

A person with short, light-colored hair is seen from behind, sitting cross-legged on a dark, jagged rock. They are wearing a yellow long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. The background is a vibrant, golden sunset or sunrise over a body of water, with a bright sun low on the horizon. The sky is filled with warm, glowing light and some darker, textured clouds. The overall mood is contemplative and hopeful.

SAY HELLO TO  
- AN AWESOME -  
**New You**  
- AND BYE -  
TO THE OLD

*A practical guide  
for processing pain and loss,  
finding the hope, strength & joy  
to move forward*

CHALLENGE 1:

# Moving Forward by Writing It Down

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You can only know where you're going when you know where you've been.

As we look forward to the next day, week, year or decade it is first vitally important to consider where we've come from. No matter what the past has looked like for you, this will likely uncover some moments of incredible joy, and perhaps even moments of incredible pain, but it is important to look at them both. We've found that, in doing so, we are led to places of incredible thankfulness for the moments of joy, towards growing in inner reconciliation for the moments of pain, and towards a greater understanding for the innumerable moments that have existed everywhere in-between.

CHALLENGE 1: Take a few minutes (or even a few hours) to write down 7 of your greatest joys and 7 pains. (if you can't think of exactly 7 for either, it's ok!)

You're welcome to start with either list or jump around chronologically. As you're working through each of the bullet points take a moment to remember each scenario, no need to jump to conclusions on what could happen in the future of each situation.

## Joys

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As you finish your lists, go back over the 7 JOYS.

Were any of them a complete surprise? Which ones? How so?

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Are there specific steps you took to make any of these a reality?

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What have you learned from these moments?

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How are you different because of these moments?

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One or more of these moments can serve as an Ebenezer –  
A pillar of hope for future situations that don't look as positive.

Always remember that hope can become reality any moment, and that there are steps  
(no matter how small) we can take to bring our dreams closer.

Now look at the 7 pains (negative moments/events). You're welcome to spend as much time as necessary on each one. If any of them bring out a lot of regret or shame, try to simply hold the event out in front of you as best as possible.)

Are there things to learn from these moments?

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What could happen in the future to begin a redemptive process (no matter how crazy, far-fetched or wild the idea seems)?

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Is there a visible first-step you can take towards the redemptive process? If so, what is it?

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Don't feel the pressure to jump on a high-speed train towards moving-on from the negative moments; it can take time. But know that it is not only possible, but it is likely in your power to begin the process.

Keep this list as long as necessary, and maybe keep it on a nightstand or desk for the next few days of to come back to, add to the list or make notes on how this could be the best life ever!

CHALLENGE 2:

# Forgetting It by Evaluating & Processing

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In the first challenge we talked about the art of remembering— that, in order to move forward, it’s important to consider where we’ve been. And where we’ve been often involves failure and pain, being let down and letting others down. It’s a painful thing to think about moments when we’ve failed, but often if we don’t look at them and evaluate, they’ll resurface seemingly out of nowhere and rock our life boat or worse knock someone we don’t want to out.

Think about it this way, your wading waist-deep in the ocean with a full beach ball. The beach ball is the failure, anger, or shame. When we’re alone or in a group, we’ll try to hide it (it’s a natural response), so we’ll submerge the beach ball with our hands in order to be seen for who we are, not the failure or pain we’ve been through. Whatever energy we’re using to keep the beach ball under the water, we’re then unable to give the group; and in the event that we forget to focus on keeping the beach ball submerged, natural buoyancy will cause it to jump out.

It’s important to bring our shame, fear, anger or pain to the surface before exhausting ourselves in an effort to submerge it. This doesn’t have to be done with a post online or even with anyone at all. But it does need to be looked at – for me, I can process all the time I want alone and with the Lord, but I need other trusted voices to walk with me through it.

These items don’t have to be huge; they can be seemingly menial like a small argument or a fear of failing at work. Or they may be some larger struggle. They may be big fears or sources of anger like the inability to communicate with family or a horrible breakup.

What are some items of fear, shame or failure that you want to leave behind?

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### CHALLENGE 3:

# Forgive It by Choosing To Love



Forgiveness is perhaps one of the hardest parts of any relationship. Do you remember what it was like on the playground in elementary school? Whether it was getting “accidentally” hit with a stick or being picked last for the kickball team, an argument would start and the teacher would come over to investigate the situation, determine the victim and posit the idea of forgiveness. If you were the one with the hurt arm or ego, the forgiveness portion could be difficult, especially with everyone watching; but you had to because it was the ‘right’ thing to do.

But the truth of it is: you don’t have to forgive. In fact many relationships have shriveled because of an untouched issue. I can think of several off the top of my head and a few even in my own life. Usually they’re over menial issues, sometimes grave ones.

Forgiveness is less a societal norm than people think.  
It's an action that requires a lot of thought and is a deliberate choice.

Unlike the situation on the playground, real-world forgiveness is likely not over something as obvious as a mis-thrown stick. It’s likely not as simple as saying “I’m sorry” and (very) likely not under the pressure of the small microscope of elementary school children on a playground. In the real-world it’s a very active task, one that requires you to go out of your way (and sometimes WAY out of your way) and effectively communicate to a person or people you may not want to communicate to.

But, nonetheless, in order to begin as healthy as possible, it’s important to at least think about the ways we’ve been hurt and how to move towards them in a peaceful manner.

Who do you need to forgive? Jot down a few things about it.

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Is there a situation in which you felt wronged by a group of people?

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Sometimes we don't feel ready to forgive – it can be a very hard choice. But here are a few things to consider.

Forgiving does not mean forgetting. We don't have a magic eraser – I wish we did.

Forgiving does not mean we have to let someone do something to us again. Sometimes we need to put up boundaries to protect ourselves from situations or people.

Forgiving does not mean they won't hurt us again. Think about the person at work who is constantly saying negative things about you – there may be some resolve in confronting or setting up boundaries – but some people continue to do things that hurt others. This is what I call **ACTIVE FORGIVING**. Posturing your heart, having forgiven them, reminding ourselves that we have already forgiven them and ready to forgive again if something new takes place.

## Forgiving is choosing to love.



We are designed to forgive! God didn't design our bodies to carry unforgiveness. (I won't go into it here, but if you're interested do a search for the effects of unforgiveness or bitterness on our bodies)

If God didn't design us to carry unforgiveness, then we must be designed to forgive and we are empowered by God with the ability to forgive.

Question 3: What would it take to begin the process of reconciliation?

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MOVING FORWARD MEANS LETTING OTHERS OFF THE HOOK, FORGIVING, AND CHOOSING LOVE INSTEAD.

As you've taken time and considered who you need to forgive, who is the first one on your list — what would it take to begin tomorrow?

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## Apologizing is choosing to love.



Last question: as you've taken time and considered who you need to forgive, are there any memories that stand out to you for someone you need to offer an apology to? If there is someone you hurt where offering an apology is still an option, prayerfully consider extending love, grace and a new beginning to? Who may need to hear an apology from you? What may that look like?

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CHALLENGE 4:

# Move On by Forgiving Yourself

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In the last challenge we talked about forgiveness. It's a difficult task that requires a lot of thinking, action and even more intentionality.

BUT, what if the person you need to forgive is yourself? Sometimes it feels like the only one in the other corner of the boxing ring is our own self-criticism.

Try this:

Do you feel shame about anything? If so, why? Is it possible that you're the only one really dwelling on the situation?

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If this is something ongoing – is it something to add to the list of things to leave behind in 2015? Is it something you can (if you haven't already) share with a trusted friend or leader to help you begin processing?

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Perhaps the biggest situation in which you need to forgive is a situation involving yourself.

If this is true, it may be good to take a moment and recognize that you're still here. You're still you, and no matter what has happened, it's probably severely worse in your head than it actually is (period)..

Maybe the beach ball (as mentioned in challenge 2) isn't forgiveness you need to give someone else, but maybe it's forgiveness you need to give to yourself.





CHALLENGE 5:

# Remember It well by Thinking It Through

In the first challenge we talked about the importance of healthy reflection. One of the challenges was to write down 7 joys and 7 pains from the previous year. Since then we've talked about forgiveness, regret and some tips for handling the negative turns that have occurred in the last year. Now we're going to turn towards the gifts and joys that you've experiences.

If you still have the list nearby, look back over the 7 joys. If you're list is elsewhere, take a few minutes to think back or write down a new list.

Whether it takes 7 min. or 7 hours, go through each moment on the list and ask yourself a few questions.. (also, if the gifts have changed since it happened, don't worry about tracing the change, just consider the moment itself)..

Can you think of the situations that directly led up to the gift? What were they?

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Was the moment a wild chance, expected or somewhere in-between?

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Is there a physical item/song you have that reminds you of the moment?

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Who were the people involved in this?

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The tough truth is this: Every day will have gifts, and every day will have negative times. Both Joy and Pain need their moments. This could be the best time of your life, or an incredibly difficult time, which is why it is vitally important to remember the times when hope has erupted from seemingly hopeless or average situations. It's important to remember the times when you've been surprised by joy.

If you've found a physical item, a song or a photo to remind you of the moment, save it somewhere; hide it in a closet or a glove compartment or a pocket. As you're doing so, think about the moment it resembles. Whether you need to return to it once or every hour for a bit, it'll be there. It's our prayer that no matter how difficult any moment may seem that you remember that hope is there and joy can be closer than the next breath!

# Remembering well helps us live well!

Are there any other key memories you don't want to forget?

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## CHALLENGE 6:

# Wrapping up!

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Take a few moments to review what you've written out and take a couple more steps!  
If you're able, get out 2 pieces of paper or use the spaces on the next page:  
Write "Moving Forward" at the top of one sheet and "Leaving Behind" at the top of the other or

### CHALLENGE 1: MOVING FORWARD BY WRITING IT DOWN

On the "Moving Forward" sheet, make a list of the positives to keep with you and remember. Since you've already written this out - just make a bullet list.

### CHALLENGE 2: FORGETTING IT BY EVALUATING AND PROCESSING

On the "Leaving Behind" sheet, make a list of what you want to leave behind in 2015 - You'll be throwing this away at midnight symbolically or literally if you want!

Add to the "Moving Forward" sheet a list of what you want to take with you into 2016.

### CHALLENGE 3 & 4: FORGIVING

Look back over the names you've written down for these challenges. Commit to processing these wounds with someone you trust. If there are people, including yourself, that you have forgiven, think about adding some type of statement to the "Moving Forward" sheet.

"I am moving forward into my new life, choosing to forgive \_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_." You may want to keep these vague or use abbreviations for peoples names because I encourage you to keep this list with you and refer back to it.

### CHALLENGE 5: REMEMBERING IT WELL!

If there are important details you want to be sure not to forget, write these down on the "Moving Forward" list.

Who are the top 7 people who have impacted you for the better this year? What would it look like to take a few moments to thank these people? (see the resource on page 18) It could just be a text, an email, a phone - or maybe coffee or take them out for dinner. The step may be different for each person on the list - But challenge yourself over the course of the next few days to connect with them and let them know or pick a date with them that you will!

As we finish one season well, we  
Move clean into the next & leave as  
much baggage behind along the way.

Leaving Behind

Moving Forward

Lined writing area for journaling reflections.

CHALLENGE 7:

# Ask Him!

Before the new year rings in, spend some time with the Lord in prayer and ask the following questions and write down what He shows you or brings to mind. Have your "Moving Forward" list in front of you and a pen.

Ask the Lord:

Is there a specific verse or passage from the Bible you want me to focus on as I consider these things? Write it below.

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Are there any words He would give you for this new time in life? (this may be something different for you, but just ask and see! Take a few minutes, rest for a bit with a pen in your hand and your bible open.

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RESOURCES: Additional helps

# THANK YOU!

I will Text Email Call See In Person

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Thank You For \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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I will Text Email Call See In Person

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Thank You For \_\_\_\_\_  
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I will Text Email Call See In Person

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Thank You For \_\_\_\_\_  
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I will Text Email Call See In Person

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I will Text Email Call See In Person

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Thank You For \_\_\_\_\_  
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I will Text Email Call See In Person

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Thank You For \_\_\_\_\_  
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# I Apologize...

I will ● Text ● Email ● Call ● See In Person

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
I want to apologize For \_\_\_\_\_

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I will ● Text ● Email ● Call ● See In Person

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
I want to apologize For \_\_\_\_\_

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I will ● Text ● Email ● Call ● See In Person

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
I want to apologize For \_\_\_\_\_

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I will ● Text ● Email ● Call ● See In Person

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I want to apologize For \_\_\_\_\_

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I will ● Text ● Email ● Call ● See In Person

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
I want to apologize For \_\_\_\_\_

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I will ● Text ● Email ● Call ● See In Person

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
I want to apologize For \_\_\_\_\_

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**Leaving Behind:**

What you want to leave behind in your old life?

**Remembering:**

Who are the top people who have impacted you for the better?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 7. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_ 8. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_ 9. \_\_\_\_\_

What are some of the victories?

**Moving Forward:**

What you want to take into this new life?

What do you want to be different in this new life?

Ask the Lord if there a specific verse or passage from the Bible you want me to focus on over the next few weeks?

Ask the Lord if there any words He would give you for this new life?

Ask the Lord how He would want this new life to be different?

Are there people you need to forgive? Yourself? God?





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