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With the holidays approaching, it is common to hear references to forgiveness. In fact, many are encouraged to give forgiveness as a testimony to the holiday spirit. This can be a very challenging task. Days, weeks and even months tend to pass while we are holding on to old hurt. Meanwhile, the offender has moved on and is unaware of our pain. However, we owe it to ourselves to forgive. Forgiveness is not saying that what was done was okay, but it is saying "I am no longer allowing what happened to control me." In this holiday season, give forgiveness to yourself. Set yourself free. You may have to do it over and over again until it takes, but it is worth it. You are worth it. *CR*

Forgiveness is a thing easier said than done. And the old adage, "forgive and forget" is nonsense. Forgiveness is about something bigger than forgetting what someone has done to you and it takes much more than putting your mind to it to get it done. Forgiveness is an active journey that validates your own hurt but is also willing to get in the messiness of what it means to have relationships with other human beings. Sometimes forgiveness doesn't repair relationships, but allows us to stop carrying baggage that we don't want to be burdened with anymore. And ultimately, forgiveness is a one way street. It invites participation from the other, but never depends on it. Forgiveness isn't for them, it's for you. *JV*

I love to go to storytelling festivals, as the stories and their messages stay with me for years. When I learned that this month's edition of our newsletter was about forgiveness, I remembered this Native American tale I heard many years ago.

A grandfather sat with his young grandson on a huge rock overlooking the lush valley below. "Sometimes when I think about people who have hurt me," the grandfather said, "I feel like I have a battle going on inside me."

"What kind of a battle?" asked the grandson, turning to look at his grandfather.

"It's a battle between two wolves. One wolf is kind and accepting and wants to live in harmony with all those around him. The other wolf is angry and fearful and wants to blame others for what has happened to him."

His grandson, listening with rapt attention, softly asked, "Which one is going to win, Grandfather?"

The grandfather gave a slight smile, and looking down at his beloved grandson he said, "The one I feed, dear child. The one I feed." *SN*

"If we really want to love, we must learn how to forgive."

~Mother Teresa

CFS is happy to announce that our offices are expanding! This month we welcome two outstanding therapists. Amelia Tuttle, LAMFT specializes in working with couples and teenagers. And Therese Wyatt, LPC specializes in working with women and trauma. More in depth bios will be in our January edition of the Cornerstone Minute, but please check out their complete profiles at www.cornerstonefamilyservices.com.