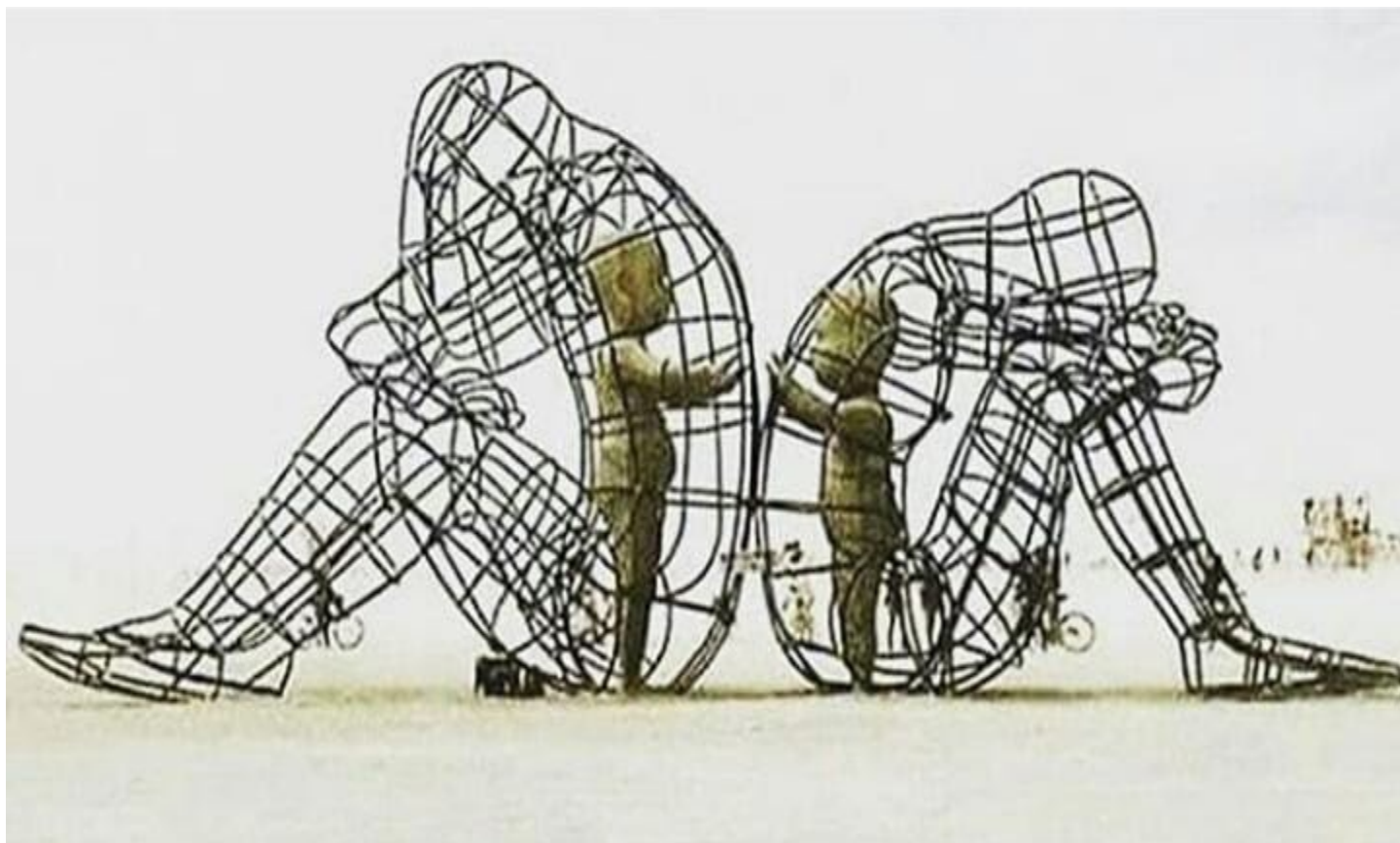


The Healing Journey of Our Inner Child



Introduction

We are the culmination of our life experience. That life experience consists of who we are currently, the way we were raised, the outcome of every choice we've made, our strengths, the things that have hurt us, our habits, our personality, and our confidence in ourselves as a person - among many other facets that make us who we are.

At every age from birth, childhood, adolescence to adulthood, we have experienced challenges and growth. If we had parents or caregivers who were mentally and physically healthy then we learned how to cope, grow, and evolve as a mentally healthy, stable, and strong individual, but sadly that is probably the minority of us. The majority of the time we are wounded and trying to do the best we can with what we know, BUT, we can always know more, learn, change and grow from adverse experiences.

Most of us experience a dysfunctional family of origin and a childhood and teen years that is wrought with trauma, challenges, and struggles that we may still struggle with today. This in turn affects the way we love ourselves, others, and the way we have relationships with others and ourselves.

To understand why we are the way we are, we must first explore and understand the struggle of our inner child. The inner child must be loved and nurtured for the duration of our lifespan. All of us have that inner child inside that wants nothing more than to feel loved and accepted. It's imperative to continue to nurture our inner child throughout our lifetime.

In our culture, we give children blankets, pacifiers, bottles, and stuffed animals, so we can learn to self-soothe and comfort ourselves. Then, we take away the very things that we have learned bring us comfort and don't give alternatives to continue to be able to comfort and self-soothe. We are left with a void and the inability to continue to feel safe, loved, comforted, and soothed. We often struggle throughout our lives with not being able to comfort ourselves, soothe ourselves, or understand how to give ourselves the love and needs that weren't met as we were children.

This booklet is a guide to help you through your journey of healing the inner child in you and learning to allow yourself to pour the love into yourself that you may not have received as a child. To accept yourself for who you are.

It is strongly recommended that you develop the practice of journaling throughout the experience of this guide. You may journal by written hand, by text on a document that is safely guarded on your computer, or by voice that many electronics now offer in their tools to text options. Documenting this journey is paramount to your healing and measuring your growth.

Chapter 1: Healing Our Inner Child

Who is your inner child? With this guide, we will learn to better understand our childhood experience and ourselves. We will explore our feelings and thoughts and learn how to nurture ourselves through difficult trauma and experiences.

Who is my inner child?

Experts in the field of psychology claim that our inner child is the aspect inside of us that is childlike. From our life experiences that we learned as a child and teen to who we become as an adult. The inner child lies primarily in our subconscious and manifest through triggers that surface when old wounds or psychological “scars” are activated. The psychological “scar” takes our psyche to the exact moment of the painful experience and our minds relive the trauma, feelings, and sometimes behaviors that occurred at the time of the event. We may not even be aware of what is taking place, we just react to what our brain is experiencing. When this happens, it’s imperative to know how to self-soothe and comfort ourselves, to be able to weigh our triggers against logic, and allow our feelings to exist and dissipate naturally.

Regardless of the age we are currently, we have experienced problems and emotional pain in the past. We may have experienced bullying, mental or physical abuse, loneliness, insecurity, or neglect from our families. All of our experiences affect our current state. We can heal from our painful life experiences through the process of acknowledging our experiences and feelings about them, observing the way we feel, offering ourselves comfort and not judging ourselves.

Exploring Your Own History

In our journey of healing from our trauma and painful life experiences, we must understand the need to heal our inner child. Through inner child work, we can experience healing from painful feelings and experiences. We will recover our self-confidence and release the painful past to live a healthier and happier life. This experience may be difficult and those challenges may become tough to work through, but know that on the other side of your hard work is healing and a joyful life!

The Experience

To heal from trauma, it is a good idea to seek counseling from a licensed mental health therapist. In tandem to therapy, this guide book may include an eclectic recommendation of therapies and techniques. Within this process, we will learn to release negative thought processes, sabotaging actions, and depleting emotions.

In addition to healing and working through past trauma, we will learn to find the motivation to reach our goals while giving ourselves permission to experience the most out of our life. Through this guide, we will learn to integrate positive affirmations, meditations, and inner child therapy as well as healing from the negative effects of dysfunctional parenting.

Chapter 2: Discovering Our Innocence

In order to live a mental healthy and balanced life, we want to discover our inner child. When we connect with the purity of our inner child, we touch the qualities of our soul.

Exercise: Finding the Qualities of My Inner Child

- Imagination
 - Curiosity and creativity are qualities that children possess, but we often deprive ourselves of these as we get older. To heal, we need to allow ourselves to be imaginative in our actions and thinking.
 - What sounds like fun?
 - Find creative activities that can rekindle our imaginations. Activities that make our lives more interesting and fun can open up new possibilities, such as meeting new people, discovering new interests, or something you loved doing as a child. Maybe take a class, enroll in a seminar, or join a group.
- Smile and laugh
 - All of us experience challenges from time to time, but we can still genuinely smile.
 - There is an ancient practice called the “Inner Smile.” This process relaxes our inner organs and allows us to give ourselves inner love. Follow the guide for the Inner Smile Exercise below.

Inner Smile Exercise:

- Close your eyes and settle into a slight smile on your mouth, curling up the corners of your mouth, not a grin, but a gentle smile.
 - Take a deep breath, as you inhale, imagine you are inhaling golden light as you hold this inner smile.
 - Now exhale, as you exhale, send gold light down to your jaw as you separate your teeth slightly.
 - Continue sending light down your through to your heart and internal organs.
 - Send the smile with love to each part of your face: your eyes, nose, sinuses, ears. Scalp, cheeks, mouth.
 - Now, send the smile to each gland and organ in your body.
 - When you have completed sending light and love to each part of your body, wrap your arms around yourself, and give yourself a big hug. Tell yourself that you love yourself.
-
- Engage your world using your senses
 - Try looking more intentionally at your world. Notice the colors, the aromas, the flavors, the textures, and the sounds that surround you.
 - Notice the colors around you as you say them outloud. Feel the sensations in your body of how those colors make you feel. Surround yourself with colors that make you feel calm and happy.
 - Notice the aromas around you. What does your bath gel smell like? What aroma of candles make you feel happy or calm?
 - Taste your food. Really taste it. Chew your food slowly, at least 10 times per bite. What flavors do you derive from one bite? What is the texture (rough, soft, etc.) What foods make you feel good and healthy?
 - Notice how your doors open, the color and texture of the door, the sound of the door, how your feet feel on the floor, rug, or carpet, the weight and feel of your sheets and blankets. Surround yourself with textures and sensations that make you feel good.
 - Notice how your vehicle drives. Is it rough, smooth, fast? How does it sound when you excel your rate of speed?
 - Notice how music makes you feel. Do you feel the vibration? Can you feel your body moving in rhythm to the music. Does the music make you feel good?
 - Do you have a pet? Have you observed your pet grooming itself? How about the way it feels, smells, and makes you feel when you're cuddling or petting it? What do you think your pet is thinking/

Exploring the world through our inner child is rather simple. We often get so caught up in the “busy-ness” of life that we forget to enjoy the little things the way we did as a child.

Chapter 3: Exploring and the Healing Journey

Unfortunately, we have all suffered emotional wounds as children. Those wounds may manifest throughout our lives, in our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

Everyone is the culmination of our life experiences, both good and bad, so we show those experiences throughout our interactions with ourselves and others. We will definitely encounter others who are struggling, too, so it's important to keep that in mind in order to be more empathetic and compassionate toward others.

With that said, **nothing gives someone license to abuse us.** No amount of trauma gives anyone the right to abuse another person. Period. Boundaries are essential to live and maintain healthy relationships, so bear that in mind as you work through this guide.

As you work through the following exercise, give yourself space between each step. You may want to work on one step per week or wait a few days between steps.

How to discover and Heal Your Damage

We will follow some basic steps to help explore what lies within our inner child.

1. Let's explore identifying the primary issue that drives our inner child.

- We often experience themes throughout our childhood and sometimes into our adult lives that may consist of rejection, lack of attention, which leads to feelings of abandonment, isolation, and loneliness.
- For some, being constantly criticized, being treated with contempt, or having unrealistic expectations held over them may also lead to feeling anxious, self-conscious, questioning and doubting ourselves.
- If the happy times were fewer and further between, there is a playful child inside longing to feel loved, accepted wanting to express themselves freely, without stress or guilt.

2. How do I earn the trust of my inner child?

- In healing our inner child, we need to develop a trusting relationship with them. Our inner child should be able to understand that we are there to protect and nurture them. We can accomplish this in the best way through having an inner dialog with them.
- To start this process, write a letter to your inner child. Let them know that you are in a better place now. Give your inner child the words of love and support that you long to hear.
- After writing the letter, close your eyes, imagine yourself as you were as a child sitting in front of you. Ask your inner child what they needed and wanted most. Reassure them with a loving and accepting embrace. Let your inner child know that you are always there to love and protect them from now on.

3. Hold your inner child's extreme pains.

- It's time to help your inner child be strong and move through the pain.
- Let them know you understand the grief they have experienced and that you are here to offer them support and safety.
- This process allows you to access the subconscious patterns that your inner child has held on to.

4. Help your inner child through their anger.

- Anger is a natural manifestation of painful feelings. It's normal to feel angry about things that have happened, but you can move through these feelings. Most feelings that arise in us stem from the subconscious memories of our traumatic and painful childhood experiences.
- You will probably be able to identify triggers that manifest the anger from childhood needs that have never been met. Take note of the triggers and feelings that arise with them.
- Thank your inner child for letting you know their feelings and speak forgiveness to them for

being brave enough to express those feelings. Tell your inner child you love them and that you are there for them to help them heal.

- When you can sit in a safe space, allow the inner child to talk to you about the anger, the triggers, and how that has affected them over the years. Hold your inner child safely while they acknowledge, allow, and accept the pain they've experienced. Reassure them that they are safe and you are there to protect and help them through the trauma. Reassure them that together you will heal.

5. Addressing the loneliness of the inner child.

- Feeling lonely, alone, and abandoned are very natural feelings of the inner child's experience.
- As your inner child what feelings arise when you say the words "lonely, alone, and abandoned" to them. Take note of those feelings. Sit with the feelings, accept the feelings without judgement, and allow the feelings to dissipate without pushing them down or away.
- Reassure your inner child that you accept and love them for their true self. That they are not alone and you will always be there to protect and soothe them. Reassure your inner child that they will never be alone again because you are there and will always be there for them.
- Take note of feelings of self-judgment, guilt, and regret. Allow those feelings to arise naturally without pushing them away or down. Accept the feelings for what they are - feelings that exist - and then let them disperse and disintegrate into the air.

6. Overcoming the voices of criticism.

- The voices of criticism are usually the ones the inner child heard growing up. They are often parents, teachers, siblings, care givers, coaches, or other persons of authority. The voices are often very critical, contemptuous, and condescending. The voices undermine and erode our confidence and self-esteem. They are the voices of criticism and judgement.
- Reassure your inner child they are now safe from those voices. They are safe to talk about it, to feel their feelings about what those voices have said, and they are safe to disagree and argue the truth to the voices.
- Empower your inner child to realize they are valuable, they have worth, and those voices are lies that incapacitate us, so we aren't a threat to those who want to control us.
- Ask your inner child to speak the lies to you, to counter those lies with truth, and to find the opportunities where the inner child can grow from the experience.
- Always comfort your inner child and soothe them after reliving the difficult experiences of their pain.

7. Reparent your inner child with the unconditional love they deserve.

- Now that you are older and wiser, bring that wisdom and maturity of life experience to help the needs of your inner child. Ask your inner child what was missing from your childhood and help them devise a plan of how to manifest that into your present and future life. For example, if your birthdays or holidays were disappointing, create your ideal experience that you missed growing up.
- Another idea to love and nurture the inner child is to hug yourself everyday and compliment yourself. Give yourself the affirmation you did not receive as a child. Tell yourself that you are proud of you!
- If you find yourself resisting love and acceptance, explore what may be hindering you from allowing the self love.

8. Empower your inner child!

- There are some people in your life who are not supportive, but instead who are toxic. It's imperative for yours and your inner child's mental health to set healthy boundaries to keep your mental health safe and secure.
- Try to minimize contact with toxic family, friends, and associates. If it's not possible to distance yourself from toxic individuals, allow yourself to use your voice to set strong boundaries of how you will allow yourself and your inner child to be treated.
- It is a privilege to be in your life, it is not a right! Determine what respect means for you, and let everyone in your life know you accept nothing less.
- It is imperative to set boundaries and how empowering it is to set those boundaries with toxic individuals.

9. Encourage your inner child to be playful and fun.

- Give yourself and your inner child permission to have fun! Sometimes the most simple experiences can be the most fun.
- What did you enjoy doing or playing as a child? What are some things you feel you missed out on doing as a child? Allow yourself those indulgences of playful fun!
- Decorate your surroundings with whimsical items, display pictures of your childhood, display childhood awards or trophies, buy yourself toys you wanted as a child.
- Allow yourself to play by acting silly, dancing around your home, finger painting, drawing/coloring, take lessons in something you always wanted to learn, join groups you wanted to join as a child, such as a choir, a sports team, etc.
- Connect with your inner child by allowing them to manifest and enjoy the things they were neglected of as a child.
- Allow your inner child to manifest to their fullest and best life!

It's important to remember that embracing, loving and nurturing your inner child is a healing experience. It will enhance your life and you will find the most amazing changes!

Chapter 4: Growing Your Spiritual Connection

We are all made of a body, mind, and a spirit. It's important to grow and nurture the spirit of our inner child. This isn't about religion, but about your spiritual connection with yourself.

Your inner child is a facet of your being that is innocent, pure, uncomplicated, loving, and playful. These are also characteristics that reflect your true self or your soul.

Most of us grew up with a spectrum of dysfunctional elements within our family dynamic, so the purity and innocence of our inner child is in need of healing. As we work through the pain of our childhoods, we will return to our natural inner child state that is peaceful and happy.

In reconnecting with our inner spirit, it is essential to take space that allows us to practice types of meditation and mindfulness that helps us to reveal the painful memories and experiences. This process will give release to them and bring about healing.

It is helpful to talk about the issues, but we must address them at a deeper level. We must acknowledge the painful feelings and experiences, allow the feelings to surface without judging the feelings or judging ourselves for having the feelings, and then we must allow those feelings to dissipate on their own without forcing them away or down inside of us.

When we take space to be mindful or meditative, it is crucial that we are open and honest with ourselves. We must determine an accurate interpretation of the experience, causes, and feelings that exist.

When we have uncovered the underlying experience and our beliefs about them, we can begin the healing process through mindfulness, meditation, and the new experience of healing.

The positive outcome of this experience is that by reparenting ourselves now, we give to ourselves the childhood we needed and deserved.

Working Through The Process

In working through this difficult process, you may want to work on only one painful event at a time. Be prepared that this may be difficult and uncomfortable, but that is okay. In order to heal, we must experience the process that it takes to heal. There is nothing wrong with feeling negative feelings and awkwardness or discomfort at working through painful memories. You may feel emotional or emotionally tired after the experience, and that is okay. Give yourself the soothing comfort and rest you need. You may want to journal the experience afterward to have a record of what you've worked through and how you felt about the experience.

In effectively healing we must take some intentional steps to allow ourselves to learn the mindful and meditative experience. Again, through each step, you may want to wait days or a week before moving on to the next step.

Preparation:

- Set aside adequate time to work through this process.
- Take space in a quiet and comfortable area of your home. You may want to light some incense or a candle, maybe have an essential oil diffuser expressing a comforting aroma.
- Make sure you're comfortable and sitting in a relaxed position as you slowly work through this process.

Steps of the Process:

1. Sitting in your relaxed and comfortable position, inhaling the aroma that you find comforting, reflect back over your childhood. Stop at an early memory when you were by yourself soon after something painful or confusing happened.
2. Imagine your present self there with your inner child. Look into the eyes of your inner child with love,

acceptance and understanding.

3. Hug your inner child by hugging yourself right now, give your inner child what they needed and wanted at that moment in time. They may need to feel heard, validated, supported, loved, safe, or another need. Give that to your inner child right now.
4. Say the words to your inner child that they needed to hear. Give them the support and encouragement they need, letting them know you are there for them.
5. Let your inner child know they are no longer alone again. They are unconditionally loved by you and always appreciated. They are now safe.
6. Allow your inner child to receive any forgiveness and healing they have longed for. Give them what they need for every painful issue they have ever experienced.
7. Allow your inner child to feel nurtured by your deep and caring love. Let them feel your embrace, your open heart, and unconditional love.
8. Allow yourself to fully become your inner child and feel the love and acceptance, the safety and nurturing that you have longed for.

Remember, give yourself space to self-sooth, self-comfort, and rest after this process. Love and hug yourself!

Chapter 5: Trusting Again

Children are born with an innate trust of those who are supposed to care for us and protect us. Over time we lose that trust as people hurt us and are not able to offer us the nurturing and safety we deserve. The less safe we feel, the more difficult it is to trust others to the point that we may have a difficult time trusting anyone else.

In order to learn to trust again, we will work through some steps below. Again, anytime you begin self-work, do so in a space that is comfortable, non-distracting and surrounded by things that soothe your senses.

Again, through each step, you may want to wait days or a week before moving on to the next step.

Learning to Trust Again

1. Trusting others is a good thing!

- By nature, we are social creatures. We do enjoy interacting with others and having relationships. Isolation is difficult. Trusting others who are safe allows us to have more emotionally intimate relationships, which in turn are more meaningful.

2. Acknowledge the areas where you do trust.

- If you were hurt by someone, it's difficult to believe that everyone won't hurt you. It's sometimes challenging to make ourselves vulnerable enough in a relationship to develop reciprocal trust. As humans, we are flawed, so we do sometimes unintentionally hurt each other, so moving through the hurt, forgiveness and letting go may be a challenge.
- Through hurtful experiences, we develop expectations of others that may hinder us from trusting. We have to look at the positive qualities of others, whether we feel emotionally safe with them, and whether we believe they are intentionally hurtful. It's important to perceive others as a whole rather than just the negative aspects.
- As we heal our inner child, we will find that sometimes in having empathy for others, we can extend empathy and grace to ourselves. As we derive a greater understanding of ourselves, we will find more clarity in learning who we feel we can trust.
- Most importantly, we must learn to trust ourselves. Acknowledging our love of ourselves, our own appreciation and trust for ourselves allows us to set better boundaries. It also helps us develop more trust in our decisions, our commitments, and to develop the best relationship with ourselves that we can have.

Chapter 6: Forgiveness

When we talk about forgiveness, we often think that forgiveness encompasses condoning or forgetting the offensive behavior. That is NOT what is forgiveness.

Before we go on, let's be clear about forgiveness. Forgiveness is a tool that we can use as an opportunity to grow. Forgiveness allows us to move forward through the difficult experience. *Forgiveness does not mean you have to have a relationship with the person who offended you.* Forgiveness again, is a tool to use as an opportunity to grow through the painful experience.

Forgiveness of ourselves is a little bit different in that we have to also accept the forgiveness we give ourselves. Again, it doesn't mean we approve of our own behavior, but it means that we're ready to acknowledge what we did to offend ourselves, we confess this to ourselves, and we are ready to move forward through the experience. We also must accept that forgiveness from ourselves and stop punishing ourselves and bringing up the behavior to ourselves. It's an opportunity to move forward.

Again, through each step, you may want to wait days or a week before moving on to the next step.

In this exercise, you may not want to tackle all of the steps at once. Maybe work on them one at a time for a few days or a week. Journal the experience and write down your many thoughts, feelings, observations, and conclusions.

1. **Acknowledge the reality** of the situation.

- Observe your feelings. Allow them to surface without pushing them away or down. Accept your feelings for what they are without judging yourself. Sit with your feelings until you feel them dissipate.
- Now, think about the situation. Let it arise in your mind without judgement of yourself or the other person for their behavior. Sit with the situation and the behavior of the other person.
- Think about the other person's intent. Think of yourself as the other person as you consider and answer the following questions.
- If possible, ask the other person the following questions in a conversation about the situation. Let them know this is not a confrontation, but a conversation.
 - Do you believe they were being malicious?
 - If so, why do you think that?
 - If not, what do you think could have been some explanations for their behavior?
 - Try to be informed but not critical in looking at all perspectives of the situation without judgement.
 - You are an observer.
- Write down any thoughts, observations, feelings, or conclusions you have.

2. **Confess and repent.** Don't forget to journal the experience!

- your part in the situation, repent of what you've learned from the situation and how you realize you would do it differently next time, then ask forgiveness for any wrongdoings on your part.
- You may not have done anything wrong to warrant or bring about this situation, but you may have been wrong in the way you reacted or behaved during or afterward.
- Look at yourself as an observer and without judgement. Realize what you may have done to contribute to the situation, reacted during the situation, or behavior that after the situation.. Write down your confession or confess to the other person.
- Repent, in this situation, means that you understand anything you have done in the situation to be harmful to yourself or the other person. It means looking at how you realize you would do things differently. Write down your repentance (what you learned and how you would do things different next time) or verbalize those things to the other person

3. **Forgive.**

- Write down or ask the other person to forgive any part you had in your behavior with this situation. Now, write down your forgiveness to the other person or verbalize it to them. Remember though, forgiveness does not mean condoning the unhealthy, traumatic, or

hurtful behaviors, it just means that you are moving through it to healing. Write a letter of forgiveness to yourself and the other person. If it's appropriate, give the letter for the other person to them. If not, you may want to release it by burning it, shredding it, or mailing it to yourself.

- It's okay if you decide the person is too toxic for you to continue any type of relationship with the other person. It's okay if you decide to just have a surface relationship with the other person to protect yourself from further trauma. It's also okay to continue to have a deep and meaningful relationship with the other person.

4. Forgive Yourself.

- Write down your forgiveness to yourself for anything you may be holding against yourself. Mail the letter to yourself then you may burn or shred it. Verbally accept your own forgiveness and do not hold anything against yourself.
- When we forgive ourselves, it is normal to want to forgive the other person and makes it easier to heal from the hurt. Be sincere, and remind yourself that you are forgiven.

5. Be intentional.

- We all make mistakes and this process is very important in being able to heal our pain. At the end of the day, we are flawed humans. It's helpful to learn not only to be intentional with ourselves, but also with others. It's beneficial when we learn to forgive more effectively, be more patient, accept others and ourselves for who we are, and live and let live without criticism or judgment.

6. Seek Help.

- There is nothing wrong with asking for help when things are too overwhelming, or we do not know how to move through something ourselves. Professionals are there to educate, assist, offer skills, or medication. There is no shame in asking for help in any area of our lives. It's good when we care for ourselves.
- Sometimes, it's difficult to move through difficult experiences and it can hinder our growth. As we forgive others and ourselves, it allows us to grow and become the amazing people we are meant to be.

Conclusion

Our inner child is an integral part of our being. It lives in our subconscious and often manifests through triggering experiences. When we neglect our inner child as many of us were neglected in childhood, it continues to prevent us from healing, nurturing, and growing into the complete and wonderful adult we are meant to be.

- **Our thoughts, memories, and perceptions.**
 - Our inner child is constantly interpreting our perception of the world and our experiences. Our inner child skews our opinions and conclusions to the point that it affects our experiences, especially our relationships, love and self-esteem.
- **Our emotions.**
 - If we received constant criticism as a child, our inner child carries those wounds into our adulthood. We may manifest this as insecurities, submissiveness, aggression, fear of rejection or approval, fears of being our authentic self and loving ourselves. It may also hinder us from loving and accepting love from others.
- **Our relationships.**
 - Our behaviors are often manifestations of our feelings. Our actions could potentially be hindered or limited by inaccurate and irrational beliefs, attitudes and conclusions we were conditioned to believe as children. These perceptions may affect our ability to be trusting, loving, and vulnerable with others. It can affect our relationships, our emotional and physical intimacy. It may affect our friendships and how we interact with those in the workplace.
 - When our inner child is nurtured, we heal and become the whole person we were meant to be. We will become more confident and functional in our interactions with ourselves and others. We will learn to be more loving to ourselves and will be able to receive love.
- **Our inner child.**
 - We are the culmination of our life experience, so everything we have lived and continue to live is rooted in us. The relationships we have, the patterns we establish, the way we think, feel, and behave, our traditions, our friendships, our careers, our moods, and our spiritual life are all built on the foundation of our childhoods. Through healing and nurturing our inner childhood we can strengthen the foundations or rebuild a better foundation.