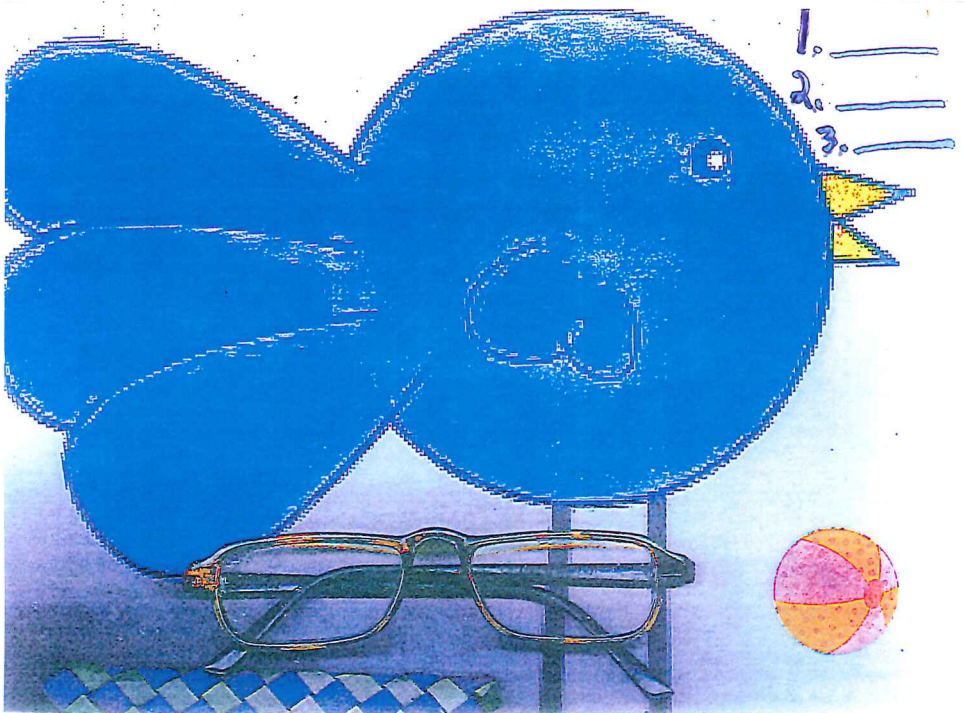


## Live Better Series: “I can live a vital and meaningful life.”

### “ACT: Forgiveness”

Tom Lavin MFT, LCADC, ACATA



**Bluebird:** I can live a vital, meaningful life. And, I accept I will sometimes have pain, and other times have joy, in my life.

**New Pair of Glasses:** to change my life, and grow in wisdom, I need to look at things differently.

**Beach ball:** I need to stop avoiding my life by pushing thoughts and feeling underwater. By being mindful, I will let my thoughts and feelings come up and accept them for what they are.

**Finger trap:** It is healthy for me to “accept what is as it is”. When I struggle against “what is”, I trap myself and cause suffering for myself. Accepting does not necessarily mean I like it.

**1, 2, 3:** I can live a vital and meaningful life by choosing and committing to values that are important to me—NIKE Therapy “Just do it!”, make a plan, don’t procrastinate, take action. Letting go and letting be is also a way of taking positive action.

**Forgiveness:** wanting to be healthy; wisdom to be willing to let go of the past.

Forgiveness starts as a decision to forgive—it is not a feeling, at first. Forgiveness is a path to freedom that can have positive mental, emotional and relationship effects in our lives.

From an ACT perspective; accepting what is, choosing life affirming values and taking action to forgive and let go and move on with our lives in a meaningful way.

Simon and Simon, Kurtz, Enright, Hayes

1. How would my life be better if I forgave:  
Physical Health: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emotional Health: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship Health: \_\_\_\_\_
2. I need to/want to forgive \_\_\_\_\_
3. What happened? How was I hurt? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How I feel toward the person/institution who harmed me (angry, resentful, afraid, ashamed, sad, vengeful, confused, disappointed, etc) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Understanding/empathy (not condoning or absolving) is part of my recovery from this. What was possibly going on with that person/institution that led them to hurt me? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Is there anything I did that contributed to my being harmed? Do I forgive myself? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Resources I need to successfully forgive? (guidance of a mentor, counselor, spiritual advisor, pray, meditate, etc) \_\_\_\_\_
8. From this experience of being hurt and now forgiving: what am I learning about myself and life \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Recommended books:

“Forgiveness: Making Peace with your Past and Moving on with your Life”. Dr. Sid Simon and Suzanne Simon; “Forgiveness is a Choice”, Dr. Robert Enright