

Principle 5

# Anger and Forgiveness

This month we concentrate on the emotional rollercoaster of living with a drinker



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In the last couple of workbooks we suggested that you should **start** doing things that improve your lifestyle and help you to grow as a person. We hope that you have now added a new interest to your life and have made it a regular feature and have drawn up a list of people who could be supportive. It would be great if you have actually contacted some of them and disclosed some of the issues that you are facing.

Remember, as we said before, these changes need to become a regular feature of your life to have the desired effect. So keep doing them and, if you lapse or forget, start again.

People who live with a drinker often find that their emotions, anger, frustration etc, are easily triggered. They can feel that they live with constant anger, sometimes suppressed but sometimes spilling over. Given the circumstances it is hardly surprising if you feel that way.

In this exercise we want you to start to change how you deal with these emotions. Also we want you to start and look at forgiveness for your drinker – and for you.

Now let's get started.

## Exercise

The exercise addresses two huge issues, anger and forgiveness. Unfortunately it is almost impossible to deal with one without dealing with the other, as they tend to be so closely linked.

You almost certainly recognise a need to learn to cope with the anger that you feel. On the other hand thoughts of forgiveness may not be something that you feel ready or able to look at. However if you are to make a real difference in your life and have an influence on your partner, looking at forgiveness would make the process easier.

Remember these are not issues that you can change instantly, they take time. So if you do not get it right first time, relax, give yourself a break. Change is not easy and takes work and commitment. So look for progress rather than perfection.

## Instructions

We'll start with anger and, yes, we have another table for you. You should be getting quite familiar with the process by now. This time there are 3 columns, Incident (what made you angry), Reaction (how did you react), Alternative Reaction (how might you react in future.

What you are looking to do is identify the flash points that make you react, eg him arriving home late. Then looking at how you normally react and finally coming up with an alternative reaction that is healthier for you.

The point is that you are trying to create 'new habits' to break out of the circle of (completely natural and understandable) unhealthy reactions that have become a pattern. By planning ahead you can have new reactions, such as going out, going to bed, removing yourself, doing something for you, writing on the forum, phoning a friend or whatever works for you. As before there are no right answers, except the ones that work for you.

To tackle the issue of forgiveness we have given you a page that only has a heading marked Forgiveness – what I am going to let go. Please, please listen to the audio before doing this exercise. If you have listened to it – listen again.

Now write down anything that you want to forgive, him or yourself, or you want to let go. Don't worry if you don't feel ready to forgive, this is a process and it takes time.

If you do write a list then you may want to burn it, bury it in the garden or put it in the trash can. The point is that ***symbolically*** you are getting rid of it, you are taking control and making a decision to forgive and this is a route to self-healing. So by burning it, or whatever you decide to do, you are letting go of the hurt.

<b>Incident</b>	<b>Reaction</b>	<b>Alternate Reaction</b>

**Things that you want to forgive.**