

# Argumentative essay on writers such as gregory jones dietrich bonhoeffer simon wi...

[Life](#), [Friendship](#)



People from all cultures and all faiths advocate for forgiveness. However, there's the question of how much one should forgive. If an offense is so grievous or repeatedly committed then it can make one question if continuing to forgive won't cause further harm towards oneself. It's true that nobody's perfect and that even the people we love and who love us do things that hurt us, whether intentionally or unintentionally. However, although I believe that we should always find it in our hearts to forgive, I believe that we shouldn't bestow the same level of trust on the offending person again, especially if the offense is grievous or constantly repeated. People who have been through trying times claim that forgiveness brings healing (Kempton). Even medical research shows that forgiveness leads to reduced risk of substance and alcohol abuse, fewer symptoms for depression, lower blood pressure, better psychological and spiritual well-being, and healthier relationships (Mayo Clinic Staff). The Holy Bible states, "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him" (The King James Version, Luke 17: 3-4). However, there's no research or text that advocates for us to continue exposing ourselves to the harm imposed on us by the people who offend us. Tutu (Scheller) call for forgiveness in the face of real evil. Reinhold Niebuhr writes, "There is no deeper pathos in the spiritual life of man than the cruelty of righteous people. If any one idea dominates the teachings of Jesus, it is his opposition to the self-righteousness of the righteous" (qtd. in Scheller).

## **According to the Holy Bible, “ And if he trespass against thee seven times in a**

day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (The King James Version, Luke 17: 4). The Bible further says, “ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (The King James Version, Matthew 5: 44).

However, as Yale theologian Miroslav Volf writes, " Forgiveness [. . .] places us on a boundary between enmity and friendship, between exclusion and embrace. It tears down the wall of hostility that wrongdoing erects, but it doesn't take us into the territory of friendship" (qtd. in Scheller). This is supported by Scheller who writes, " Who am I to say I won't forgive, when I know forgiveness does not mean to condone their actions or to absolve them —since God alone can absolve?" As such, I think that it would be enough for us to forgive people in our hearts and to no longer hold any ill feelings against them. I think that forgiving means freeing ourselves of all the negative feelings we have towards the person who has wronged us. This will also be liberating for us because forgiving the other person will enable us to move on with our lives without having all those anger and hatred weighing us down.

However, I think that it's important for us to learn to put things in perspective and to put the other person in their right place so-to-speak. As an old English saying states, " Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me" (qtd. in Brieg) Stated in another way by an Italian proverb, it

says, “ When a man deceives me once, [. . .] it is his fault; when twice, it is mine” (qtd. in Brieg). This means that we should be smart enough to prevent people from hurting us repeatedly. After all, they can only have power over us if we give them that power. As such, we really can’t blame them or anyone else if we allow them to keep doing us wrong.

Of course, it also depends on the grievousness of the fault. If the fault made against us is trivial then we can and should forgive without letting the relationship be ruined. However, if the offense keeps recurring and is hurting us so much that it’s causing us harm mentally, physically or spiritually then I think it’s only right that we distance and protect ourselves from those people. There are times when we should put our own good before the good of others as this will enable us to be more useful and helpful to more people. For example, in the case of the battered wife, if she keeps forgiving her abusive husband and refuses to leave then she’s putting her life in danger. In the end, this may be harmful not only for her but for her children as well because they might end up losing their mother or they might end up having a mother who’s so beaten that she can’t take care of them anyway.

Similarly, in the short story “ Forgiveness” by Rebecca Brown, the main character allowed her lover to take her arm (Brown 1), and although she was able to go on with life despite the tragedy, her life would have definitely been better and easier if she had kept her arm. Although she became a stronger person because of her predicament, I think that she would have been able to do more good for other people if she had the use of both of her arms and if she was able to spend her time on other things instead of on conducting a futile search for her arm.

We often hear the saying, “Forgive and forget” when we are asked to reconcile with someone. I believe it’s possible for us to forgive, but how can we ever forget? Unless we suddenly incur amnesia or have some other cognitive problem then we won’t likely be able to forget the painful and hurtful things done against us. In this case, I think that it would be much better for us to forgive the other person and then stay away rather than to forgive the other person and continue to relive the hurt and pain if we continue to stay. I think that healing and forgiveness will be more difficult to come if we are constantly reminded of the bad things that happened to us. As the main character in “Forgiveness” thought, forgiveness would just be a myth if she and her lover continued to stay together (Brown 6). In contrast, by staying apart, both of the persons involved in the situation can heal faster and can more easily move on with their lives. With that, our aim then should not be to forgive and forget but – as one of my teachers profoundly said -- to forgive and remember without bitterness.

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