Steps to True Forgiveness
Recommended by Dr. Gary Chapman
Author of the book *The Five Apology Languages*

FIRST: Identify your own failures through prayer.

Psalm 139:23-24 is a good example. David said, "Search me, O God and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts and see if there's anything wicked way in me." A good way to rephrase that is, "Lord, shine Your spotlight on me and show me where I am failing in this relationship."

(Get out your pencil, because God will give you a list!)

SECOND: Confess the sins God shows us.

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

When we confess our sins to God, we agree with God on at least three things:

a. We agree that it's wrong – "Lord, the way I treated him/her last night is wrong. The way I have ignored him/her for three days is wrong, let alone what he/she did. That's his/her problem. But the way I have responded to him/her is wrong."
b. Agree that Christ has paid the penalty - "Lord, I thank You that Christ has paid for these sins."
c. Agree to accept forgiveness – Gary says, "God does not want you depressed for three months because you sinned against your spouse. He wants you to accept His forgiveness; get up; move on; do something good today!

THIRD: Confess to the other person

Acts 24:16, "In this do I exercise myself. To have always a conscience *void of offense* toward God and toward men."

Gary explains, "Paul says, 'I am committed to living with an empty conscience toward God and toward men.' Nothing is more fundamental to mental health, let alone spiritual health, than living with an empty conscience."

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