



MINDFULNESS in SCHOOLS PROJECT CONFERENCE 2021

Including ALL
TEACHERS & LEARNERS

William Fley

The Mindfulness Network for People of Colour
and the forgiveness model of mindfulness

Mindfulness in Schools Project Forgiveness in Education A presentation by William Fley Mindfulness network for people of colour



Defining forgiveness

'Continuation of the labour of mourning' ('Forgiveness in Intimate relationships') by Shahrzad Siassi

'When unjustly hurt by another, we forgive when we overcome the resentment toward the offender, not by denying our right to the resentment, but instead by trying to offer the wrongdoer compassion, benevolence, and love; as we give these, we as forgivers realize that the offender does not necessarily have a right to such gifts'. (Enright- 'Forgiveness Therapy')

What forgiveness is not

- Pardoning
- Forgetting
- Saying it
- Reconciliation
- A quick fix
- Tolerating
- A sense of weakness or flaw
- Condoning
- Accepting an apology
- A cognitive process
- Moving on
- Self-centred
- Absolving
- Allowing time to fix it

Why do we need to forgive?

- ▶ They wouldn't let me play in their football team
- ▶ He pushed in front of me in the lunch queue
- ▶ She called me names
- ▶ He pushed me over in the playground
- ▶ She didn't invite me to her birthday party
- ▶ The teacher picked on me in class

How do we respond to conflict, uncertainty and vulnerability ?

First Impressions- The initial response is an impulsive need to retaliate, defend and disconnect.

Establishing power- by disempowering others> It feels good, sets clear boundaries and perhaps prevents future offences

Reality check - But it comes at a price – poor quality friendships, peer rejection and ‘ social withdrawal, psychological tension between friends, heavy burden of anger and vengeance

But there is an alternative

Training in forgiveness and mindfulness involves :

- ▶ **Social awareness** - Understanding protected characteristics
- ▶ **Self-management** - a buffer against conflict, interpersonal hurt
- ▶ **Relationship skills** - increased self-esteem
- ▶ **Responsible decision making** - preventing reciprocal conflict
- ▶ **Empathy growth** - reducing social anxiety

Children may learn forgiveness within the family

- ▶ Parents who are more forgiving **to** their children receive more forgiveness **from** their children
- ▶ Children learn forgiveness behaviour modelled by their parents
- ▶ Ways that parents can help include around emotional regulation, and discuss how often people do hurtful things by accident
- ▶ Template for current interpersonal relationships
- ▶ Intersectionality, homosexuality & race
- ▶ Tired of hiding & endless search
- ▶ A therapist's blind spots

What can schools do? (1)

Within the school community:

- ▶ Create a caring school community
- ▶ Lead by example
- ▶ Create a forgiving climate
- ▶ Be seen to treat staff and colleagues fairly

What can schools do? (2)

Within the classroom:

- ▶ Explain and discuss the concept of forgiveness – what it is and what it is not
- ▶ Ask the class to identify occasions when they were offended, how they responded and how that left them feeling
- ▶ Explain the benefits of forgiveness
- ▶ Take some of the pupils' specific examples and explore how they could have been handled through forgiveness
- ▶ Encourage the class to be creative, for example a forgiveness poster or a newsletter
- ▶ Get the class to think about who they would like to be more forgiving towards. Put this on a handprint and create a circle of forgiveness

Thank you.

(This presentation draws on research by Reine C van der Wal et al ('Causes and consequences of Children's forgiveness'), and an article in Greater Good Magazine by Margaret Abdullah in October 2018 – 'How to help kids consider forgiveness').

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www.mnpsc.co.uk



We are a secular organisation with the mission to make mindfulness accessible to People of Colour, who are underrepresented in the industry, both as practitioners and end-users.

We are sensitive to our members' sense of history and need for belonging under the broad term 'POC'.

This network has been established as a showcase for mindfulness teachers and those who want to learn, share and develop mindfulness for POC and its future.

Our mission includes:

- Establishing networks and training routes for POC within organisations which provide mindful based services.
- Promoting cultural wisdom-learning and shaping inclusivity within shared spaces for 'POC'.
- Sharing learning practices and methods which enhances our sense of shared humanity and connection.