



S4E4: Transcript

The Power and Meaning of Forgiveness

with Dr. Everett Worthington

Tavia Gilbert:

Welcome to Stories of Impact. I'm producer Tavia Gilbert, and in every episode of this podcast, journalist Richard Sergay and I bring you conversation about the newest scientific research on human flourishing, and how those discoveries can be translated into practical tools.

This season, we're focusing on conversations about human flourishing. Today's episode highlights Richard's conversation with Dr. Everett Worthington, Commonwealth Professor Emeritus at Virginia Commonwealth University. For the last 30 years, Dr. Worthington has been studying forgiveness, writing more than a dozen books on the subject. In 2001, he developed the pioneering REACH Forgiveness method, which has helped thousands of people reap the mental and physical benefits of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is not just an area of detached scientific research for Dr. Worthington, but an intensely personal subject. In this interview with Richard, Dr. Worthington shares the steps to apply the REACH method, highlights examples of people who have offered forgiveness to those who caused them grave harm, and he recounts how he applied the REACH method to his own profound trauma. A gentle warning to our listeners: this episode contains details of violence and pain, so care should be taken playing the audio in the presence of children, or anyone who might be coping with the impact of violence in their own life.

Let's begin with Dr. Worthington sharing an overview of what forgiveness is.

Everett Worthington: So forgiveness, I believe, is a virtue. And a virtue classically is something that is a positive character trait, a positive character strength that people have, in which they do something that's good. In positive psychology, we look at this nowadays as what it is called a eudaimonic virtue, and that's just a Greek term that means it's good for ourselves, but it's also good for other people. It just kind of takes that traditional Greek eudaimonia and shifts it a little bit, but it's a, a goodness of character, a character strength that not only is good for me but is also good for other people.

Tavia Gilbert: Is everything forgivable, or are there some offenses that are so heinous they never ought to be forgiven? Why is it important to forgive? And does forgiveness demand reconciliation?

Everett Worthington: I think all offenses are forgivable. And I think that often it's very wise to be able to forgive them, because if I hold on to unforgiveness, then the other person doesn't even know what's going on in me. But I'm making myself ill. I'm putting myself at cardiovascular risk and immune system dysfunction risk, mental health risk, and relationship risk, and spiritual risk, and I'm not hurting them at all. In fact maybe they hate me so much that they're, they would be glad if they knew I was suffering.

So because forgiveness goes on inside of me, I think just from a point of view of what's good for me, forgiveness is an experience that, you know, I would want to pursue. Now that doesn't mean that I need to reconcile with them. If they're not going to be trustworthy, we may never reconcile. I may never trust them and they may never trust me. But that is a relational quality, not an internal quality.

So I have seen people that say, I am so angry and vengeful toward this person but that energizes me and allows me to channel it into doing something good. And my response, internally, I mean, externally, I'll support them, but internally I think, you know, if you weren't using up a lot of your energy trying to cope with your negative emotions, think how much good you could do then, you know, you could really do good because you still can get that

motivation to do good to repair things, but you wouldn't be tying up a lot of your own energy coping with hate and revenge fantasies, and things like that.

Tavia Gilbert: It seems to me that a conversation about forgiveness is particularly relevant today, as in the United States, we're having national conversations about unity, accountability, responsibility, consequences for actions, or lack thereof. Is forgiveness politically relevant?

Everett Worthington: Politically, it seems like we just have wedges drawn between any two people with different views, and that this seems to drive people further apart. Can forgiveness play a part in helping to find some common ground, instead of, you know, drawing more and more differences? You know, can we come together more and solve problems more if we're able to forgive some of the offenses and harms that have happened on like, Facebook and Twitter, and elsewhere in social media and news?

Tavia Gilbert: Is America a forgiving society?

Everett Worthington: The jury's mixed on that. You know, they have not come to a unanimous conclusion. I think there are places in society such as that Amish community that forgave, such as the South Carolina church, and individuals that stand out, and yet, that certainly doesn't seem like it characterizes the whole society. I think we have, like any pluralistic society, we have a bell curve, and we have some people that would never forgive, and we have others that will forgive anything. And most of us are someplace in the middle.

Tavia Gilbert: Dr. Worthington is referencing the West Nickel Mines school shooting in 2006, in which five young Amish girls were murdered in their one-room schoolhouse in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, as well as the 2015 shooting at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, in which nine people were shot to death during their Bible study. Despite such horror, both communities embraced forgiveness. So what does that mean? When they forgave, were they simply deciding to ignore their feelings about the events? Refuse to think about the events? What IS forgiveness?

Everett Worthington: So I define forgiveness in, as two different experiences. So one of those is making a decision about how you intend to act towards someone who's harmed you or offended you, how you intend to act in the future. You say, I'm not going to get even with them, I'm not going to get revenge on them, I am going to treat them as a valued and valuable person.

So even if the person is not alive, I can still say, well, if they were alive I would treat them in a different way. So I can make this decision about how I would like to act in the future. That's called decisional forgiveness. But I can make a decision to forgive someone and still feel enormous resentment and bitterness and hostility every time I think about it.

So that must suggest that there's a second type of forgiveness that we call emotional forgiveness. And this is when I replace negative, unforgiving emotions with positive, other-oriented emotions. So what tends to happen is, I erode away the negative at first, and if it's a stranger that I'm talking about or someone that I don't really want to continue my interaction with, I'm pretty good with just getting rid of the negative.

But if it's my partner or a valued friend I'm not really good with stopping at neutrality. I want to get back to a net positive feeling toward them. So that's emotional forgiveness, that titration, that, you know, dissolving of the negativity into positivity.

Tavia Gilbert: So how does someone go about creating, activating, or inviting forgiveness?

Everett Worthington: Decisional forgiveness and emotional forgiveness are actually separate processes. They have some relationship to each other, but they're not joined at the hip. So just making a decision to forgive is actually fairly straightforward, although people don't want to do that often, and they will struggle with, you know, getting the motivation to make that decision to forgive.

Emotional forgiveness, well of course, most people want to have a sense of peace after they've been offended so they want to do that, but emotions are unruly and don't obey our wishes as much as

decisions do. And so, that requires usually some kind of process in which they have experiences that change their emotional valence toward the person.

Tavia Gilbert: Should we hold ourselves and others to the expectation of forgiveness?

Everett Worthington: Not everyone has to forgive, of course, and so there are people that just don't want to go there, because it's too early or they just, that's not in their value system. But as a psychologist, what I want to do to help them make a decision is to help them explore what their motives are and what kind of cost that's enacting on them.

So we know that unforgiveness really does have a lot of costs, it has mental health costs, it has physical health costs in the long run, it has relationship costs, and it has spiritual costs. And, and so if they explore these costs, often, they'll want to make a decision, and because they can make a decision without as much rigmarole as an emotional change, then they often will be able to make that decision.

Emotional forgiveness, though, is, is usually a longer process. And if I'm working with a person in counseling and they really want to spend the time on reaching emotional forgiveness, then it's pretty much going to be about a six, seven, eight hour, depending on the hurt and offense they're dealing with. But it's going to take a time, because they have to have experiences where they can see things from the point of view of the person who hurt them, or even if they can't, if they just say I cannot empathize with a person who hurts me like this, maybe they can say, but I feel sorry for him or her for doing this.

And so sympathy ends up being a replacement emotion or compassion toward the person, like you know they, I think they need help with this, and I wish I could help them. Or even love, the person might draw on some kind of unselfish, altruistic love, or romantic love in a couple relationship. And those experiences of empathy, sympathy, compassion, and love, those are the experiences that neutralize the negativity, get people to have a

more positive emotional response, and eventually come to say yes, my emotions have changed, and I do emotionally forgive the person.

Tavia Gilbert: Is there a cost to *not* forgiving?

Everett Worthington: There are a number of health effects for holding unforgiveness toward a person about an event. Unforgiveness is a stress response, and so it's going to have all of the negativity of a chronic stress response. So it's going to put people at risk for cardiovascular events, because the blood pressure is higher, because, you know, as, as the heart beats and it stretches out the arteries with that higher blood pressure, you know it tends to make little tears in the walls, and eventually, those can snare plaque or snare chemicals that would turn into plaque. So cardiovascular risk is one thing that unforgiveness elevates.

But there's this hormone that we know a lot about called cortisol. It's a neural hormone secreted by the adrenal glands besides adrenaline. And cortisol, if it is chronically elevated, will basically affect every physical system in the body. It can shrink people's brain, different portions of it. The hippocampus, which consolidates memories, for example, is really vulnerable to prolonged elevated cortisol.

It will affect people's cardiovascular system. It will affect people's gastrointestinal tract and they can have colitis and ulcers and things like that. It will affect their sexual and reproductive system. Basically, elevated cortisol, if it's kept at an elevated level for a long time, it's better if we get a chance to not elevate it, because it can have a lot of pernicious physical health effects.

In terms of mental health effects of unforgiveness, really I think a lot of that comes through rumination that goes along with unforgiveness. So rumination is playing bad events over and over in the mind. And the more people ruminate, the more they keep their stress response elevated. And also rumination has just been shown in lots of research to be what I like to think of as the universal bad boy of mental health. It is implicated in anger disorders, in depression, in anxiety disorders, in

obsessive-compulsive disorders, in post-traumatic stress disorders, in some psychosomatic disorders. So rumination really can affect people's mental health in many different ways. And I think you know as long as people are feeling unforgiving they tend to keep bringing this up in the late, late show of the mind.

There are relationship effects also of unforgiveness. If I'm holding a grudge toward someone clearly I don't respond in as positive a way toward them. Also, there's a theory in positive psychology called the broaden and build theory of positive emotions and positive reactions, that positivity tends to widen our perspective and openness to things and not having that positive response can shut down on a lot of possibilities that relationships have. So people tend to have more negative interactions in the relationship and fewer positive interactions.

In a spiritual sense, often when people feel unforgiving they feel out of sorts with what they feel is sacred.

Tavia Gilbert: When Dr. Worthington refers to feeling out of sorts with what is sacred, does he mean to imply that forgiveness is for people who have an active religious practice? Is satisfying the expectations of a religion the core motivation behind forgiveness?

Everett Worthington: If they hold God as sacred or the church they feel like this unforgiveness is a sin that puts them out of sorts with God or with the church. But if they hold, say, humanity as sacred, they feel, this person has done this crime against humanity. And you know so I feel, as long as I hold on to this negativity, I feel out of sorts with that unity with humanity or with nature, a crime against nature.

So people hold different things to be sacred that we call spirituality, closeness or connection with that which people hold to be sacred. And unforgiveness tends to put people out of joint with the things that they hold sacred.

Tavia Gilbert: So what do we know already about forgiveness? What has Dr. Worthington learned in his long career focusing on forgiveness?

Everett Worthington: I think at this point we really understand quite a bit about forgiveness. I think there are over 4,000 scientific articles that have accumulated on forgiveness, starting really with seriousness when the John Templeton Foundation funded a request for proposals in 1998, and I would say we've come an enormous way in understanding forgiveness, and it's, it's incredible for me to see.

We know a lot about it, and of course science being what it is, the things that we've studied have revealed that on the other hand we don't know as much about it as we would like to know.

Tavia Gilbert: Dr. Worthington is the writer of the Handbook on Forgiveness, first published in 2005, and updated with a second edition in 2020. What has changed in the 15 years between editions of the Handbook on Forgiveness?

Everett Worthington: In the first edition, it was all about the internal experience of forgiveness, and we knew a lot about that, but we didn't pay much attention to the social context that forgiveness might or might not be happening in.

And I think what has happened in years past is that the investigators have started paying a lot more serious attention to the social context, to the environmental factors, to the social factors, to the societal factors, to, you know, does the offender experience self forgiveness, because seeing and offender struggle that they can't forgive themselves actually helps some people forgive more. So, you know, if the offender apologizes, then that helps the person forgive.

So, you know, looking back, it makes me want to go duh, why didn't we see that before? But, you know, science gets us there eventually, and so that's been really a focus in the last I'd say seven or eight years, and I think that's where it's going more in the future.

Tavia Gilbert: Dr. Worthington has developed the REACH Forgiveness model, which he offers in one-on-one counseling, as well as in a workbook format. And he's on a mission to gauge the impact of helping people forgive by offering them an accessible, two hours at a time, do-it-yourself process.

Everett Worthington: This two-hour workbook is really kind of a universally applicable workbook. It's about forgiving someone and learning to forgive someone. And then in the last, say, 30 minutes that they work on it, kind of making it broader to forgiving anybody.

So the idea of this, it's like penicillin. It's like, if I have an infection and I take this dose of penicillin, well, two hours is not going to, you know, cure the unforgiveness of a you know, a severe sexual abuse or physical abuse. But just like taking a dose of penicillin okay that's going to help a little, I can do this again, I can take it again for two hours, you know I can take it again for two hours, and eventually, you know, I can erode away the hurt of very, very serious events.

We're going to start out by helping people define forgiveness in a way that they can work with. We are going to help them see the benefits of forgiving, that it's going to affect their physical health, their mental health, their relationships, their spirituality. We're going to help them make a decision to forgive. We invite them to make a decision early on and then we enter into trying to help them have an emotional experience of forgiving.

So they will go through five steps to REACH forgiveness. REACH is an acrostic, that stands for the steps: So, Recall the hurt, Empathize with the person who hurt you, give an Altruistic gift, an unselfish gift to, of forgiveness to a person who doesn't deserve forgiveness, Commit to the forgiveness you experience, and then Hold on whenever you doubt.

So as they work through exercises to help them experience those five steps to emotional forgiveness and then eventually get to the place where they see that they have reduced the emotional unforgiveness, then we go back and we re-invite them to consider the decision to forgive again. Because decisional forgiveness and emotional forgiveness are not locked in a particular time order, they're independent of each other.

And then the very last part, we get them to apply this REACH Forgiveness model again and again to different people and events in their life that are troublesome, so that it broadens out the

application and they can feel like that they're not only able to forgive a particular event, but they are becoming a more forgiving person and kind of building that virtue into their life.

Tavia Gilbert: But what about forgiving enormous, society-wide wrongs? Is Dr. Worthington encouraging people to forgive even those offenses that affect millions of people at a time? Is that desirable? Is it realistic?

Everett Worthington: Some of the really kind of outstanding examples of forgiveness really happened in South Africa. The world kind of looked on at the apartheid for years and years, and it just kept going. And yet, when Nelson Mandela became president you know he was so magnanimous and so able to just put aside all of these systematic harms that the people of South Africa had experienced and had inflicted on others. And even personal harm of being imprisoned and losing much of his vision and so it kind of astounds people how could he do that. And it astounds me. He's, like, probably one of my major heroes of forgiveness in life.

You know, he had such dedication to the hope of being able to reconcile. And I think that, for him, was the norm that drove everything. It's like he can see this vision in his mind of blacks and whites able to work together in a reconciled society. And so he could take a distancing perspective and say, well what happened to me is minor in that case, and I forgive that, because this hope is so important and so grand and, and can bring that about.

I think for Archbishop Tutu, I think he had a different motivation, being an archbishop in the Anglican Church. He had the religious motivation as well as the social motivation. So he had again a strong, overarching reason to be able to say yes, I've been hurt. Friends of mine have been hurt, you know, enormously. My people have been hurt. And yet, I see this, this redeeming value that can be achieved in our lifetime and whatever I experience is not consequential compared to that dream that could come about.

Tavia Gilbert: Does forgiveness have a higher purpose? Is it larger than an individual act? Is it a cosmic act?

Everett Worthington: I think, [laughs] personally, I think there is a higher purpose and that you know, people are meant to eventually be reconciled. But, but I think from the point of view of individuals, you know, if they can get in touch with what they think is a higher purpose, that can help them put aside their personal experiences and really focus on the redemption that's possible if they forgive.

Tavia Gilbert: Is Nelson Mandela unique in Dr. Worthington's mind? How useful is it to have such a phenomenal example of forgiveness, when Mandela has an almost mythic status?

Everett Worthington: I think Nelson Mandela was one of a kind, but I think there are many one-of-a-kinds that are that are possible in life. And I've seen personal examples that I look at and say, I just don't think I could have done that. And yet these people are able to achieve a sense of forgiveness, even though it's beyond my understanding.

One of my favorite examples, Chris Carrier, he, as a 10-year-old boy was abducted. Was taken out in the swamp, stabbed repeatedly in the torso. And then when he pleaded with the man to stop, the man stopped and took him to the truck. And then as he stepped up on the running board to get in the truck the man placed a gun through against his head and shot him. And it came out his eye.

Well, he survived that, and then, like, 20 years later a police officer came and said, we've always thought we knew who did this, but we never had any kind of evidence. But this guy is dying and does not deserve to be, to go out of this world without being confronted. And so he took Chris out to this man's house, and certainly this guy was dying, and he was going to die within a couple of weeks.

But you know, instead of confronting the man, he walked up to the man and said, "Sso who's taking care of you?" And the guy goes, "I'm taking care of myself," while he's clearly laying in bed unable to take care of himself. So Chris Carrier took care of this man for the last couple of weeks of the man's life.

You know, to think about having lost an eye, having been stabbed, having been physically brutalized, left for dead in a swamp, and

able to not just forgive, but to lay down your life to bring some comfort to this man in his final days on Earth, I mean, that's just an astounding story.

There are heroes of forgiveness like this, I think, everywhere. And if we're not tested, then we don't find out that maybe we may have a quality like that. But I think there are many people out there that could be just the same type of heroes of forgiveness, given the right test.

Tavia Gilbert: How does Dr. Worthington explain that depth of forgiveness?

Everett Worthington: I can't, I have no scientific explanation for this. Clearly, Chris Carrier had beliefs, values, that made that possible. But he also had something inside of him that's probably intangible that was drawn to a needy person. And he was able to love and care for this person regardless of what the person had done. You know, I'm not sure science can account for that. You know, we can write questionnaires about it but it's just something in the human spirit that, you know, I believe God gave us. But, you know, wherever we got it, it's there.

But it always is surprising when somebody goes above and beyond what you expect and is able to forgive something that seems, to an outsider, almost unforgivable. We don't know what went on in their minds. All we see is their behavior. And sometimes if we have trouble getting on and into their minds, we have trouble seeing it from their point of view.

Tavia Gilbert: Dr. Worthington has a very personal experience with forgiveness, and what he chose to forgive is no small thing. He shares the story of one of the greatest tests of forgiveness he has faced.

Everett Worthington: Back in uh, 1995, 96, on New Year's Eve night, my mom was murdered. And it was apparently a young man who was going to burglarize the house, but it was New Year's Eve, the house was dark, my mom had gone to bed early, she didn't drive so there's no car in the driveway, so it looked like it probably would be a safe house for him to just go in and take whatever he wanted.

Well, she was there, asleep and he waked her up while rummaging, looking for treasure. And when she came out, he, and probably confronted him, he ended up bludgeoning her with a crowbar that he had used to break the window to get in the door. And so she died, and then he was angry, upset, afraid, and he assaulted her with a wine bottle, and she lay there bleeding to death.

So when I heard about that murder it was New Year's morning and was at home with my family and my brother phoned and said, you know, he was really shaken, he said, you know, you've got to come down to Knoxville. I live in Richmond, Virginia, it's a seven hour drive. Got to come down to Knoxville. You know, something terrible has happened, mom has been murdered.

And so he had gone in and with his son to see what was up because she didn't answer the phone when he called to wish her a happy New Year. And when he walked in, the place was a wreck, and, and he walked into the hallway, and there was blood splattered all over the walls and her body was lying there. So he covered up his son's eyes and left and called the police and then called me.

So I went down with my sister who also lives in Richmond and her husband, and we went down into this murder investigation that day. One of the things they did was take us to the house that I grew up in for the first 22 years and walk us through, trying to see if we detected whether something might be missing. And it's pretty horrendous to see the devastation and the blood and the pools of blood on the carpet.

That night, my brother, my sister and I were in Mike's back room, kind of processing what we heard during the day and putting together the story. And apparently the police had thought this was a youth, maybe one or more youths that had broken in. And I remember as we, the more we talked about this, the angrier I got. And I just felt like my face was going to explode, and I was so angry I pointed down to a baseball bat leaning against the wall and said, I wish whoever did that were here. I would take that bat and I would beat his brains out. I said, he would not last 30 minutes. And my brother said he wouldn't last 10 minutes if I got a hold of him. My

sister said I'd make him last an hour. You know, we were all absolutely furious at this.

Well, I couldn't sleep. I was pacing around my, the place I was staying, my aunt's house. I was pacing around the bedroom, and it got to be about three o'clock in the morning and I'm like, what am I doing? I'm just roaming around, and I can't sleep. And so I better do something productive.

And I sat down to write a eulogy for my mom, because I was going to give a talk at her funeral. And it suddenly dawned on me that, here I had gone through like almost 24 hours at that point, and I had never allowed myself to think the word forgiveness. And you know, the incongruity of that just hit me, I thought well, here's a guy, I've counseled people to forgive. I'm a Christian I value forgiveness. I, you know I have written a book on forgiveness, I do research on forgiveness and yet I can't allow myself to think the word forgiveness?!

And I thought I need to at least think through this. And so we had developed this REACH Forgiveness model, and I thought well, I'll just use that to think through this experience. And so I started recalling the heart and recalling what this might have been like from the point of view of this young man.

So that helped me empathize, where he's out in the cold on New Year's night at Knoxville, Tennessee, looking at this house thinking, it's going to be a perfect crime. I'm just going to waltz in there, take whatever I want, waltz out, totally safe. They'll be gone till after midnight. And so he's all keyed up, he breaks in, and then here he is searching, and he probably hears this voice behind him, because apparently he was in the hallway pulling books off the shelf. Probably heard this voice behind him, "What are you doing in my house?"

Turns around, looking at this older woman, probably thought, I don't know what he thought, but he probably thought, this, this is wrong it's supposed to be a perfect crime. This old woman's messing up my perfect crime. He's angry. She's looking at my face. I'm gonna go to jail. He's afraid. He's holding that crowbar. He's got impulse

control problems, probably wouldn't be breaking into people's house without impulse control problems. Reaches out, strikes her, strikes again and again. And then you know, being really angry he, he assaults her.

But then as we walked through the house that afternoon we had seen that only the front of the house had been searched. But the mirrors in every room throughout the house had all been broken. And I realized, well, he couldn't look himself in the face. So here is a kid that, he has done something bad, you know, but at some level can't look himself in the face.

And about the time I got there in my thinking through the E, the empathy, I flash back to myself standing in that back room of my brother's house pointing to that baseball bat, saying I wish whoever did that were here, I would hit him in the head just like he hit my mom in the head until he died. And I thought, whose heart is darker? Is it the heart of a young man with impulse control who's angry and afraid, or is it me? The Christian. 48 years old at that time. The person who's counseled people about forgiveness, written books on forgiveness.

I thought, my heart is darker than his heart. But I knew that I could be forgiven for the darkness in my heart. And I thought, if I can be forgiven for the darkness in my heart, who am I to hold unforgiveness against this young man? And I was able to forgive that young man. And that's really lasted ever since.

Tavia Gilbert: Did Dr. Worthington ever have a chance to talk to the young man who murdered his mother?

Everett Worthington: As it turned out, no usable evidence could be brought forth. And although someone confessed at about the fourth day, when the grand jury met there was not enough evidence to bring him to trial. So in our system of innocent until proven guilty, there's no way to meet the young man.

Tavia Gilbert: How does he cope with the sense of injustice that no one was held accountable for the murder of his beloved mother?

Everett Worthington: Decades later, I still feel that forgiveness, which happened in one night late, still holds. I had a few moments toward the police about the way that the evidence was handled that ended up making justice not being able to happen. But, but that wasn't, that didn't affect my forgiveness of the young man. That was another issue I worked through with the police.

So the forgiveness that I was able to give this young man of course happened inside of me. And, and he really doesn't know about that. You know, there is a, a big difference between saying, "I forgive you," and forgiving someone. So forgiveness happens inside our skin.

Some people say, how can you forgive this young man, this is you know, you must be some kind of super forgiver. And I go, well you know, I think anyone could forgive, given the right circumstances. And, you know, I don't have some kind of special gift of forgiveness.

Tavia Gilbert: I take Dr. Worthington's words to heart. He may not have a special kind of forgiveness, but he clearly has profound forgiveness. His story is incredibly difficult to listen to, as is the story of Chris Carrier, as is recalling the faith communities suffering the trauma of mass shootings. What is so significant to me is that Dr. Worthington suffered such an anguishing loss, compounded by the injustice of an investigation that failed to hold his mother's murderer accountable, and even that outrage didn't shake his ability to find a deep sense of sustained forgiveness for the perpetrator of the vicious crime.

If it is forgiveness that will allow individuals, families, communities, and nations to heal, I hope you'll be inspired to seek out Dr. Worthington's lifetime of work around forgiveness, so that you can release anything that holds you hostage to the past, and keeps you from finding the peace that he so remarkably has achieved. What a gift the freedom of forgiveness offers us all. We'll link to the REACH Forgiveness Model in the show notes so you can check out how to apply it in your own life.

My friends, we've come to the end of the Stories of Impact podcast,

so we don't have another episode to preview. Richard and I and our whole team have loved working on this project, telling diverse stories about curiosity and human virtues. We hope you have enjoyed the episodes, as well. If we have an opportunity to return to the subject of human flourishing, bringing you voices from around the globe, from innovative thinkers who are translating their research into practical tools for flourishing, we will be absolutely delighted. It has been a true honor and a great pleasure to spend these hours with you. Thank you so much for listening.

For more stories and videos, please visit storiesofimpact.org.

This has been the Stories of Impact podcast, with Richard Sergay and Tavia Gilbert. This episode written and produced by Talkbox and Tavia Gilbert. Associate producer Katie Flood. Music by Aleksander Filipiak. Mix and master by Kayla Elrod. Executive producer Michele Cobb.

The Stories of Impact podcast is generously supported by Templeton World Charity Foundation.