

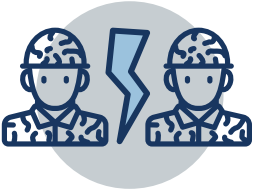


SELF-HELP EXERCISE: THE ANTIDOTE TO BETRAYAL

INTRODUCTION

The ultimate antidote to betrayal is forgiveness. If you find ways to forgive those who violated your trust, you will lose your anger and bitterness and not be burdened by the scars of betrayal. But, this is easier said than done; it is really hard for us to forgive people who have betrayed us.

Short of total forgiveness, the challenge is to accept and understand that:



- Betrayal can happen
- Good people can screw up
- People can earn trust and be trustworthy

The dictionary lists these words as being the opposite of betrayal: faithfulness, loyalty, protection, and support. If your experiences have caused you to expect that others will let you down and should not be trusted, these key words may offer a path away from the dark place of betrayal.

The goal of this exercise is to get you thinking about what may be missing in your life and what needs to happen to keep your life moving forward.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Below are some of the key areas of your life that can be damaged by betrayal. Think about your betrayal experience and how it has affected your feelings about yourself and others. Then, keeping in mind your personal goals, plans, and aspirations, think about actions you can take to recover and rebuild from the damage the betrayal has caused.

Faithfulness

Has the betrayal impacted your faith in others? Is it difficult for you to depend on others?

Yes, this is how the betrayal has affected my ability to depend upon and have faith in others:

Can you try depending on others or being dependable yourself and see what happens? Who are some people who might deserve your faith? What can you try to do to test their dependability? What things can you do to build the faith that others have in you?



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Yes, this is what I could try to regain my faith in others:

Loyalty

Has the betrayal impacted your sense of loyalty? Has loyalty lost meaning to you?

Yes, this is how the betrayal has affected my sense of loyalty:

Can you try being loyal to one person? Can you try being loyal to others in some ways? What might happen?

Yes, this is what I could try to do to regain loyalty:

Protection

Has the betrayal impacted your ability to feel protected? Does it feel dangerous to let your guard down and trust that others will look out for you?

Yes, this is how the betrayal has affected my ability to feel protected:

Do you protect anyone? Do you feel in any way protected by others? Would you be willing to take the risk of allowing yourself to be protected by someone? Do you feel protective of yourself?

Yes, this is what I could try to do to regain my ability to feel and provide protection:

Support

Has the betrayal impacted your ability to feel support from others? Is it difficult to accept the care and support of others?



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Yes, this is how the betrayal has affected my ability to feel support from others:

Can you try feeling supported and cared for by others? Do you provide support and care for others?
Would you be willing to try?

Yes, this is what I could try to do to regain my ability to feel and provide support:

Forgiveness

*Was the betrayal so unforgivable that you are still hurting because of what happened?
Does it feel impossible to accept what happened?*

Yes, this is why the betrayal has been hard to forgive:

*Can you try to forgive what happened? Would forgiveness help you to move on and make a good life for yourself?
Can you forgive the unforgivable?*

Yes, this is what I could try to do to forgive what happened:

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE



Did you stop and think about what kind of a person you want to be moving forward and what work needs to be done so that you can heal and recover?

Working toward forgiveness is one of the best things you can do to stop the betrayal from continuing to hurt you. This will take time. It would be wise to revisit this exercise after some time has passed so that you can remind yourself of the actions you agreed to try and to check in on your progress. If you work to forgive, and take actions to rebuild faith, loyalty, support, and protection, you can build a life for yourself that is more balanced: a world where good can often happen, where many people can be trusted, and where you can benefit from the support and care of others.



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