The Forgiveness Ledger

Count what it cost, then walk it through, one step at a time.

Forgiveness often gets rushed, and the part that was never counted stays with you. So this worksheet counts first, because you can only release what you have actually counted. Then it walks REACH, a researched path through forgiveness (Recall, Empathize, Altruistic gift, Commit, Hold), one step at a time. There is no pressure here and no schedule: if you are not there yet, you are not doing it wrong. Forgiveness is never owed, and it never means reconciliation or going back. What it releases is the grudge, not the memory.

First, count it

You can only release what you have counted. Name the specific hurt and its full cost: time, trust, a relationship, a sense of safety. The whole amount, not a rounded-down version.

R: Recall the hurt

Bring it to mind plainly, the way it happened, without replaying it for the hundredth time and without rehearsing revenge. Just the facts of it, held steadily.

The Forgiveness Ledger (continued)

E: Empathize, if and when you can

Only if you are able: what might have been going on for the other person? This step is hard, and it is optional. Skip it with no guilt if it is not the time.

A: The altruistic gift

Recall a time someone released you when you had not earned it. Forgiveness is a gift you choose to give, not a debt they paid off. What would offering it look like here?

The Forgiveness Ledger (continued)

C: Commit to it

One small, concrete thing that marks the choice: write a sentence, tell one safe person, put a date on it. Commitment is what holds when the feeling fades.

H: Hold on when it comes back

The grudge will visit again; that is normal, not failure. You keep the memory and the boundary, shrewd as a snake about a real danger; you set down the grudge, gentle as a dove. What will you do when it returns?

Forgiveness is a process, not a moment, and it is never owed or the same as reconciliation. Wherever you are is allowed.

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A free, 15-minute call with Sean, a Canadian Certified Counsellor. No pressure, just a conversation.

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