Without forgiveness, there is resentment — or guilt. Instead of human fellowship, there are separate prisons.

We have a choice: We can stay where we are — or we can give or ask for forgiveness.

- **Forgiveness is a decision.** It is not a feeling. A decision to forgive is a first step.

- **Forgiveness is showing mercy** even when the injury has been deliberate. The challenge is not in forgiving when there is an excuse for what was done, but in forgiving when there is none.

- **Forgiveness is accepting the person as is.** It is letting go of judgments. People can begin to deepen relationships if they forgive each other — continually — for not being equal to their expectations.

- **Forgiveness is taking a risk.** It is making myself vulnerable. To renew my commitment to someone who betrayed my trust is to trust myself to handle being hurt again.

- **Forgiveness is a way of living.** It is developing a readiness to forgive: by pardoning others for the little daily hurts and annoyances, by pardoning ourselves for small things, too.

- **Forgiveness is choosing to love.** Forgiveness is the first skill of self-giving love. It takes the hurts, acknowledges the problem, accepts the person and loves in the direction of resolving the situation.

- **Forgiveness is not sentimental,** not condescending, not righteous. Above all, it is not conditional.