

Empathy and the ability to forgive others for their behaviour is something we all will struggle with during our lifetime. Even if you have not dramatically fallen out with someone, you will still have experience of forgiving someone for something small. Forgiveness can often be very difficult but remember that it is normal to feel this way! As Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, it is really important to display empathy and try to understand other people's perspectives.

Making the effort to understand someone and their actions (i.e. empathise with them) is a really important first step to forgiving someone. If you are reading this article to seek some support then well done! Taking

the time to think about how you can try and make yourself feel better is a huge move in the right direction. Or perhaps you're reading this article so you can share some top tips with your peers on how to build empathy – great! We hope these top tips are helpful.

If someone has been unkind to you, it can be difficult to forgive them and sometimes you don't want to. However, understanding someone's reasons for their actions can be helpful when trying to move on from the situation. Sometimes we also want to try to forgive someone because of how much we value the person.

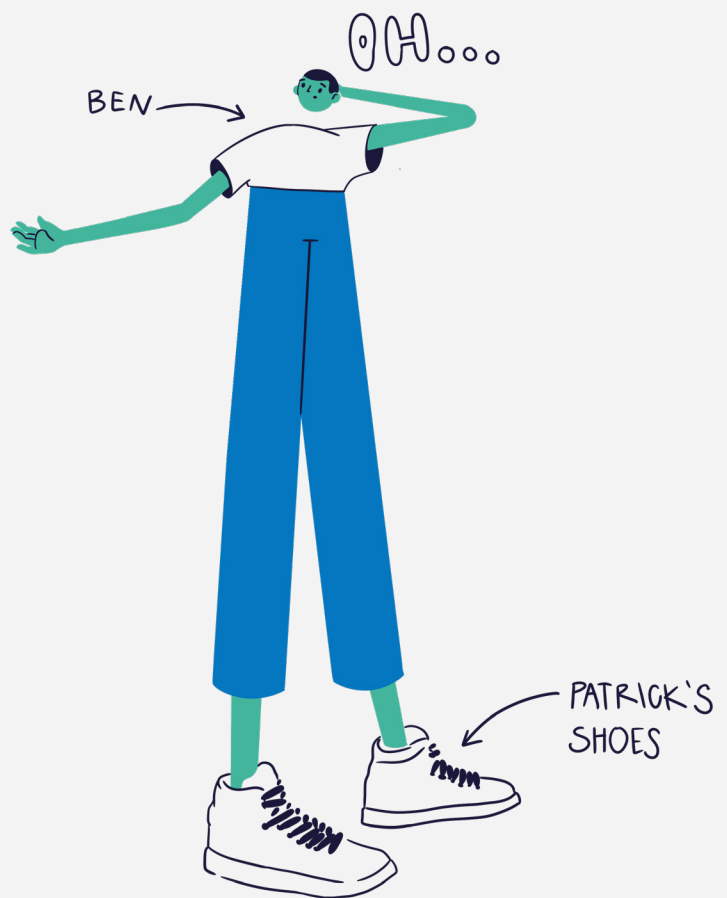
**At The Diana Award, we have come up with some guidance for how to work through forgiveness and trying to understand someone:**

## PROCESS YOUR EMOTIONS

Let yourself feel how you want to feel about the situation. No matter how big or small the disagreement is, it is important to know that your feelings are valid. Take the time you need to work through your emotions – bottling everything up can sometimes make us feel worse later on. Try to reflect on why you are upset and think about what would make you feel better. Top tip: As an Anti-Bullying Ambassador team, you could encourage reflection spaces at the end of each week. This could be an opportunity for people to process their feelings, write them down and put them in a box anonymously. Remember to remind your peers that any serious incidents or arguments should always be reported to a staff member who can offer support.

## PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES

Once you have processed your emotions and taken time to think about why you are hurt and upset, it is important to also think about the person who upset you. Often other people are facing private struggles that we don't know about, and this can lead to them behaving unkindly towards others. This does not justify the person's actions; however, taking time to try to understand where they are coming from could help you understand the situation better. Top tip: As Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, you could encourage your school to adopt a restorative approach to tackling bullying behaviour. People involved in an incident could come to a safe space and discuss what happened and listen to each other to try and understand one another's viewpoints. Don't forget to involve your staff member too – they may not need to be physically present during the restorative discussion but it's important for them to be aware of the conversation so they can offer support.



## THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE

It is important to think about what will make you feel better going forward. Holding onto an issue can sometimes affect our own wellbeing in the future. By choosing to forgive someone and move past a situation, you are not giving in, but instead putting your own happiness and peace of mind first, especially if your relationship with that person is important to you.

## MISTAKES

Remember: people make mistakes, especially while growing up! People can often be pulled in the wrong direction or say and do things they don't mean. It could also be helpful to reflect on when you have made a mistake and think about the times people forgave you.

## CELEBRATE DIFFERENCES

Everyone is different (and that is great!) As you get older, you will meet so many people who have different viewpoints and beliefs. Learning to accept that people will have

different opinions to yours is very important. Top tip: As Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, you could run events which encourage people to listen to different viewpoints, such as a debating competition on topics related to your anti-bullying work.

## REACH OUT IF YOU NEED SUPPORT

If you are finding it hard to forgive, that is okay. Reach out to an Anti-Bullying Ambassador or a trusted adult for support – talking through your feelings can really help. You may need more time to process your feelings or an opportunity to speak to the person you are struggling to forgive to hear their perspective. Your feelings are valid and forgiveness is something many of us find challenging at times. Top tip: As Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, add reporting tools around school like a 'worry box', so if someone needs to ask for help with forgiveness, they have an easy way of doing so.

We're proud to be the only charity set up in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, and her belief that young people have the power to change the world. It's a big mission but there are two things within it that we focus our charity's efforts on – young people and change.

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Throughout all of our programmes and initiatives, 'change' for and by young people is central, including our anti-bullying work which encourages change in attitudes and behaviours.

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We hope you found this resource useful and wish you all the best in your anti-bullying journey. If you would like to help us create more resources and train even more Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, you can make a £5 donation by texting CHANGE 5 to 70470 or visit [diana-award.org.uk/donate](https://diana-award.org.uk/donate)

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