

## What is your FQ: Forgiveness Quotient?

*Warning: It's Probably Not What You Think*

© 2007 Cliff Stockamp

*"We are all on a life long journey and the core of its meaning, the terrible demand of its centrality is forgiving and being forgiven." Martha Kilpatrick*

*"Without forgiveness there is no future." Desmond Tutu*

He was a college student. I could tell by his frumpy disheveled brown hair, his loose fitting khaki shorts, and t-shirt and by his well worn camouflage back pack that bulged from his back as he walked ten feet in front of me at the Charlotte airport. His backpack had written on the back Virginia Tech in bold black letters. My mind filled with questions. It was just four days after the Virginia Tech massacre that shocked our country and the world when our paths crossed or nearly crossed in that place. I tried to make them cross. I picked up my pace to try to catch up to this young stranger as we both weaved our way through the mass of humanity to our separate destinations. I felt a kinship with this young man as if I knew something about him and his life created by the media exposure. I wanted to ask him about his experience of the shooting. I wanted to hear what he saw and felt. I wanted to touch the hem of his conscience. I formulated my opening question as a way of creating dialogue: "You must be going home. I saw that you go to VT."

I picked up my pace more but like a college student late for a final exam after an all nighter-- he moved quickly and purposefully. I didn't know if he was running from the tragedy or running to home—or both. It was probably both. I decided to end my pursuit and let the young man go to where he was going without my selfish inquiry.

I like many others have tried to make sense of the actions of Cho Seung-Hui who destroyed the lives and futures of at least 33 students and then justified his actions on video recording. He presented himself as a martyr for the good of his "children and brothers and sisters" as he states in the video.

What has emerged from the unholy saga was a young man who chose the path of hatred, death, and unforgiveness as opposed to forgiveness, life, and joy. He represents in the extreme of what happens to a human being that chooses to hang on to and collect a lifetime of hurts, betrayals, and experiences that all human beings are heir to on a planet filled with some 7 billion people. There is a part of each of us that is like Cho Seung-Hui though we may not ever take it to the extreme that he has done. There is a part of us that wants to play the victim and hang on to hurts and wrongs and betrayals and then justify why we can't have what we really want in our lives because of what they did to us. I have that part of me that lives and so do you.

Having coached now over 1000 clients from ten countries I want to share with you what I have found to be one of the biggest keys to unlocking your true potential and creating the life, health, wealth, and relationships that you deserve but may be pushing away unknowingly.

Let me first of all say that everyone I've met and coached have people and things that have occurred that they've not forgiven and the vast majority of them aren't aware of it. Unforgiveness will cause you to keep attracting and creating the same results and painful experiences over and over again in your life in some or several areas of your life. And that pattern, no matter what it is, will continue until the day you die if you do not stop it at its point of origin. That point of origin exists in your memory of the experience and your perception of yourself and the people involved. And that memory can only be altered through forgiveness. When you forgive rightly, then your life and results will change to reflect true forgiveness. If your patterns and results have not changed, then no matter how much you may try to convince yourself and others that you've forgiven someone—you have not in fact forgiven them.

Your life results, i.e. the fruit on your tree, determine how well you have chosen to forgive. And it is the only accurate barometer to measure your Forgiveness Quotient by.

**Forgiveness Quotient:** Def. The degree of forgiveness present in a person's psyche based on measurable and observable phenomena.

The first step in increasing your FQ and thereby increasing your joy and health and wealth and relationships is to first identify what you've not forgiven. This is the first and most difficult step for people to take. Why is it difficult? It's difficult because we all grossly overestimate our ability to forgive and to have forgiven. We aren't honest with ourselves and we often don't even know that we aren't being dishonest. Very few people want to admit that they carry grudges or seek revenge in some capacity. Yet every person I've worked with does it. And I've done it repeatedly in my life.

So how do you determine if there is someone or some experience that you've not forgiven? Answer: You do it by looking honestly and objectively at the mirror of results in your life in each area of your life and taking an honest inventory to discover repeating patterns that do not serve you.

Look at your Physical health. What pain, discomfort, dysfunction, disfigurement exists in this area of your life?

Look at your Family health. What pain, discomfort, dysfunction, disfigurement exists in this area of your life?

Look at your financial health. What pain, discomfort, dysfunction, disfigurement exists in this area of your life?

Look at your Career/Business health. What pain, discomfort, dysfunction, disfigurement exists in this area of your life this area of your life?

Look at your Social health. What pain, discomfort, dysfunction, disfigurement exists in this area of your life?

Your past will tell you with complete accuracy what needs to be forgiven and what patterns you keep creating in your life. Our past never lies. A very wise person once said "you'll know them by their fruit." Translated he was saying, you can judge the quality of a person's ability to forgive based on what they have and don't have in their life. (For a very insightful Living Inventory Quiz: [http://www.totalsuccessinstitute.com/inventory/test\\_self.html](http://www.totalsuccessinstitute.com/inventory/test_self.html))

Now from experience, this concept and notion will seem acceptable to most people on an intellectual level. But when the barometer of Forgiveness is applied authentically to a person's life, what often emerge are all the justifications for why their life is what it is and why it must continue on that path.

I had a coaching call with a woman last week who gave me permission to share this part of the experience. Her experience is a metaphor for everyone's life in some way.

This woman has been single for about 20 years, feels alone and often lonely. She originally told me that she enjoys her independence and being single and does not need a man in her life. She then got honest with me and herself and admitted that she would like to have a partner in her life to travel with, to play with, laugh with and to love and be loved by. We all want that. She does not have that in her life and has never really had it. So I simply looked at the fruit on her tree objectively and saw the lack of fruit i.e. results in that area of her life (Family) and I knew that something had happened and that she had not forgiven others for and herself.

When I dug deeper, what I found was this. Her last husband had died of a heart attack all alone. She had taken a 10 step recovery program which he supported and helped pay for. She left him at the conclusion

of the program. Six months later she flew back into town, hired an attorney, filed for divorce without telling him, and cleaned out the bank accounts then flew out of town. Shortly thereafter he died of a heart attack. He had no living family or relatives. She was contacted as the next of kin when he died. In our call she was full of justifications for her actions which were at best cold and heartless and at worst cruel and calculating. She has confessed that she never saw herself or the situation accurately and always justified what she had done. She now looked honestly at what she had done and she did not like what she saw. She is now beginning the process of forgiveness. Only when this happens will she ever find true love and a healthy relationship.

You situations may not be as extreme as Cho's or Michelle's. But you do have areas of your life that require honesty and forgiveness. You have only to begin this journey and your life will begin to change. You may need help in this journey. If so please seek competent help. You were born for greatness. Make it so.

Cliff Stockamp

CEO and Master Mentor Coach of [www.totalsuccessinstitute.com](http://www.totalsuccessinstitute.com)