

## DAY 17 | FORGIVENESS AS AN EMOTIONAL DETOX

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." — Ephesians 4:31–32 (KJV)

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." — Matthew 6:14 (KJV)

Forgiveness is perhaps the most counter-cultural, counter-intuitive command in the entire canon of Scripture. 'Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you' (Ephesians 4:32). The offender may not deserve it. The wound may still be raw. But forgiveness is not primarily for their benefit — it is for yours. Unforgiveness is the emotional toxin that harms the one who holds it most.

The amygdala, your brain's threat-detection centre, treats unresolved offences like ongoing dangers — even when the offender is absent. This keeps your nervous system in perpetual fight-or-flight mode: elevated cortisol, increased heart rate, suppressed immunity, disrupted sleep. Berry and Worthington (2001) found that unforgiveness directly stimulates cortisol production. Bitterness is not merely spiritual — it is physiologically toxic.

Dr. Caroline Leaf's research offers a remarkable neurological discovery: 'Forgiveness changes the brain. Research shows that forgiving someone increases the size of the brain's anterior superior temporal sulcus. The more you forgive, the more you are likely to forgive — the brain changes to accommodate a forgiveness mindset.' Forgiveness, practiced consistently, literally restructures the brain toward compassion.

Dr. Curt Thompson cautions that forgiveness must be real, not performative — the pain of the wound must be acknowledged before forgiveness can be genuine. True forgiveness does not minimise what was done; it hands it to God. It says: 'I will not let what you did to me continue to build neural architecture of bitterness in my brain. I choose freedom.' That is the power of the cross.



**38 DAYS TO DETOX  
NEGATIVE EMOTIONS**

## WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

"Forgiveness changes the brain. Research shows that forgiving someone increases the size of the brain's anterior superior temporal sulcus. The more you forgive, the more you are likely to forgive — the brain changes to accommodate a forgiveness mindset." — Dr. Caroline Leaf, Think, Learn, Succeed

"The body keeps the score: If the memory of trauma is encoded in our senses, in muscle tension, and in anxiety, then the body must also be involved in the healing process." — Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, The Body Keeps the Score

## PRAYER POINTS

1. Father, I bring every person who has wounded me before Your throne today. I choose, by an act of my will empowered by Your grace, to forgive them fully.
2. I release the debt. I hand the offence to You. I refuse to let bitterness continue to build toxic neural architecture in my brain and body.
3. Holy Spirit, heal the wound beneath my unforgiveness. Let the grief be real, let the pain be acknowledged — and then let it be released.
4. I declare that I walk free from every prison of unforgiveness. My emotional world is being detoxed of bitterness, and the peace of God is filling every vacated space, in Jesus Christ's name.

In the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen!

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— From the Desk of Chief Seer, Dr. Andre Thomas



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