

Understanding Forgiveness

By Nova Elders, Adult and Adolescent Therapist Intern



There are very few words that hold as much power as the forgiveness. "Then Peter came to Him and said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times? Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times," but up to seventy times seven" (Matt 18: 21-22, NKJV). Now before you stop reading, thinking this is becoming a math lesson, stay with me. Seventy times seven is not a math problem but rather a number representing infinity, which is the number of times that God forgives us.

Forgiveness is a powerful medicine that can heal deep emotional wounds better than anything else. Unfortunately for many people, the term forgiveness has been used carelessly by well-

meaning Christian friends, family members, therapists, and even pastors. People who have been abused, neglected, and mistreated, who speak their anger and pain often hear the response, "you need to forgive him/her/them." Such a reaction is rarely helpful and frequently leaves the person feeling worse.

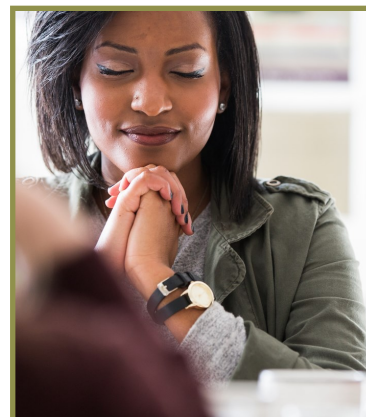
So what exactly is forgiveness? Forgiveness is giving up to God your right to revenge, which can be hard to do when you have been hurt, abused, or mistreated. The desire to seek revenge and hurt the person(s) back can be powerful. Forgiveness is a personal decision, and you are not required to tell the offending person that you forgive them. Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling.

Forgiveness is a process, not a point; forgiveness is often a decision we need to make over and over again.

I think even more importantly, we need to talk about what forgiveness is not. Forgiveness is not condoning the behavior of the offending person. You forgiving someone doesn't mean what they did is suddenly okay. Forgiveness doesn't always mean the restoration of the relationship. The decision to end a relationship can be essential for survivors of abuse where the abuser refused to admit she/he did anything wrong. The person may never have apologized for his/her behavior, or he/she refused to change his/her behavior. Forgiveness does not involve putting yourself in harm's way again. Please don't be frustrated with yourself if you find yourself still getting angry even after you thought you had forgiven the offending person.



Nova Elders, MAPC, MSW
Candidate meets with adults and adolescents in New Leaf's Crown Point and Wheatfield offices.



5 Helpful Tips on Forgiveness

Develop an understanding of what forgiveness is and what it is not.

Address your inner pain. The more hurt you have experienced, the more you will need to address it.

If you are struggling with forgiveness, resist the temptation to consider yourself a failure. Have patience with yourself. Forgiveness requires practice and determination.

Understand there is no timeline with forgiveness. You are not required to forgive in a day, a week, a month, or even a year.

Have at least one trusted person to share your genuine thoughts and feelings; this can be a friend, a family member, a therapist, or a pastor.



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“You Cannot Handle It Alone.”

By Corky DeBoer, Executive Director



"The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone." Exodus 18: 18

I imagine these words to Moses from his father-in-law Jethro must have stung at first. Coming to terms with our limitations can be difficult. This past year, in one way or another, each of us experienced times when our limitations were undeniable.

The need for a listening ear, support, and guidance has been greater than ever during this pandemic.

As Moses was challenged to avail himself of additional resources that could help meet critical needs, we too have been challenged. One of the ways we have leaned into this challenge is by providing telehealth services to our clients. Another important way we have attempted to meet the increased social, relational, emotional and spiritual needs of our community during the pandemic is by emphasizing the "resource" aspect of New Leaf Resources.

We created a special page to help individuals, families and even businesses seeking information about Covid-19 (newleafresources.org/covid19.cfm). One of the recent additions to that page is

the link to the "Pandemic Parenting" website, which is under our Mental Health Resources for Children and Families section. From here, parents can check out the "Best of Pandemic Parenting Webinar Recordings and Resources," which include snack break videos (1-3 minute snippets from webinars) for busy parents.

Another enhanced resource centers on our addiction ministry. New Leaf's original focus revolved around providing help, hope and healing for those impacted by addiction. During this year of pandemic, many have turned to alcohol or other substances as they attempted to deal with their limitations and real-life stressors. Those who struggle with substance abuse disorders have experienced a decreased level of social support and interaction, since in-person meetings for 12-step groups have largely been suspended. Because of that, we've enhanced a resource on our website that has served many over the years, our "Dealing with Addiction" section (newleafresources.org/addiction.cfm). We also added a link to the Alcohol Rehab Help website, which provides free resources and information to assist struggling individuals

and families get their lives back on track.

I'm grateful that, for more than 40 years, New Leaf's ministry has provided not only excellent counseling services, but also valuable resources to help guide and support those who may never have an opportunity to walk through our doors for a counseling session.

We continue to lean on God as well as your faithful support while we acknowledge that "The work is too heavy for us; we cannot handle it alone." Whether you have been a long-time supporter of New Leaf, or a newer member of our community, your gift is vital to sustaining our mission of bringing help, hope, and healing to so many! Because of your investment in what we do, we are able to help people who might not otherwise be able to receive the much-needed assistance we provide. Your financial commitment to our ministry and ongoing prayer support are what enable us to serve others as "New Leaf Resources."

In God's strength,

Corky DeBoer



It's Time to Celebrate!

Reserve Tuesday, June 22 for New Leaf's annual dinner at Illiana Christian High School.

More details on back of this newsletter!

Our Mission

New Leaf Resources promotes healthy relationships and personal growth through counseling, education, and consultation from a Christian perspective.

New Therapists of New Leaf



Becky Duncan, MS, LMHC-A, NCC comes to New Leaf as a Mental Health Counselor Associate. Becky works in New Leaf's Crown Point office, specializing in working with children and adolescents. Becky's areas of interest are relationship, family, and school issues, stress, anxiety, depression, self-esteem, and human sexuality.

Becky comes to New Leaf with a Bachelor of Arts in Education from Purdue University Calumet and a Master of Science in Education and Counseling from Purdue University Northwest. She is currently studying toward her Master of Arts in Art Therapy at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College.

Becky has experience working in elementary, middle school, and high school counseling as well as residential homes and private practice. She teams with clients in individual or family settings to give the best treatment possible. Becky excels at using expressive arts to assist in therapy saying, "I am passionate about helping people feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves in therapy. I use art to help clients express themselves in a way that they may not have ever been able to do before."



Nova Elders, MAPC, MSW Candidate, works in New Leaf's Crown Point and Wheatfield offices. She specializes in trauma/abuse recovery/PTSD, spiritual concerns, non-suicidal self-harm, addiction recovery, depression, anxiety/OCD, grief and loss, and life transitions.

Nova comes to New Leaf working toward a Master of Social Work from Indiana Wesleyan University and holds a Master of Arts in Professional Counseling from Olivet Nazarene University. Nova has over six years of experience as a professional counselor and is passionate about helping women who have suffered from the trauma of abuse, rape, or domestic violence. Nova also has experience working with teens and adults who struggle with mental illness, self-harm, addictions, and questions or difficulties with God and faith.

Nova strives to make all clients feel comfortable and accepted when they walk in the door and believes each client has unique strengths that they bring with them to therapy. She works to help clients identify their strengths and then work together to achieve client's individual goals.

If you'd like to schedule an appointment with Becky or Nova for yourself or your child, contact New Leaf's office today at (&08) 895-7310.

Heroes Work Here!

By LaVerne Jordan, Board member

For several months, as I have driven into the parking lot of my health care providers, I have witnessed signs stating "Heroes Work Here". I agree that all of those in the medical profession, other first responders, and those in service jobs deserve hero status. One group that is largely missing from this list of community heroes is those in the mental health profession.

Even under normal circumstances, mental health providers are prone to secondary traumatization which is a stress response commonly developed by those who work with clients who have been traumatized. It is probable that during the pandemic this phenomena has increased. Running parallel to that phenomena is that mental health providers have fewer resources to counteract this stress. That is especially true of human resources, as much counseling is currently occurring in some electronic mode.

So kudos to the New Leaf Resources therapists who have continued to provide excellent counseling using

"Telehealth," an online therapy modality. Most counselors enter the profession in order to be in that face-to-face close relationship that occurs between a client and his or her counselor, so for most counselors, this is not their preferred mode of interacting with clients.

I also want to extend kudos to New Leaf Resources for providing supervision to therapists. Norm LeClerq facilitates this service to assist therapists in gaining therapeutic insights and participation in a supportive community. These affirmations are so very important in a profession that is conducted in relative isolation.

New Leaf Resources Board president, Brian Smith is calling all Board members to find creative ways to provide ongoing affirmation, encouragement and prayer support for our therapists and staff. I want to also encourage each of you to not only support the organizational ministry but hold up the therapists and staff in your thoughts and prayers.



Mental Health
MATTERS

FAREWELL

New Leaf Resources offers a fond farewell to Alexis Crenshaw, Britney Jackson, and Krista Matthews.





You're invited!



**ILLIANA CHRISTIAN
HIGH SCHOOL**

Will you celebrate with us?

2020 was a difficult year for so many, but God used New Leaf to offer hope, help, and healing. We are excited to celebrate with you!

This year's event, held at Illiana Christian High School in Dyer, IN will include:

- Great music
- A delicious meal
- Testimonies of lives changed

Watch your mail for your personal invitation or RSVP today by emailing lisa@newleafresources.org



New Leaf Resources is...

A **professional mental health agency** which provides counseling and consultation services to individuals, families, couples, children, churches, schools and businesses.

A **ministry** which brings the best possible care to those we serve, striving to reflect God's grace and love to all who seek help.

A **community resource** offering educational services, prevention programs, training, support and coaching.

