

# Hold Me Tight Workshop

Dr. Michelle Gannon & Dr. Sam Jinich

## Forgiveness Conversation

In all relationships, we make mistakes. Research has shown that *learning how to repair* is the most important relationship skill in healthy, loving relationships.

We will hurt those we love. Our loved ones will hurt us. It is how we deal with this that matters.

Entering into a process of forgiveness is a choice. If you choose to not forgive, and you close yourself in order to not risk ever being hurt again.... you lessen your chances for closeness and connection with your partner.

**“Remember that the source of pain can also be the source of repair”**

**1. How would you rate yourself on a scale of 1- 10 on the ability to apologize?**

**2. How would you rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 on the willingness to forgive?**

### **3. Do any of these apologies sound familiar to you?**

- “I’m sorry YOU feel this way”
- “Saying you’re sorry doesn’t matter to me, you have to promise to change”
- “Well maybe I did that but...”
- “Fine...I’m sorry”
- “ It’s always my fault.”
- “I’m sorry, OK?”
- “I’ll apologize if you apologize”

For many couples, learning how to more effectively apologize, repair and forgive is definitely an area of “needs improvement”. Let’s practice a new model of forgiveness. In this conversation, we will go through the Six Steps of Forgiveness based on the Emotionally Focused Therapy model.

**The first step in healing attachment injuries is to recognize and articulate them.**

**For many of us, this model is a new way to consider forgiveness and apologies. We will need to practice the six steps of forgiveness. Choose which option you want to use to learn this.**

1) Easier option:

Take turns telling each other of a time when you felt hurt by an important person in your life.

2) More challenging option:

Take turns telling each other of a time when you felt hurt by your partner.

**Pick one of the options above. The following 6 steps will guide you through the more challenging option. Work Together:**

**Think of a time when you felt hurt by your partner:**

**1) The hurt person shares about his or her pain (without blame) as openly as possible.** Dip into your primary emotions. Be specific about your pain including your feelings of hurt, sadness, and underlying worries and fears. To identify the emotional impact, ask yourself: At the time of urgent need, did I feel deprived of support or comfort, abandoned or alone, helpless, devalued or dismissed or scared to turn to my partner?

**2) The other person stays emotionally present, non-defensive and shows that they care about the hurt partner's pain.** Acknowledge that the hurt partner's feelings make sense and are understandable. Show that you see and understand the significance of their pain. Communicate that you are accessible, responsive and emotionally engaged and use receptive body language (eye contact, nod, "uh-huh", "I get it").

**3) The hurt person shares more about the core of the hurt by expressing vulnerability instead of blaming or defining the other.** Move out from behind the protective wall and share your deeper feelings. When your partner is not defensive and *is* listening to you, it is safer to explore further and to go deeper. Take the elevator down now, and share more about the core of your hurt.

**4) The person who has contributed to the hurt needs to be empathic and take some ownership and accept responsibility for how they contributed to the hurt. They need to express that they “get it”. It’s important that the hurt person sees that you feel empathy and hears you express sincere feelings of regret and remorse.**

In order to be non-defensive and feel and show empathy for each other, we *all* need to feel safe.

**5) The hurt person needs to ask for comfort and identify what they needed then from their partner and what they need now.**

**6) The other person responds in a caring manner and provides the antidote to the hurt by showing that they care, by being here now and by showing that they are....Accessible, Responsive and Emotionally Engaged. (e.g. I care, I am here for you now, you matter to me).**

**If you prefer, you can follow the first three Steps of Forgiveness with an example of when you felt hurt by an important person in your life.**

**Now you can create a NEW narrative together.  
You are both responsible for the creation and continuity of the relationship.**

**At Hold Me Tight Workshop, we have EFT Volunteer Therapist to provide you with lots of support and guidance. Please call one of us over if you would like any additional help.**

Adapted by Dr .Michelle Gannon and Dr. Sam Jinich of Hold Me Tight Workshop from Dr Sue Johnson Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love.