

# The virtue of forgiveness and understanding in friendship

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



The thought of vulnerability can be frightening especially when an individual gains power of one's emotions. It is human nature to want to protect oneself from others. But the only way to truly protect oneself is through forgiveness. In the movie *Silver Linings Playbook*, Pat Solitano, a former high school teacher with undiagnosed bipolar disorder creates an unlikely friendship with widowed Tiffany Maxwell to reconcile with his ex-wife Nikki. Through his friendship with Tiffany, Pat became capable of forgiving himself and others around him.

Tiffany's relationship with Pat plays a significant role on his road to forgiveness. Although Pat and Tiffany's friendship was unintentional, it was a positive contributor for Pat to realize his faults. While running on his usual route, Pat is ambushed by Tiffany bombarding him with personal questions about his recent outbreak with his father and his ex-wife. Pat is very defensive but pities her since he believes she is a crazy, mouthy and promiscuous widow. Tiffany admits to Pat that although those accusations may be somewhat true she still likes all those parts of herself because she has learned to forgive herself. Vanier says " To be truly liberated, we have to make an effort to communicate with those we dislike, to try to understand and accept them as they are, and to experience our mutual humanity" (Vanier, 142). Although Pat is still unsure about his friendship with Tiffany through this interaction, he starts to understand her differently and begins to make the connection to their own likeness.

Through this communication, Pat begins to make an effort to try to understand Tiffany better so that he is able to better himself to get back with

Nikki. As well as try to accept his responsibility for actions he made in the past. While practicing for their dance performance, Pat learns more about Tiffany's past and why she is such a guarded and hostile person. Vanier says " Hurt can be so painful that some victims create thick walls to protect themselves from more pain" (Vanier, 143). Tiffany used sex as a way to cope with her pain in order to protect herself from getting hurt whilst Pat uses denial to deal with his problems. Through this, it shows Pat that to start forgiving yourself like Tiffany you have to start accepting who you are and take responsibility for all of your actions past, present and future. Finally at the dance performance with Tiffany, Pat comes to the realization that he needs to forgive himself to become liberated and move on with his life. After forgiving Nikki and coming to terms that his marriage is over, Pat expresses to Tiffany that he knows that she was the colubrit of the infamous Nikki letter.

From this letter Pat was able to keep motivated with his commitment to help Tiffany and to better himself ultimately making him free from his past faults and able to move forward with Tiffany. " Forgiveness is to begin to love and accept ourselves, trying to understand and appreciate all that is valuable in us all" (Vanier, 162) which is exactly what Pat did with the help of Tiffany. With the understanding of oneself one is able to prevail over all the challenges and difficulties that comes with being human. As humans we are scared to open up and feel rejection. One learns that it is easier to blame others for one's problems. It is easy to mad with people, especially yourself but the challenging part is finding the courage and love within you to forgive,

and open yourself up again for the chance to get hurt again even if the person that may hurt you the most is oneself.