take care of them myself?

“And you know, even though I said this alone, out loud in the kitchen -- I felt a hand on my back and heard a voice saying, ‘You can.’

“Every time I said, ‘I cannot,’ I heard this voice that said, ‘You can.’

“When it really comes down it, you can only rely on God. I made the right choice, and it's proven to be the right choice, every moment that I've lived since that tragedy.

“Something good needs to come out of this for me and for the girls. Sorry, it's selfish. We made a huge sacrifice. It's got to mean more than the death of this woman on a Friday afternoon. It's got to.”

Shu – Forgiveness
“soft as the speaking heart”

The Hawai’i Forgiveness Project has used this symbol for several years, and people ask us about its origins.

The Chinese character Shu is comprised of three symbols, which interact to produce subtle meanings.

The upper part of the character is Ru, meaning "like, as or same."

If you break this down, the left part is Nui, meaning "woman," representing "softness."

The right part is Kou, which commonly means a squire or servant; its root meaning is "mouth" or "speak."

The bottom part of the character is Xin, meaning "heart."

If you translate the whole character Shu into English directly, the common Chinese meaning today is "forgive from the heart."

Deeper meanings, which might be discovered in poetry and sacred literature, are "like a woman who speaks from the heart," or "soft as the speaking heart."

translation and commentary by Xiao Fang Zhou, Beijing and Hawai'i; from the Hawai'i Forgiveness Project, http://www.hawaiiforgivenessproject.org

The Congressman and the KKK
Forgiveness Live on CNN, February, 2009

(CNN Reporter, Don Lemon)

Almost fifty years ago, Elwin Wilson and his friends attacked a young black man at a bus station in South Carolina.

That young black man went on to become Congressman John Lewis; he'd been travelling America championing civil rights. The man who attacked him, Elwin Wilson, has been carrying around an apology in his heart and has been waiting for an opportunity to get it off his chest.

And finally, he did.

Representative John Lewis and Elwin Wilson, a former KKK member, had a brutally honest conversation about their first meeting, and now Lewis says all is forgiven.

Mr. Wilson, what would you like to say to the Congressman?

(Elwin Wilson)
I've thought about him a lot since I found out what kind of man he was. I didn't think I'd ever see the day when I found out who I beat up at the bus station in Rock Hill.

(Don Lemon)
Mr. Lewis, what do you say him? You were beaten up pretty bad. Some folks even lost their lives because of men like Elwin.

(Congressman Lewis)
Mr. Wilson came to Washington to visit with me. He said he wanted to apologize, that he was sorry and I said, "I forgive you." I don't have any bitterness or hatred because of what we believe: that we should have the ability to forgive; that love is much stronger than hate. It was very moving and very touching for me, to hear him say I'm sorry for what I did. In almost fifty years he is the first person and only person who attacked me to say "I'm sorry."

(Don Lemon)
Mr. Wilson, I understand you've been getting some disturbing phone calls.

(Elwin Wilson)
I got a phone call from a boy at Rutgers College. He said "Is this Elwin Wilson?" I said: "You're right." He said "You are slummy black n__ dog." He kept on talking and he said "You were with the KKK, you took an oath and here you are going back on your word and against white people."

(Don Lemon)
You were outraged by that phone call and you said you had to call the police. Can you believe that in 2009 there's still that sort of hate in the world?

(Elwin Wilson)
Not as much as it used to be, I don't think.

(Congressman Lewis)
I'm sorry that someone would do something like that to you, Mr. Wilson, that

someone would call and use those words. It is sad. What you're doing is right, and it's very much in keeping with what we all believe in.

(Don Lemon)
Mr. Wilson, the people that are watching, what do you want them to know about why you apologized, and how we should be treating the topic of race right now in this country?

(Elwin Wilson)
I told the guy who called me, "One day I hope that you get the hatred out of yourself." He asked "Why did you change?" I said, "Like my daddy always told me -- a fool never changes his mind. A smart man changes his mind."

That's what I've done and I'm not ashamed of it. I'm not trying to be Martin Luther King or something like that. I never thought I could apologize to this many people. I feel like I'm apologizing to the world right now.

(Don Lemon)
Mr. Lewis, I'll give you the last word on this if you'd like to comment.

(Congressman Lewis)
I think this shows the power of grace and love. It is very much in keeping with the philosophy and discipline of non-violence: to have the capacity to say, "I'm sorry, forgive me." The person who received the attack would say that you're forgiven, for hate is heavy a burden to bear. Maybe Mr. Wilson will inspire others to come forth.

Transcribed and edited from the original CNN interview, video at
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTKEokcd8M4
http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0902/08/sm.01.html

The Bowl of Light
Kupuna Kawohiokalani
(Aunty Betty Jenkins; Waimea Valley, O'ahu)

Today I'm going to re-tell the story of the Bowl of Perfect Light.

Your bowl is made from your left hand, with your right hand on top, forming a cup.

Look into your bowl of light, and tip it around a bit. Look closely. Don't you see light -- radiant light? It's kukui malamalama.

When we were children, we understood that through this bowl of perfect light we could know anything and everything.

We learned that we could fly with the birds. And we learned that we could slide down the rainbow. And when we did that, we could take each of the colors from the rainbow and make a lei, and it would be ours.

Or we could ride, and surf on the back of a honu (turtle). We knew that we could do all of these things, because of what we learned from that bowl of light.

Move your bowl a little bit so you can see -- it can do anything, and everything.

And yet we began to notice that the behavior of our people, our peers, our family, was one of disrespect.

And this took the beautiful light from the bow; that bothered us. We heard unkind words said to each other; behavior that was not becoming; we broke family traditions. That was disconcerting to us.

We looked in our bowl of light again, and the act of giving had changed.

We no longer gave unconditionally; we kept score: "I gave to you, you haven't given me back yet." The true act of giving was no more.

And then we found that all the things we had learned from our kupuna, from our ancestors, were no more. We were more interested in being competitive, jealous, and unkind to each other.

By that time, our bowl was not only heavy, but the light was almost gone. When that happens with a Hawaiian family, your na'au (life force) is disturbed. You're really unwell. We went to the doctor, and the doctor said, "You're fine, you're just stressed out." But we knew that something else was wrong.

So we journeyed to see our kupuna. The kupuna said, "I'm so glad you came. I've been waiting for you." And we said, "You knew we were going to come?" And kupuna said, "Oh yes, we knew you would come. What is the problem?"

We said, "We don't know. All we know is there is no light in our bowl any more. The bowl is so heavy, and we are not well. And kupuna said, "I know."

"What can you do?" we asked. And she/he said, in a very decided voice, "The answers lie within. Huli your bowl.

“That's right -- empty it out, give it away, throw it out. Huli your bowl."

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