

Self Forgiveness Emotional Layers Letter

Our feelings tend to come in layers. Anger is the protective emotion to deal with an underlying hurt, for example. Often we need to express the painful emotions and get them moving before we find the warmer feelings underneath.

We're going to apply this to your relationship with yourself. The guilt-ridden, ashamed self is going to address the "bad" self that did this unforgivable thing.

On separate sheets of paper, start writing your honest thoughts and feelings about yourself, following the prompts below to get you started and expressing yourself freely. Address yourself as "you" or use your own name. Don't try to be nice. Don't try to be reasonable. Don't think about it. Don't analyze and explain. Just let it all out, all your shame and anger and guilt about yourself. Think of a child just saying

everything they think so innocently and honestly.

It does not have to make sense; it can contradict itself. That's okay; feelings are messy and illogical.

For example: "I hate you for messing up my life!" "I resent you for hurting the people I care about most." "I'm afraid I will never be able to fix what you did."

No one has to read this—this is for you to get in touch with the full range of mixed feelings you have about yourself, and work to the more tender, balanced and compassionate feelings.

Give yourself time to work with each section. And you can go back in fill in earlier sections if you find those feelings coming up.

Keep going until you discover the love and appreciation for yourself. Don't stop until then!

1. Blame & Guilt

- I am so ashamed of you for—
- I feel so guilty that you—
- I hate you for—
- I resent it that you—
- I'm tired of you—
- I'm mad at you because—

2. Hurt & Sadness

- It hurts me that—
- I felt sad when—
- I am disappointed that—
- This reminds of past pain, when you—
- Because of you, I lost—

3. Fear & Insecurity

- I'm afraid that you—
- I get scared when—
- I am worried that you—

4. Regret

- I'm sorry for you because—
- You may not be to blame for—
- My accusations against you aren't right because—
- I believe you didn't mean to—

5. Requests & Intentions

- I want you to—
- I hope that you—
- I need—
- Let's try—

7. Appreciation & Forgiveness

- I appreciate you for—
- Now I understand about—
- I like you for—
- I forgive you for—
- (God loves you for—)

Adapted from "The Emotional Map" by Barbara DeAngelis, Ph.D., and "The Letter Technique," by John Gray, Ph.D.