

# Summer Of Peace2012

## Deborah Higgins & Wayne Ramsey

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Philip: Hello, everyone. Welcome back to the Summer of Peace 2012 telesummit. This is Philip Hellmich, the Director of Peace with The Shift Network.

This week we continue the journey around forgiveness, and this is such a powerful topic because it's one that touches most of our lives, people around the world both on a personal level, and we can also see the need for forgiveness in larger conflict situations. Today I am extremely thrilled to have with us Deborah Higgins, the director of programs; and Wayne Ramsey, the director of research design and evaluation from the Fetzer Institute.

Fetzer Institute's mission is to foster awareness of the power of love and forgiveness in the emerging global community. They seek to deepen the understanding and the practice of love and forgiveness and integration of the inner life with the life of action in the world among individuals and communities.

Through the development of their advisory council, the institute further seeks to create and study a catalog of examples of love and forgiveness in action through individuals, programs, events, or organizations; define exemplary cases for budgetary support that will further raise awareness of love and forgiveness in action; and they developed councils into living laboratories that through heightened awareness of the power of love and forgiveness generate the institute's operations within diverse sectors of transformational work with the emerging global community.

The Fetzer Institute is truly a pioneer and leader in the area of really bolstering up the emergence around forgiveness.

Deborah and Wayne, it's just a real honor to have you here on the Summer of Peace. Thank you for being with us.

Deborah: Thank you. Thank you. It's an honor to be with you.

Philip: Yes. I just want to acknowledge that one of our wisdom council members from the Summer of Peace is Azim Khamisa who also shared a powerful story about forgiveness, and he also a part of the work of Fetzer. His story is just powerfully moving. It sounds like you have been exposed to it quite

a bit. But I like to start off with just some general questions. What is forgiveness and are we talking about the same thing when we use the term?

Wayne:

That's a very interesting question because obviously definitions are very important. One thing that I really have to emphasize with forgiveness and it's very interesting that your group is called Forgiveness Journey because that's really what forgiveness is. As one begins to take that choice and that commitment for forgiveness, it really opens one up to a lot of different possibilities.

So when you begin to talk about forgiveness the whole richness of it makes it for a very difficult concept to begin with. Now, for instance, in the past we worked an awful lot with social psychological researchers. We can talk about forgiveness as a social psychological concept, but we also have to recognize at the same time that forgiveness, when people talk about forgiveness it has a very profound nature as well. People use spiritual terms. They use transformational language. That sort of forgiveness has been the topic of arts and poetry and religious reflections throughout the centuries. It really becomes a notion of who am I? What am I capable of? How do I want to live?

So I just want to start out by recognizing that there are different ways to talk about forgiveness. As one goes deeper into it, it becomes much more profound. But for an awful lot of people and we can't take away from this at all, forgiveness is really to them about the choice they have when faced with a wrong or an offense that has been done to them and making a choice to turn away from the resentment, the anger, the pain, and opening themselves up to acceptance and understanding and perhaps even compassion, perhaps even love.

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So it is a choice, and out of that choice different changes occur. It really can be an opening to a journey where really one goes much, much deeper to understand their own sense of who they are and what do they want to do in the world.

I know that was a long answer, but it is important to recognize that for some people, forgiveness is about taking charge. I have been hurt. I need to take charge of the situation so I am no longer the victim. I am going to change the story of victimhood to becoming the hero of my own story. So I'm going to take charge through forgiveness, and I am going to release that person who has hurt me, who has offended me, and I'm going to release them from anything further.

For many people, that is forgiveness and that is important. For other people, that is the beginning of something that perhaps is much more profound, much more transcendent, much more transformational in their life where they turn to a completely new pathway and new way of living. So it's a fascinating concept. I also have to admit when we work with psychologists, there's almost -- I think someone wrote a law once that when psychologists talked about forgiveness, they have to first start with what forgiveness is not.

So forgiveness is not something like pardoning. Pardoning is a legal concept. It's not condoning what happened. It's not excusing it or denying it in any way. It happened. It really did, and it created tremendous harm. But it's also not about forgetting. When we forgive, we don't forget; we just remember in a different way. It's also really not about giving up notions of justice, this notion that somehow you give up a claim for justice because you have forgiven really takes you down a wrong path. Forgiveness is really about you and what you want to do and how you want to want to be and how you want to live.

Psychologists distinguish forgiveness from reconciliation. Reconciliation takes two people; it's relational. There are maybe some cases, you can think of the abusive family relationship where reconciliation is not called for, that you really need to get away from a particular situation. But that is not forgiveness. Forgiveness would be something different. So really forgiveness is about this choosing to do something very differently -- the way you think, the way you feel, and the way you act. Sorry, I went on so long there.

Philip: Well, no. Wayne, I just really appreciate how much you and your colleague have just looked at all the many different dimensions of this. Deborah, would you like to elaborate any parts of what Wayne just said?

Deborah: I think one of the things that Wayne emphasized was that when we are doing research around forgiveness that it's often very important to try to begin with the definition. Also in our work we recognize and acknowledge that it is a very personal and in many ways unique to each individual what these concepts mean. It's really quite exciting to be here and to do this work in multi-dimensional ways both from a research perspective and then also a process of inquiry and engagement and sharing in conversations around these concepts.

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Philip: Nice. What are some of the reasons that you've seen in your research why someone would want to forgive? Why should a person who's been

wronged or offended should choose to forgive? Why would someone embark on that journey?

Wayne:

The caveat is that forgiveness research is a very new field. For so many years, forgiveness was thought of by scientists as something relegated to religion, and it was not a subject of scientific inquiry. Thankfully, that is changing now as people are beginning to see that forgiveness is a topic that can be studied scientifically and that you can show that there are actually benefits from forgiveness.

For instance, when you look at forgiveness, you can say that the research is quite consistent. Those who say they have forgiven they are exhibiting an increased sense of well-being. They have a greater sense of hope for the future. They're also less associated with a lot of qualities, anxiety, stress that have real health issues involved in them because when you're dealing with something as powerful as a harm, a pain, it can be such a burden so that our bodies react in a real stress pattern, producing stress hormones which really can affect our physical health as well as our mental health. It can increase blood pressure. It can have some cardiovascular effects. So by releasing that anger and resentment through forgiveness, we free ourselves up.

There was a very interesting study that I think that the conclusion is really very important. They looked at a number of couples, some who were dealing with real forgiveness issues, really problems that they had in their relationships, and then they looked at others who were able to deal with issues in a compassionate and forgiving manner. They really looked at different physiological measures. What they found obviously beyond the basic physiological markers was those who were able to deal with these issues in a compassionate, loving, forgiving manner were able to take on other tasks with increased efficacy, the feeling that they can do them, and as well as persistence.

The conclusion really was that forgiveness seemed to free up people and their emotional and their mental energy so that they can do other things at the same time. It's not this burden or this giant wall that they needed to climb over, but it freed them in a real sense of being able to go on and do other things. I think that's the real thing about forgiveness is that it can free you to do what you're meant to do.

Science every once in a while comes up with great metaphors, and I think that is one out of that case in the sense that forgiveness can free you to do that which you are really meant to do. Obviously, there's a lot of research in forgiveness and in relationships and family and marriage. I'm not sure who said it, but I think there's a quote that, "Marriage is the

ultimate experiment in forgiveness." It's something all of us married couples know something about.

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The research there is quite consistent as well. If couples can become more forgiving, then it's going to improve the marital satisfaction, your feelings of contentment within the marriage. So there's a lot of research on that as well. I just have to add, it's a fascinating research. If there's any young psychologists, sociologists out there, forgiveness research is very interesting and I hope they think of it as a career possibility.

Some of the research is really quite fascinating. They bring in couples to a laboratory and then they play a kind of game. The researchers manipulate the game so that it looks like one of the parties is maybe doing something wrong or acting selfishly or even trying to humiliate the other person, and then they see what the consequences are. Sometimes it's very, very interesting I'm sure. Some of the things that I really think are pointed out in that research that I just have to mention too is that it really shows the importance of taking some time to respond when you're faced with something like that; that you see is an offense; that you see is a harm.

Those who respond quickly obviously seem more inclined to be more vengeful, to be more hurtful. There's a real importance of taking time. The other thing is that obviously the importance of communicating your feelings, what you expect, and the notion of commitment to better behavior in the future. And then also the importance of the underlying relationship, but I can't stress that enough because the stronger your relationship is in a marriage family situation, the more likelihood you are to be able to forgive.

I think, in general, it's a growing body of research that really shows that there's a consistent pattern on the benefits both from a mental standpoint but also from a physical health in being able to forgive, being able to make that commitment to "I am willing to try and forgive."

Philip:

In the same time you say that forgiveness is not forgetting, it's not necessarily condoning or giving up justice. It sounds like it's really evolving the human capacity to love. Could you say a little more about that? It's such a transformational aspect of the human potential, forgiveness in terms of what does it really mean to be human? Forgiveness really comes down to some pretty deep qualities of what it means to be human. Could you say a little bit more about those aspects and what you see exciting about forgiveness being an innate potential in human?

Wayne:

Yeah. As you said that, I would agree as well that it really raises some very deep questions that we can all address to ourselves. What does it mean to be human or what does it say about our own human fallibility, our own vulnerability? What does it say about who I am and my place in the world and my relationship with the transcendent, the deepest part of myself and then my relationship with each other?

While much of the research is really around this forgiveness as a psychological construct, an important one, but there's also, if you take the time, and again think of forgiveness as a journey and you begin on that journey by looking in that concepts of what can I do? How can I take control? Where is my will to take control of the situations? But over time if you look at it from that deeper perspective and that deeper well of who I am, what am I, what is my relationship with the deepest sense of who I am and my meaning and purpose, and what is my relationship then to others, then that forgiveness journey becomes something very transformational.

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It's not viewed in isolation, but it really becomes an entire picture or tapestry or mosaic of who you are and how you're going to live. I say that knowing that to some people that sound very flowery and very abstract, but it's all a process, it's all a journey, and some people will get off that journey and say, "This is as far as I'm capable of going." But if you take the time to practice and you take the time to go deeper, then you'll raise these issues and it raises that opportunity for transformation. To me ultimately, that's what forgiveness is about. It's an opportunity for transformation.

You just heard the story of Azim Khamisa. That is a wonderful example of what can become and what can come out of the power of love and forgiveness. I stand in awe of those stories. There are many of them, and we've heard stories through our work, stories like people who have been hurt tremendously through 9/11, and yet have taken that and have done something else with their lives, transformed their lives in service of others.

I have worked in the field of research for many years, and one of the most prominent researchers in the field of forgiveness came out of that work in part through a personal tragedy where close family member was murdered. They had to live through that experience, and they had to deal with that on a very personal level as opposed to the scientific objective, yes, I'm going to tell you what forgiveness is. They had to feel it on the

most intimate level, and it turned around the way that they think and they feel and they act in the world and the research as well.

Now he talks about his mission in the world as encouraging forgiveness in every willing heart and home. So we have a lot of these stories where people have just been transformed. I think that's really the ultimate power. It's not easy. There are no easy answers, but it's really a commitment to a journey and seeing where that journey goes.

Philip: Deborah, are there any stories that particularly stand out to you that you found really moving?

Deborah: Well, as Wayne mentioned, there are really quite a few, and through our work with international advisory councils, we're meeting more and more people from around the world learning more and more about their stories. Azim's story is one, as Wayne said, that is so enriching, so inspiring. There are others, and one of our advisers is Angelina Atyam. Angelina is from Uganda, and her daughter was abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army in 1996 and held in captivity until 2004.

She struggled through this terrible ordeal what would be every parent's nightmare. So many in Uganda were living the reality of that nightmare. But somehow through that pain and struggle, Angelina somehow found within herself a way forward. She formed the Concerned Parents Association, and together with these other parents they would begin to meet and share their stories to lend one another support. They made commitments to one another to be there for each other and to find a way forward.

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She eventually met with the commander who had been responsible for her daughter's abduction and asked for the release of all of the children, and he said, "No." He did offer that he would release her child if she would stop talking about the atrocities and maybe try and convince others. She said, "No, we need you to release all of the children. We've committed to one another. We are a community." Her daughter continued to be held.

Eventually, she even met the mother of the rebel soldier who held her daughter, and somehow they connected. She was able to express to that mother that she'd forgiven her son. She realized that he too somehow was caught up in something that wasn't calling forward his best human capacities and potential.

For me, what she did was she was able to tap into that place, as Wayne was talking about, and we were describing that forgiveness, it may not be about condoning what someone else has done. It may be about some kind of acknowledgment, a release. It may happen too, in a sense that one is so free to let go of this pain which has held you captive. But miraculously, as you free yourself, you also create space for transformation to happen for those around you.

Her story, she did that. Through her opening up this space for forgiveness, for healing to begin to happen, some tremendous things began to happen in her community. I'm just hugely inspired by her, and her way of being able to find forgiveness in that situation is a path forward that opened the possibility for healing in her community. Eventually, these young women were released and then eventually some of the soldiers who were caught up in this terrible situation began to make their way back home. How do you reenter a situation where you've created so much pain for others, but maybe not even initially through your own intending to enter that situation?

Philip: Right. There's a few aspects here that are really -- I mean just the fact an individual takes the journey that is transformational. And then it sounds like this person in Uganda as well as Azim then serve as modeled that others can then be inspired to forgive and then creating the space for the ones who wrong to rise up to a higher capacity. Can you say a little bit more about both of those aspects of how people who become champions of forgiveness model it for others and then also how they create the space then for people who've been doing the wrong and then go through their own transformation? Can you say a little bit more about both of those aspects?

Deborah: I don't know if the research focuses on those dimensions, but I think that in almost all of the stories that have come forward that you're absolutely right. You're describing the relational dimension that while it may be an individual who begins this journey of forgiveness, that because we do live in community, that we are interconnected, that my transformation is tied up with your transformation. While it may begin from within me in this work that I'm doing, it does end up having this ripple effect that at least creates the possibility and the openness for someone else. It's not necessarily prescriptive for someone else, but it does seem to be a removal of barriers perhaps.

Wayne: Yeah, I would agree with Deb in that when we hear about these inspiring stories, transformational stories, I think that oftentimes the tendency is to say, "Well, I couldn't do that. That's beyond me." I think at the very basic level we recognize the human capacity and possibility around love and forgiveness.



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I'm thinking back, the Fetzer was involved in a book and a report out on the Amish Community. The book was called Amish Grace, when the Amish Community went through that horrible killing of their school children and yet they responded with almost immediate forgiveness and reaching out to the family of the killer.

I thought it was a great discussion point for communities or discussion groups. What does this tell us? What does this tell you about forgiveness? because I can see where many people would say, "Well, that's very nice for them, but what does this have to do with me? I am not Amish. I don't have that world view. I don't have that religious background." Yet it's such a powerful story that shows that forgiveness is possible, and that out of that we need to look at this from our own individual relational community perspective.

We are not saying that there is one roadmap to forgiveness. What we are saying is that you need to start that journey if you want to be able to be open to that possibility and that once you begin that journey and you will find others on that journey and you will be able to share and guide each other and you may be able to share resources. It doesn't say that there is one roadmap on how one should forgive. There are ways to do it within standard therapy, but everyone is going to be so different. I think these stories are really about the possibility, the sense of the opportunity and the possibility of forgiveness.

Philip: Nice, Wayne. It seems like a big part of Fetzer's work is -- I love the fact that you are bridging the science into an area that was traditionally considered in the religious areas because this seems like a big part of Fetzer's work is just really starting to understand more and then making those findings and those tools available for people. I mean when I look at the Fetzer website, you've got resource, conversations about forgiveness, participant guide to a PBS series, The Power of Forgiveness.

So it seems like you're making available for people to know that what are the findings about forgiveness or how is it possible and how can people take steps to apply it in their life? Could you tell us a little bit more about the whole mission around Fetzer in this area and also the resources that you have available for people?

Deborah: Yes. I think what you hit upon is exactly that. The institute is a private operating foundation but a different type of a foundation. We're not grant makers, but what we do is to fund works that explore these concepts of love and forgiveness with the purpose of sharing what we

learned, engaging with others around this mission in a way that benefits the world really. So yes, you are absolutely right. As we learn more and gather resources, it is our purpose, our intention to share all that we learn with as many people as we can and are interested in accessing that information.

So our website as you know has already some wonderful resources on it, including we have a guide, conversations about forgiveness. It's a wonderful guide. It's available in hard copy. Also, you can download it as a PDF from the website. It's been created for small group conversations, used by church groups, community groups, even individuals who might want to gather a group of friends together. The idea is that it helps guide you into conversations that explore with one another what is this topic.

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We also have what are called conversation cards. It's actually a lovely little deck of cards that you can contact us and we'll send to you. Each card offers a question of quote about forgiveness, and it also offers something to discuss and something that might challenge you. I have them right here in front of me. I'll just quote one out, a quote from one of the cards: "Forgiveness of self emerges when we understand that even with our own actions we do not have total control. Everybody makes mistakes."

This is a quote from Fred Luskin from his book, *Forgive for Good*. On the back, it offers an item to be discussed, a question, it poses a question, "How does knowing we are all imperfect affect your view of self-forgiveness?" It could be a very rich discussion topic, just getting together with a group of friends and having that time. And then it offers exercises to do together or individually. So that's one of the resources that we have.

If you visit our website, you'll also know that we have links to various other resources. There's one lovely -- it's called the Letting Go Ritual. If you follow that link, it will actually take you through a ritual of a series of exercises of helping to let go and the burdens of pain or vengefulness that you may be holding on to. And then there are numerous, numerous video clips. One story is so powerful and the sharing with one another of our individual stories and how we've moved through, how we've come to transformation.

We have put many of the video clips. The story of Angelina, for example, is on the website along with many, many others. We'll continue to add to these resources as we gather more information from the work that we're doing. So we would encourage people to return and visit often the

website to see what new is there. We're also looking to make the website interactive. We'd love to hear from others, their stories, their resources around love and forgiveness as well.

Philip: Nice, nice. In that website, it's [www.fetzer.org](http://www.fetzer.org), and then there's a tab for resources. When you go to that --

Deborah: Yes, that's correct, yes. Thank you.

Philip: Yeah, and I'm looking at it right now. I'm just thrilled that these resources are available because I'm just imagining, some of the people listening may be like, "Well, there's a situation where I need to forgive. I don't know how to do it" or "Can I learn from others on how to do it?" I know you mentioned that it's a journey for everyone. It will be different from situation to situation. But it sounds like there's probably some lessons learned that we can gather from everybody's experiences and then try to apply them in our own lives.

This is just wonderful, wonderful work, Deborah and Wayne. Thank you so much for all this work. I just want to ask real quick, what are some of the typical patterns? I know a journey will be different, but what are some of the typical stages of forgiveness that you see that might be applicable to some of the people who are listening right now?

Wayne: Okay, again, with the caveat that we all began at different places due to our own genetics and our own personality and our own culture. So we all begin differently, but perhaps the first focus is really upon "I have this burden that I'm carrying. It is affecting how I feel and work because of something that has occurred to me, and I can't get beyond being the victim here."

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So the first step is really to recognize that obviously we are letting that pain control us. The first step is really about our own taking control about our own situation, our own story. At the very beginning of our journey, it really is about recognizing that that is a burden; that we have something that we can do that it is within our power and control. It becomes something of the will where we want to take control of our own lives and not be controlled by this person that hurt us.

At the very beginning, it really is about recognizing the importance of what we can do. Then it's really about this notion of choice, of choosing, of committing to this forgiveness process and journey. Then overtime as one goes deeper into this, perhaps different psychologists, spiritual teachers really talk about surrendering the will to something larger that is

at the same time deeper and even transcendent. One begins through attention of recognition, of taking control, of choosing a commitment, and then the hard work of going deeper and deeper until instead of the control of the will, perhaps there's a surrender of the will. So that would be a big picture idea.

Obviously, with different approaches to forgiveness when you're dealing with some specific offense, there's a lot of good therapy out in the world where different therapists have used different techniques around forgiveness. I don't want to lose sight of that either is that for a lot of people that is what's more important is being able to move beyond something very specific. A lot of times, those therapists and counselors in that work do have a specific process. They begin with, first of all, recognizing the offense, acknowledging it. It's not imaginary, it's real, and it really caused harm. We can't gloss over that or condone it or excuse it. Let's recognize and acknowledge the harm.

Then it really begins to work. Then you really want to work on this notion of commitment and choice that "I am going to work on forgiveness." Different therapists will have different approaches, but a lot of times what they'll be working on are first notions of what might be called spiritual values or qualities. They often work on gratitude, for instance, to begin with what are you grateful for. They begin with notions of gratitude and humility, and then they begin to work on exercises that really work on empathy. A lot of therapists would say you get the forgiveness through empathy which is really beginning to understand the thoughts and emotions of the other.

What are some of the exercises that psychologists would do? They're kind of interesting too. Some of them they work with this empty chair notion where the victim is sitting in front of an empty chair, and that empty chair is the person that hurt you. So what you want to do is you want to let them have it. You want to tell them how much they have hurt you. After a while, after you begin to go through all of this process of one's own feelings and perhaps some generation of empathy and then they reverse it, and the person sits in the chair and they become the offender, and they have to respond as such.

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So there is this whole how do you build up feelings of empathy towards the other? Then it's a question of how do you deepen and work on it and continue to reinforce? Some people say you need to get up in the morning and you have to say that "I'm going to forgive and I'm going to forgive and I'm going to forgive," and you keep repeating it. And then over time, perhaps you don't have to need to repeat it quite so many

times, and over time perhaps you'll get to that point of acceptance and understanding and forgiveness.

Philip: Nice, Wayne. Thank you. Deborah, would you like to add anything to what Wayne was just describing?

Deborah: Just to emphasize again the idea that at the point of choice that so many people you find that when, as Wayne said, the acknowledgement of the hurt, the wrongdoing that occurred, but then the choice to forgive is also a choice to transcend, if you will, to make something beautiful, create something beautiful out of something that was tragic, that there is a sense that they don't want to be frozen or have the beauty of something lost.

So many people who've lost love ones to violence, for example, have described this choice to move toward forgiveness, not really about letting go of the person who committed the crime but about transcendence of what happened so that there is a preservation and a celebration of the beauty of the individual in their life so this quality of transcendence that has been there that is inherent. Then again this idea that it is a journey and a process and we may not be that it's something that you check off on the list there. "There, I'm done. I've forgiven." It may be this ongoing process in our life and that's okay.

Philip: Right. Azim Khamisa is such a beautiful example of going through the grief of the loss of his only son and then taking it into meditation, I believe it was 40 days. And then at the end of that his teacher said, "Okay, now it's time to let go of the grieving and to honor your son." It is really interesting, Deborah and Wayne, how you're doing research on part that really gets into the core essence of humanity and transcend it, whatever language you want to describe it as. It really does go into the domains that have been left mainly for mystics and spiritual teachers over the years about what's possible in being human.

Deborah: Yes, that is true.

Wayne: That's the aim. Obviously, it's not always easy. That's why we think forgiveness is so fascinating and so powerful because if you do spend time thinking about some of these, you really do get to those deeper, more profound transformational questions. So it is very much an opening and an opportunity. So we need all aspects of human life and inquiry to help understand and help us as a society.

Philip: Yes. Desmond Tutu has gone as far as saying, "Without forgiveness, there is no future."

Wayne: Yes.

Philip: We are really talking about a really pretty big topic here in terms of helping seven billion people co-exist on the planet today. It's very essential. I noticed how you have forgiveness together with love and compassion. There is a Dalai Lama quote that I just love. Love and compassion are not luxuries. They are necessities for survival. That's a paraphrase. I have to look it up exactly.

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His Holiness also just talks about how love, compassion are essential for humanity, that we can't survive without them. I'm just thinking about some of the different speakers we'll have during the Summer of Peace, and then also what I've seen across Africa about the process of transforming conflict really does require awakening the human potential for forgiveness, compassion, and love.

Wayne: I can't really think of Desmond Tutu without thinking of the whole truth in reconciliation for South Africa which meant so much to that country going forward. One of the wonderful things about that experience and what Desmond Tutu lifted up, I think it's really the African notion of ubuntu which says that a person is only a person through other persons that my humanity is caught up, is intricately bound up in yours. If you really think about that, there is a pathway there to empathy, understanding, compassion, love and forgiveness. I think it's one of the true gifts that Africa has given us is this notion of ubuntu.

Philip: Yes, yes, very much. As we are talking about, I just found out the Dalai Lama quote. I know it's on love and compassion. He says, "Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity can't survive." I'm sure in your research there is a lot of distinctions between love, compassion, and forgiveness. Again, I just think it's wonderful that you're bringing a scientific lens to a part that is so essential for the survival of humanity.

Wayne: Right. Those are wonderful discussion points as well. What is the difference between love and compassion? Compassion involves some notion of suffering. Taking on another person's suffering perhaps is a broader concept, a deeper concept, I don't know. And then what's the relationship of love and forgiveness? Some people would say forgiveness opens us up, releases us so where love and compassion can ultimately flourish. Others would speak of forgiveness as the ultimate act of love. Where love has been blocked, forgiveness allows love to go beyond that blockage.

You can talk in terms of those spiritual concepts of love and forgiveness and what does that mean in different religious and spiritual traditions. I'm going on and on, but I guess the point of this are very interesting things to think about, not just abstractly but ultimately it comes back to what does it mean to me -- love, compassion, empathy, forgiveness, reconciliation? I hope people continue to think and talk to each other about those concepts.

Philip: Thank you for that, Wayne. Before we wrap up, Wayne, do you or Deborah have any final words for our listeners about this subject of forgiveness and even love and compassion?

Deborah: I have a quote I have just found from one of the love and forgiveness cards that I thought I might share. It says, "Forgiveness makes us one with the human family and allows us to live in the sunlight of the present, not the darkness of the past. Forgiveness alone of all our human actions opens up the world to the miracle of infinite possibility." That was from Kent Nerburn from the book, Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace.

Philip: Beautiful, Deborah. Thank you. Beautiful. Wayne, any final words from you also?

**[0:54:58]**

Wayne: Well, if we're giving favorite quotes, I have a Henri Nouwen quote that I really love and he said, "Forgiveness is the name of love practiced among people who love poorly. The hard truth is that all people love poorly. We need to forgive and be forgiven every day, every hour increasingly. That is the great work of love among the fellowship of the weak that is the human family.

Philip: Beautiful. Beautiful. I want to thank you, Deborah and Wayne, for being with us and taking the time out of your busy schedule there at Fetzer. Again, I want to encourage everyone to visit your website, fetzer.org, and then tap on the resource area where you can find some valuable resources that can help you explore forgiveness.

So again, Wayne and Deborah, thank you so much for being with us today.

Deborah: Thank you.

Wayne: Thank you.

Philip: All right. We will continue with our journey of forgiveness tomorrow and so we look forward to having you with us. Again, I invite everyone to look

at your own journey of forgiveness. If there's anybody in your life that you need to forgive and if you need help, go to the Fetzer website and you can find some tools there.

And then tomorrow we continue with the journey with Glenn Aparicio Parry with Leroy Little Bear and then Stephen Dinan of The Shift Network. They explore an indigenous perspective around forgiveness.

All right, everyone, thank you. That's going to be on July 4th which is somewhat appropriate. So thank you, everyone. Have a wonderful day. Bye-bye.

**[0:56:46]**

**End of Audio**