Forgiveness. It’s often something that’s very hard to give.

A non-profit organization, "The Forgiveness Project," aims at awareness, education, and transformation for those on the giving and receiving end of forgiveness. Their mission is: "To open up a dialogue about forgiveness and promote understanding through awareness, education and transformation." They work to accomplish this through their website, newsletter, and restorative and preventative programs in prisons, schools, and communities.

The website makes it clear that, “forgiveness does not condone or excuse the action. It is a gift from one individual to another” and “forgiveness must be a choice.” A choice that Reaksa and Elizabeth, whose stories are told on the website, made.

When Reaksa Himm was just 14 years old, he witnessed 13 members of his family murdered by soldiers in the Killing Fields of Cambodia. Surviving the massacre, Reaksa swore revenge against those responsible for the death of his family. “The anger against the killers was as great as the grief for my family and it burned inside me like a great ball of fire,” he remembers. But something happened years later. After he survived the horrors of refugee camps and death squads, Reaksa became a Christian. His newfound faith gave him a whole new reason to find the murderers: he wanted to forgive them. Now free from the grip of hatred, he serves as a missionary in Cambodia—building schools, planting churches, and training leaders.
Elizabeth Turner was pregnant with her first child when the twin towers were attacked. Her husband, Simon, was at a breakfast meeting in one of the towers on that fateful morning. Not wanting to raise her child full of hatred, she made a choice that she admits was tough. She says, “Choosing the path to stop the cycle of violence is just as difficult as choosing the other path of anger and hatred.” Her healing came through writing a book to help others. The Blue Skies of Autumn is a memoir about how she had to hit rock bottom before she could start building a new life for herself and her son.

It’s easy to read these two stories and declare, “The perpetrators didn’t deserve forgiveness!” But neither do we.

One of the most amazing forgiveness texts in the Bible is Romans 5:8: “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” The text doesn’t say, “Because we were perfect” or “Since we were saints” but rather “While we were still sinners.” Isn’t that amazing? When we deserved it the least, Jesus offered the gift of forgiveness.

The Creator had placed Adam and Eve in a perfect place. When they sinned, God could have called it quits with the world. God could have destroyed them and given up on planet earth. But the One who would later save the world gave them a second chance. In an unselfish act of love, Jesus chose to die so that they—and we—could live.

~ nc

Additional resource: [You Tube](#)

1. [The Forgiveness Project](#)

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