

Voicel2

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I work with a number of my fellow inmates, trying to help them prepare for their upcoming parole hearings and hopefully, their eventual release. As almost all of them have taken the life of their victim(s), usually while suffering from addictions to drugs and/or alcohol, the issue of making amends, and forgiveness always comes up at some point in time. With these issues in mind, I wrote this particular essay, trying to put myself into the shoes of my neighbor, who took the life of his victim. Doing so not only provides future people with something they can learn from, it also provides me with an opportunity to learn something from them, teaching me empathy and compassion.

As far as the concept of forgiveness is concerned, by no means am I opposed to it. On the contrary, forgiveness helps everyone involved. The victim(s) are able to free their souls from the burdens associated with carrying around so much anger, hatred, pain, etc., while at the same time, the offender himself is able to obtain redemption after making his amends. Once forgiveness has been earned, and given, then both parties can go forth in life, wiser for their experiences, without the continued pain and suffering that accompanies living in the past. With that said, this concept relies on the victim being able to offer their forgiveness, on their own time and in their own way, something that can't be done if the victim's life has been taken from them. Under this limited set of circumstances, forgiveness is **not** an option, simply because it's impossible for the victim to grant it. Furthermore, as many of my fellow inmates have found out the hard way, the victims' rights groups respond quite harshly to such requests, and have been known to go out of their way to show their displeasure at the inmate's audacity to even consider asking for it.

Something else to take into consideration is your statement that "[o]f course we have no control over someone else's forgiveness,..." This is true. No matter how sorry we are, how much we do to make amends, or how much we want forgiveness, at the end of the day, this is not within our ability to control. It is the victim who must decide whether or not to issue this miraculous gift, not the offender. By forgiving ourselves for our act, we have taken that power and control away from the person we harmed, victimizing them all over again in the process.

Again, I'm not opposed to the concept of forgiveness. I just believe that there are certain circumstances in which it isn't an option, and that's only because it's physically impossible for the victim to express their opinions one way or the other. This does not, however, mean that the friends and family members of the victim shouldn't express their views on the matter, or their forgiveness.

I really appreciate you taking the time to respond to my essay, and I hope that I've managed to satisfactorily answer your questions. If not, or if you have any other questions and comments that you wish to share, please don't hesitate to do so, either here on the Net, or via snail mail.

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