We tend to think that circumstances causes us to become bitter, but this is not always the case. Bitterness is something that happens to us, it is a characteristic we develop. To swallow a daily dose of poison would be unthinkable. Yet this is what you do if you awaken each morning with bitter thoughts that belong to the past. You are poisoning your system.

Bitterness is a killer. But who does it hurt? Only you – for who else suffers that gnawing pain which twists and turns deep in your being? Certainly not the one who has wronged you!. He or she probably is not even aware of it. Bitterness depresses the spirits, stifles creativity, weakens the immune system, obstructs happiness and ruins health. As a carrier you are the only one who reaps its adverse consequences so why submit to it?

A bitter person always seems to find a good reason to be bitter: “After all I did, he or she left me…” “My parents all favour my brother – nothing I do will please them…” “That false rumour ruined my chances of promotion…” and the list goes on…Valid reasons, maybe. Painful, certainly! even worthy of some human emotion. But it takes only a little –yes just a little time and effort to work through the pain, hurt, disappointment, sadness or anger. You must process your emotions, regain your balance, change your attitude or seek counsel.

“Wonderful in theory,” a bitter person might say. “But I can’t forget.” You can forget; but whether you choose to is another matter. It takes time and effort to re-pattern negative thoughts into the conscious habit of replacing them with positive ones. When we harbour negative emotions towards others or towards ourselves, or when we intentionally create pain for others, we poison our own physical and spiritual systems. By far the strongest poison to the human spirit is the inability to forgive oneself or another person. It disables a person’s emotional resources. The challenge is to refine our capacity to love others as well as ourselves and to develop the power of forgiveness.

“Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hate. It is a power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness.”

ALLAH TA’ALA knows what’s hidden in the deep recesses of our hearts. Those feelings of pain, anguish, resentment, hatred, bitterness, etc., that we so successfully hide from everyone else, including our closest family members and friends. So why not let it all out. Why not let ALLAH TA’ALA be your “therapist”. Let your prayer mat be your “couch” while you reveal and ask the One who is in control, Who knows you better than you know yourself. From the very depth of ALLAH TA’ALA’S fountain of Mercy, bitterness will be cleansed and you shall blossom amongst the flowers of enjoyment. Subhaan-ALLAH !

Beloved Reader! It is better to live in peace than in bitterness and strife. I’ve known people to go through a lot of trials and hardships and maintain a grateful and gracious spirit throughout. I’ve seen others face similar trials only to become angry and embittered souls. In both the cases the hardship revealed the heart more than it formed the heart. If we are filled with sweetness and something jostles us, then sweetness spills out. If we are filled with bitterness and we get jostled then battery acid goes everywhere. Overcome the obstacles in your path, be determined, courageous and hard-working. Never be faint-hearted. Be resolute, but never bitter… be beautiful inside and thus you shall become an embodiment of love, joy and happiness.

HOW TO DEAL WITH BITTERNESS:  
• Most important is to Turn to Allah by means of Dua (Prayer). Raise your hands in supplication, for, Du’a is a weapon of a Believer.  
• Every time you think of a past negative situation, replace it instantly with a picture of a positive, happy life.  
• When you feel resentful, bless and forgive the person who wronged you and do not stop praying for the best for those you love.  
• Busy yourself with things you enjoy so that you have no time to brood. Plan something to look forward to. Give to someone who is worse off than yourself. In other words place every negative thought with a positive one until it becomes a habit.  
Never allow bitterness to take root or you’ll become a twisted, sour human being people will shun.

Bitter thoughts are like weeds. Pluck them out of your heart relentlessly…and in their place will sprout the seeds of joyful new life.

**O ALLAH TA’ALA! Reform our character and bless us with cleanliness of the heart! Ameen.**

Forgiveness:  
Its Something Extra Special!!!

“So fear Allah and adjust all matters of difference among you.” (Quran-8:1)

The Messenger of Allah Muhammad [Peace be upon him] is reported to have said:

” If one gives charity it does not diminish his wealth; if one forgives others, Allah bestows more honour on him; and if one humbles himself for Allah’s sake, Allah exalts him higher.” (Hadith-Muslim)

**Some Handy Tips!!!**

**Make dua[pray]**- For only Allah can reconcile hearts and differences  
**Forgive**- He who forgives is forgiven and Allah will elevate his status!  
**Act-** SMS[text],call, email etc or even better personally approach the person/s and ask them forgiveness.  
**Remove Hatred**-Don’t hold any hatred in your heart-hatred is the cancer of the heart and soul- It Destroys the Hater and Not the hated!  
**It’s a process**-Remember, forgiveness is a process that takes time and patience to complete. You must be ready. Realize that forgiveness is for you – not for anyone else  
**Not Condoning**- Realize that forgiving does not mean you are condoning the actions of the offender or what they did to you. It does mean that you will blame less and find a way to think differently about what happened to you.  
**Refocus**-Refocus on the positives in your life. A life well lived is the best revenge. People who find a way to see love, beauty and kindness around them are better able to forgive and get past their grievances.  
There is no such thing as an unforgivable act. So don’t let your fear of what you did, or rage about what was done to you, dissuade you from either seeking or granting forgiveness.  
**Stay balanced.** The number of apologies you seek should be proportional to the number you are willing to offer, because the doing of each nurtures the capacity for the other.  
Know that you are never alone. Allah is always with you!  
**Allow love to triumph over logic**. There will always be a good reason to keep doing what you are doing or to withhold your forgiveness from someone else. But real issue is whether or not you love them enough to go beyond that logic.  
**Keep it simple**. Apologize for, or forgive, one thing at a time. There is always more to the story, but this is not the moment to explore it.  
Remember that forgiveness is not always the end of the process, but the beginning of a new level of relationship which may continue to be shaped into something very special  
Celebrate the moment of forgiveness by thanking Allah for giving you the opportunity to remove this burden off your shoulders. Give Sadaqah[charity] as it pleases Allah and removes Allah’s anger.

E ISLAM