



Project Forgive

ProjectForgive.com

THE PROJECT FORGIVE FOUNDATION

The Project Forgive Foundation is a 501c3, non-partisan, non-religious free global resource, advancing forgiveness education.

BACKGROUND

Project Forgive Founder, Dr. Shawne Duperon, is a communication scholar and public speaker. Her research explores the innovative use of good gossip to make a difference and cause engagement. In 2014, an unprecedented response to her case study, Project Forgive, inspired this Six-Time EMMY® winner to produce an educational documentary (slated to air in 2016), and to create a non-religious, non-partisan, non-profit. The Project Forgive Foundation's mission is to provide educational resources, tools and trainings that foster the skill of forgiveness in two specific areas: addressing the needs of our future leaders in high-schools and universities by advancing personal and professional leadership development. This development encompasses compassion and forgiveness within the school system, the home and in our future workplaces; and advancing educational understanding of the connections between forgiveness and health. Research consistently shows that the ability to forgive is correlated with lowering the risk of heart attack, reducing pain, blood pressure, anxiety, depression and stress, among other health risks.



CURRENT IMPACT

Project Forgive is currently reaching more than 120 million people per month in social media. The foundation has garnered an endorsement from Archbishop Desmond Tutu and a 2016 Nobel Peace Prize Nomination for its innovative approach to forgiveness education. Our popular Facebook Live Broadcasts welcome tens of thousands of weekly participants, validating the need for this important educational resource.

THE NEED:

Students

Research indicates high school and university students prefer to collaborate, want more autonomy and care more about doing work they “believe in” and having a purpose. They want professional development and promotions early and often. They want meaningful input and impact from the start. This population of future leaders wants to lead, learn and grow within a personalized career development path at every stage.

While students are well prepared in their own eyes, they are often not prepared for the requirements of the institutions who are hiring them upon graduation. There is a gap in their perception of skill levels, particularly in fundamental communication.

Revised and totally new concepts of leadership are critical. Forgiveness, for example, is a bold leadership skill. When fostered in educational settings, students cultivate greater leadership skills, creativity, and productivity. In our forgiveness model, mistakes aren’t met with contempt, fear or harsh judgment, but rather with a solution-focused mentality of compassion, forgiveness, dignity and respect. And quite frankly, who wouldn’t want a world infused with heroic, loving and compassionate leaders, ready to find solutions to the obstacles we all face?

Health

Research shows there is an insurmountable physical, emotional, and financial toll that a lack of forgiveness takes and that people who forgive, are happier and healthier than those who do not. Holding on to grudges can harm your health by acting as a chronic stressor. When you struggle with forgiveness, you get a burst of the stress hormone cortisol every time you think about the offending event. Ruminating about the harm that’s been caused can raise your blood pressure and put a strain on your heart. Over the long-term, this can make you more vulnerable to disease and take attention away from maintaining your health.

CURRENT OBJECTIVES

Students

There is a huge need for outreach and education focused on forgiveness as a leadership skill in the educational system. Teachers and students are frustrated and disengaged by ineffective communication with counselors, peers and authority figures. Students also lack awareness and development for those higher levels of complex thinking skills that encompass integrity, collaboration, compassion and forgiveness within the educational system.

Our current focus is entering a Pittsburgh public educational system and providing communication leadership training to guidance counselors within that system to impact the students they serve. The project is both experiential and research based.

The counselors will participate in two advanced trainings: the first training is to further their understanding as communications leaders; the second is to train them to impart those learnings to their students in a “train the trainer” experiential approach. An online training will also be created for the students to cement those learnings in a digital experience, further securing leadership skills such as integrity, collaboration, compassion, diversity and forgiveness at school and in their future career paths.

Over a three-month period both guidance counselors and students will participate in the training with the goal of improving their current leadership and critical thinking skills in an innovative and mutually beneficial way.

Currently there are 42 high schools in Pittsburgh. Since the capacity for participation is unlimited, our outreach to schools will work to create as many partner schools as possible to benefit from these leading-edge experiential trainings.

To measure success, a series of surveys will be administered both prior to the workshops and upon completion. The data obtained will allow the facilitator to measure success and tweak the curriculum to adhere to a rapidly changing digital and global environment as we move on to other school systems.

Health

Forgiveness research is a relatively new and exciting field that, along with other mind-body research, is encouraging a fundamental shift away from treatment of disease to focusing on the positive aspects of human nature as a basis for healing.

To address this need, Project Forgive is advancing the tools and resources section at its website. These improvements include upgrading the current health information to provide more video and blog updates addressing health concerns linked to a lack of forgiveness, such as heart health, stroke and cancer.

Our team is also implementing an online forgiveness challenge that dispels commonly held myths surrounding forgiveness and actionable steps to relieve painful emotions surrounding an inability to forgive. Other resources to be uploaded include a digitally downloadable audio program that focuses on those who feel “stuck” in anger or bitterness and a parenting guide and ebook that fosters peaceful parenting. This tool for parents models the skill of forgiveness during problem solving. Currently, the website receives thousands of requests each month for new material.

**Thank you for your interest in the Project Forgive Foundation,
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