

WHY FORGIVE?

I ONCE READ A DEFINITION OF FORGIVENESS THAT SAID: "FORGIVENESS; TO MAKE IT AS IF THE WRONG HAD NEVER HAPPENED."

THAT SOUNDS ABOUT LIKE GOD'S DEFINITION OF FORGIVENESS.

Picture a field of pure white snow,

and smack dab in the middle of that field, a pool of blood.

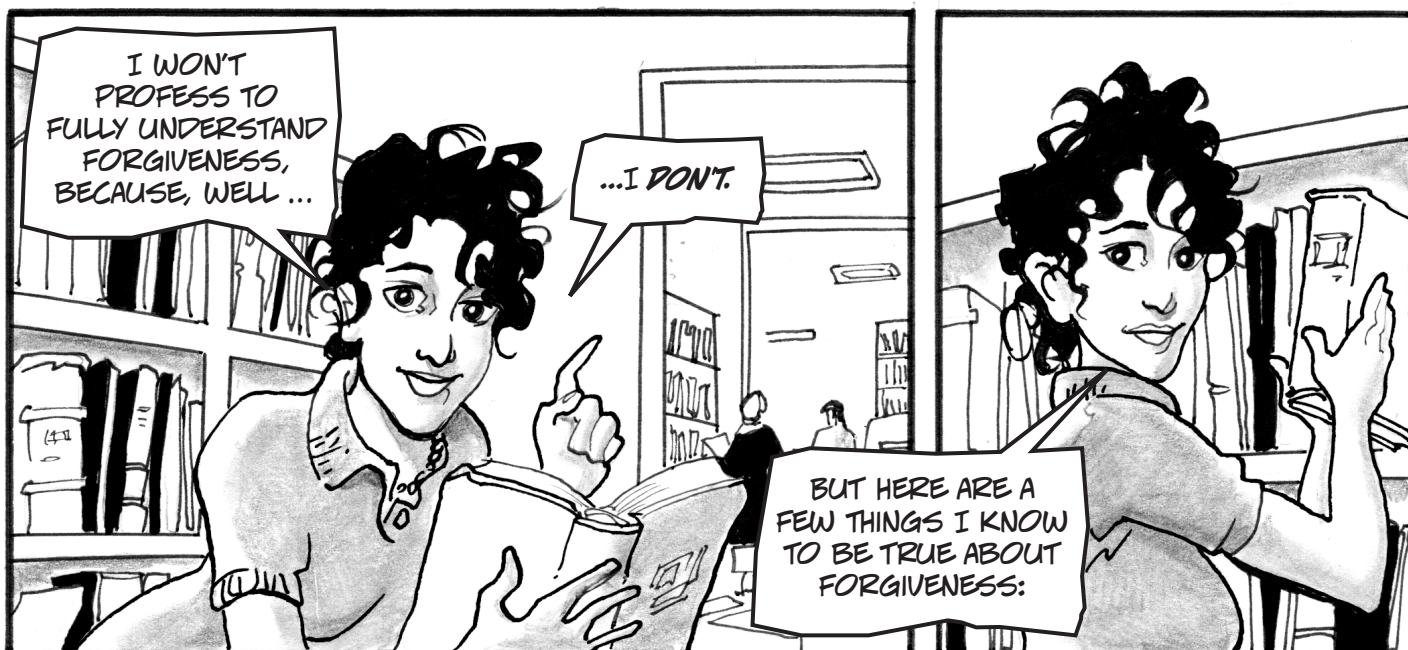
Gruesome, I know. It's also very noticeable. The red against the white is pretty hard to miss.

Along comes a fresh snowfall, and all that blood is covered up, just as if it were never there.

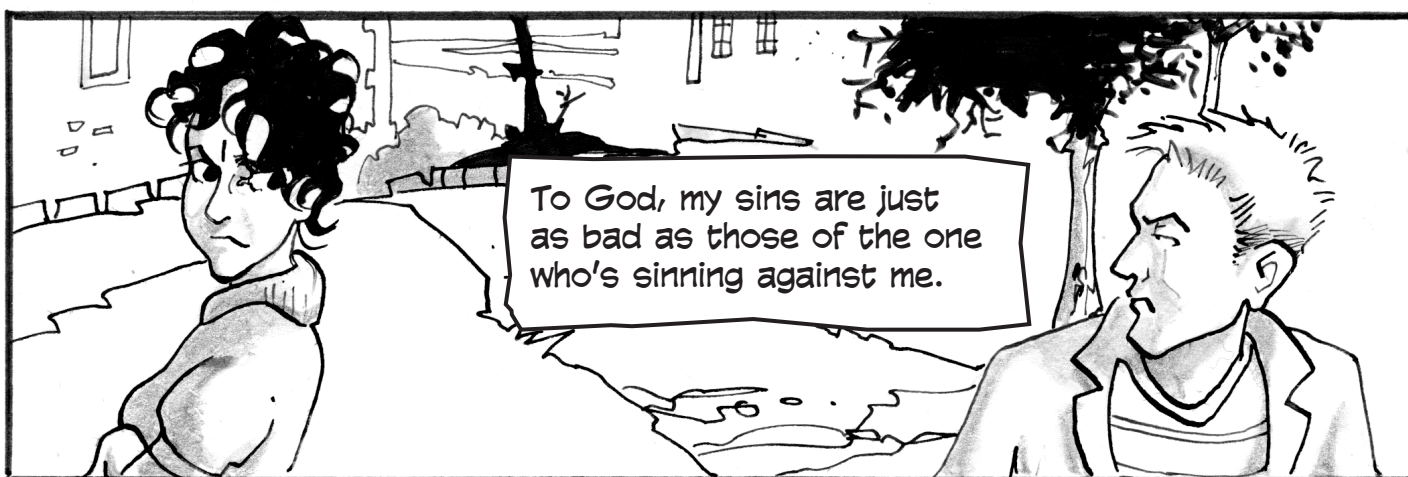
That is how God forgives; He makes it as if the wrong had never happened.¹

COME NOW, AND LET US REASON TOGETHER...

THOUGH YOUR SINS ARE LIKE SCARLET, THEY SHALL BE AS WHITE AS SNOW; THOUGH THEY ARE RED LIKE CRIMSON, THEY SHALL BE AS WOOL.¹



FORGIVENESS PUTS YOUR HEART RIGHT WITH GOD.



In order to experience God's forgiveness; *we* need to forgive others.

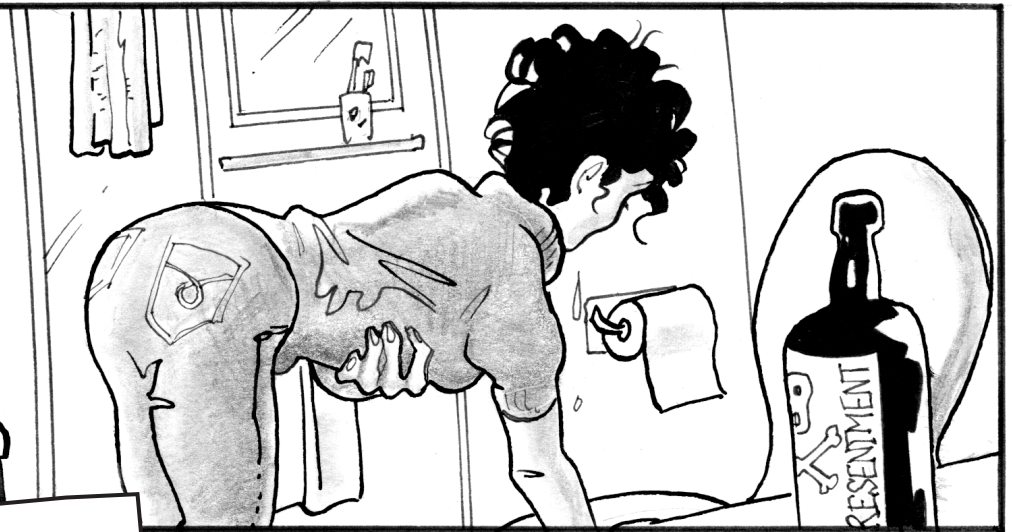
FORGIVENESS HEALS YOU.

Forgiving others is often the first step in allowing yourself to begin healing from whatever it is that hurt you.

There is a proverb that says "holding on to resentment is like taking poison and expecting the other person to suffer."



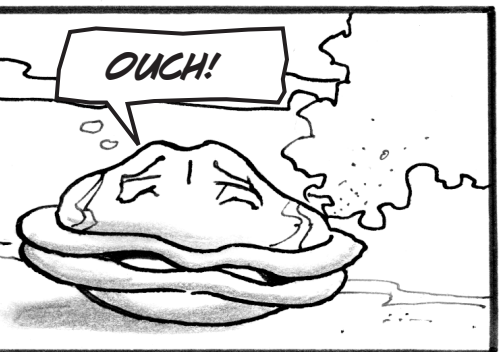
Regardless of the other person's fault, or how much justice they deserve, resentment hurts you more than it hurts them.



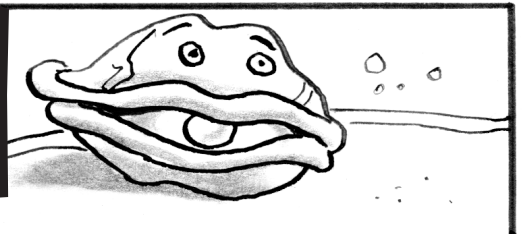
I'VE FOUND THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE OYSTER HELPS ME TO VISUALIZE HOW I CAN AT LEAST BEGIN THE HEALING AND FORGIVENESS PROCESS.

WHEN A GRAIN OF SAND GETS STUCK INSIDE AN OYSTER'S SHELL, IT DOESN'T GET TURNED INTO A PEARL OVERNIGHT.

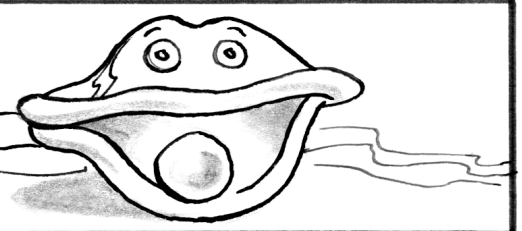
OUCH!



IN FACT, IT TAKES AT LEAST A FEW YEARS TO MAKE A PEARL.



THE REALLY BIG AND VALUABLE ONES TAKE UP TO 20 YEARS TO FORM.



The oyster starts covering that grain of sand layer by layer, and eventually it's no longer the pokey little thing that irritated and disturbed it.

THAT FISH
THAT KICKED
SAND AT
ME...

WHAT YOU USE TO
LAYER OVER YOUR
"GRAIN OF SAND"
DEPENDS ON WHAT
WORKS FOR YOU.

It might be
saying some
sort of
affirmation to
yourself each
time you think
about the
event or the
person.

Something
like...

...I HAVE
CHOSEN TO
FORGIVE
HIM.

Or it might be
something more active
like working on building
a positive relationship
with that person.

S-SO YOU
LIKE TO
R-READ?

LOVE IT.

It will probably be
a combination of
things, but with
time and effort
you will see that
you have moved
past whatever
situation or
person you're
resentful about,
and have indeed
forgiven.

REALLY? THAT'S
MY FAVOURITE
BOOK, TOO!

HAVE YOU SEEN
THE MOVIE OF IT?
IT'S ON IN TOWN.

A BEAUTIFUL THING ABOUT FORGIVENESS; IT CHANGES LIVES FOR THE BETTER.

One of my favorite stories is about Jean Valjean, from Victor Hugo's novel, *Les Miserables*.

Jean Valjean was a convicted thief who was paroled.

The kindly bishop of Digne took him in and gave him a meal and a place to sleep.

But the temptation was too great for Jean.

In the middle of the night, he stole the silver and made off.

Of course, it didn't take long before he was apprehended by suspicious soldiers and brought back to face the bishop.

This was a pivotal moment. One word from the bishop and Valjean would have been sent to the galleys for life. However...



Footnotes

¹ Isaiah 1:18 NKJV

² Matthew 6:14 NKJV

³ Romans 3:23