

EXAMPLE OF SPONSOR FACILITATING THE FORGIVENESS LETTER TO THE SPONCSEE

A

To review, here is the assignment that you got yesterday:

USING THE SAME PERSON YOU DID YOUR 4TH STEP LONG-FORM ON, WRITE AN APOLOGY LETTER TO YOURSELF FROM THIS PERSON.

WRITE A LETTER FROM THE PERSON WHO HAS HARMED YOU. LET THEM GIVE YOU THE APOLOGY YOU ALWAYS WANTED OR NEEDED TO HEAR FROM THEM SO YOU FEEL YOU CAN HEAL THIS RESENTMENT. WRITE EVERYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO HEAR THEM SAY TO YOU FOR YOU TO FEEL HAPPY.

DON'T HOLD BACK, AND PLEASE KEEP THE LETTER SIMPLE AND NOT TOO LONG.

PLEASE BE READY TO READ THIS LETTER TO YOUR SPONSOR DURING YOUR 1 HOUR APPOINTMENT THIS WEEKEND.

In this demonstration I will play the sponsor and B will play the sponsee. The sponsee will read their letter and I will ask questions. Please be aware that when you are working with your sponsee, you are going to witness someone working through a process of discovery and forgiveness. This may be an emotional experience for the person who is reading their letter and also for you witnessing it. As we demonstrate this letter, we ask you to hold this space sacred so we can all be enlightened and healed through witnessing this process. Just to be clear, this is a demonstration. This is a generic letter. B did not write this letter, they are merely reading it as a demonstration.

Okay, let's begin. Remember you are writing the forgiveness letter on the same person you did your Long-from 4th step on. B , Who did you do your Long-from 4th step on.

B

My mom.

A

Okay, good. Please read the letter from your mom just as you wrote it.

B

Dear (B),

First, let me tell you how much I love you. You were always so special to me. When you were growing up, I loved watching you dance and sing. You were quite the entertainer.

I want to apologize to you my dear (B) for all the times I was not there for you, for all the times I was in a drunken stupor and could not see what was going on in your life. I am sorry I was not there to protect you from your overly strict and abusive teacher and that I could not see how hard

you were trying to be good. I am sorry that I taught you things that hurt you and made you feel inadequate.

I would never want to hurt you. I love you. Can you forgive me for my inability to see you and understand what was going on for you? Can you forgive me for abandoning you?

If there is something I can do to make this right with you, please let me know. I want all to be right with us going forward.

Love,
Mom

A

Thank you. How does it feel to hear this apology?

B

I feel good. I have always wanted her to see that she hurt me by not being there for me.

A

Thank you. In this situation, what roles did you cast the other person in?

B

I cast her in the role of abandoner, of an unfit mother. As someone who didn't love me enough to protect me.

A

Thank you. What roles did you cast yourself in?

B

The lost child. The victim of abuse by my teacher. The good girl not getting validated. Someone unworthy of my mother's attention.

A

Thank you. What roles did the other person cast you in?

B

Someone who didn't need protection. Someone doing okay without her. Someone she didn't need to worry about.

A

Thank you. As far as you can observe, what roles did the other person cast themselves in?

B

Someone barely holding it together. Someone who was trying to be a good mother and teach her child how to be good and how to get to heaven. Someone who wants the best for her child

A

Thank you. Now read the letter again and this time read it as if this is the apology letter YOU wrote to your mom.

B

I will read the same letter as if I wrote it to my Mom, changing words to fit her and the situation. (Hint: keep it simple and clear when changing words and keep as close to the original letter as possible)

Dear Mom,

First, let me tell you how much I love you. You have always been so special to me, even when I didn't show it. When I was growing up I loved watching you bake bread and plan holidays. You were quite the cook and you loved making holidays special.

I want to apologize to you, my dear Mother, for all the times I was not there for you, for all the times I was in a Media blackout and self-absorbed fantasy stupor and could not see what was going on in your life. I am sorry I was not able to tell you about my strict and abusive teacher at school and that I could not see how hard you were trying to be a good Mom. I am sorry that I believed things that hurt you and made you feel guilty for them and inadequate.

I would never want to hurt you. I love you. Can you forgive me for my inability to see you and understand what was going on for you? Can you forgive me for abandoning you?

If there is something I can do to make this right with you, please let me know. I want all to be right with us going forward.

Love,
(B)

A

Thank you. How does it feel to give this apology?

B

I feel sad. I can see that I didn't see her either. I didn't see what she was going through. I can see that I didn't trust her enough to tell her about my school teacher and how afraid I was. I can also see how much she did for the family and how she did make the holidays awesome. Basically, I can see that it was not all bad. There was a lot of good times too.

A

Thank you. As you reread it, did you notice if you still cast the other person in the same role as before?

B

No, I was beginning to see her as more loving than I had remembered. She was there for me more than I give her credit for. I think this time I cast her in the role of caring mother rather than abandoning mother.

A

Thank you. Did you notice if you were in the same role you cast yourself before?

B

No. I can see where I hurt my mom. That I abandoned her. That I didn't see her. That I didn't appreciate her or really know what she was going through. I can see that I was drunk on media. That I was a drunk too. That I wanted to escape too. I see I was like her.

A

Thank you. Does this situation look any different to you from this perspective?

B

It does, though it's hard to admit it. I still feel like she should have been there for me because I was the child and she was the parent. But I think I am looking at it with more adult eyes right now. I can see that she was doing the best she could, given everything that was going on in her life. I can see that she loved me, even though I wanted her to show it in different ways. I can also see that I punished her for not being the mother I wanted and that my behavior towards her did hurt her.

A

Thank you. Now read the letter again and this time read it as if this apology letter is a letter YOU wrote to YOURSELF. Please slow it down so you can really FEEL your apology.

B

I will read a letter that I wrote to myself, changing some words to make it clear what I did to me.

Dear (B),

First, let me tell you how much I love you. You were always so special to me. When we were growing up I loved watching us dance and sing. We were quite the entertainers.

I want to apologize to you, for all the times I was not there for you. For all the times I was in a media drunk stupor and could not see what was going on in your inner life. I am sorry I was not

there to protect you from your strict and abusive teacher by speaking up and getting adult support and that I could not see how hard you were trying to be good but rather always told you how bad you were. I am sorry that I told you things about yourself that hurt you and made you feel inadequate.

I would never want to hurt you. I love you. Can you forgive me for my inability to see you and understand what was going on for you? Can you forgive me for abandoning you by not letting you be your authentic self?

If there is something I can do to make this right with you, please let me know. I want all to be right with us going forward.

Love,
(B)

A

Thank you. How does it feel to give this apology to yourself?

B

It feels personal. It feels like I am now really getting in touch with myself and how I don't love myself enough. How I abandon myself. How much my self-talk is abusive and unkind. I did always tell myself how bad I was. I never let myself off the hook. I shamed myself all the time. I never stood up for myself.

A

Thank you. As you reread it did you notice any recurring roles that you have played out with yourself?

B

Dictator. Abuser. Strict disciplinarian. Abandoner. Never satisfied with myself. Shaming myself.

A

Thank you. Did you notice more deeply how you have limited yourself with these roles?

B

Yes, I am harder on myself than anyone else. I abandoned myself by not speaking up and by not allowing myself to be worthy. I don't validate myself and expect other people to do that for me. This limits me in my ability to take care of myself and be happy.

A

Thank you. Does this situation look any different to you from this perspective?

B

Yes. I can see that, when it comes to hurting myself, I do it better than anyone else. I can see that others are not as hard on me as I am on me. I can see that I need to find ways to be kinder and more loving to myself.

A

Thank you. What roles can you recast the other person in that would serve you both?

B

I think I am going to say, "loving mother" because she was loving. She did the best she could. She still is trying to make me happy.

A

Thank you. What roles can you recast yourself in that would serve you, the other person, and the world?

B

Resourceful adult. A good parent to myself. Compassionate and understanding with myself. A nurturing, loving, forgiving friend. I could be the kind of mother to myself I wanted my mother to be for me.

A

Thank you, B . This ends the demonstration.

We would like to go over a few points before we have our qualifications. You will notice as the sponsor or facilitator for the Forgiveness Letter, I do not comment on what the sponsee shares. I only say, "thank you," my job is to listen and hold space for the sponsee to find (his/her) own answers to the questions. My job was to allow B to find their own discoveries. The only time a sponsor might give some feedback is if the person reading the letter feels stuck and asks for help. Then I might give some suggestions for the turn arounds. I do not try to do this worksheet for them. What makes this process valuable is the sponsee's own legitimate self-discoveries.

B

You will notice that I try to keep each of my letters as close to the first letter as possible, turning the ordinal letter around to my apology to my mom and then myself. I added only the things that made sense, for instance instead of singing and dancing, which was what my mom loved about me, I write baking bread and planning holidays. We want to keep the letter simple too. Not too long so we can have easier turn-arounds.