

How to Truly Forgive

A Surprising
4-Step Method
That Actually Works

This book is full of lies.
I've never written so many lies.
But let's not dwell on that.

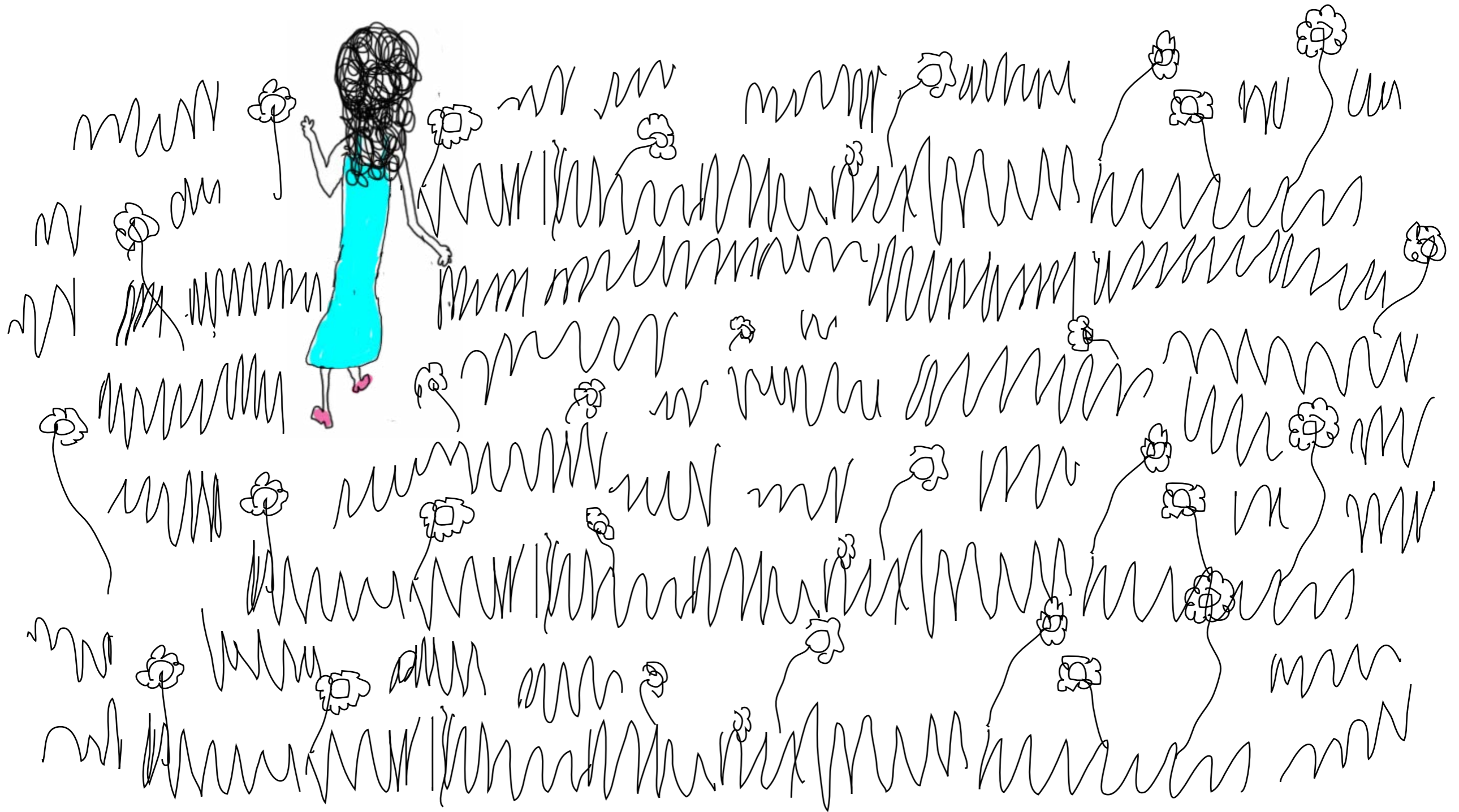
You're here because you want to

let go and move on,

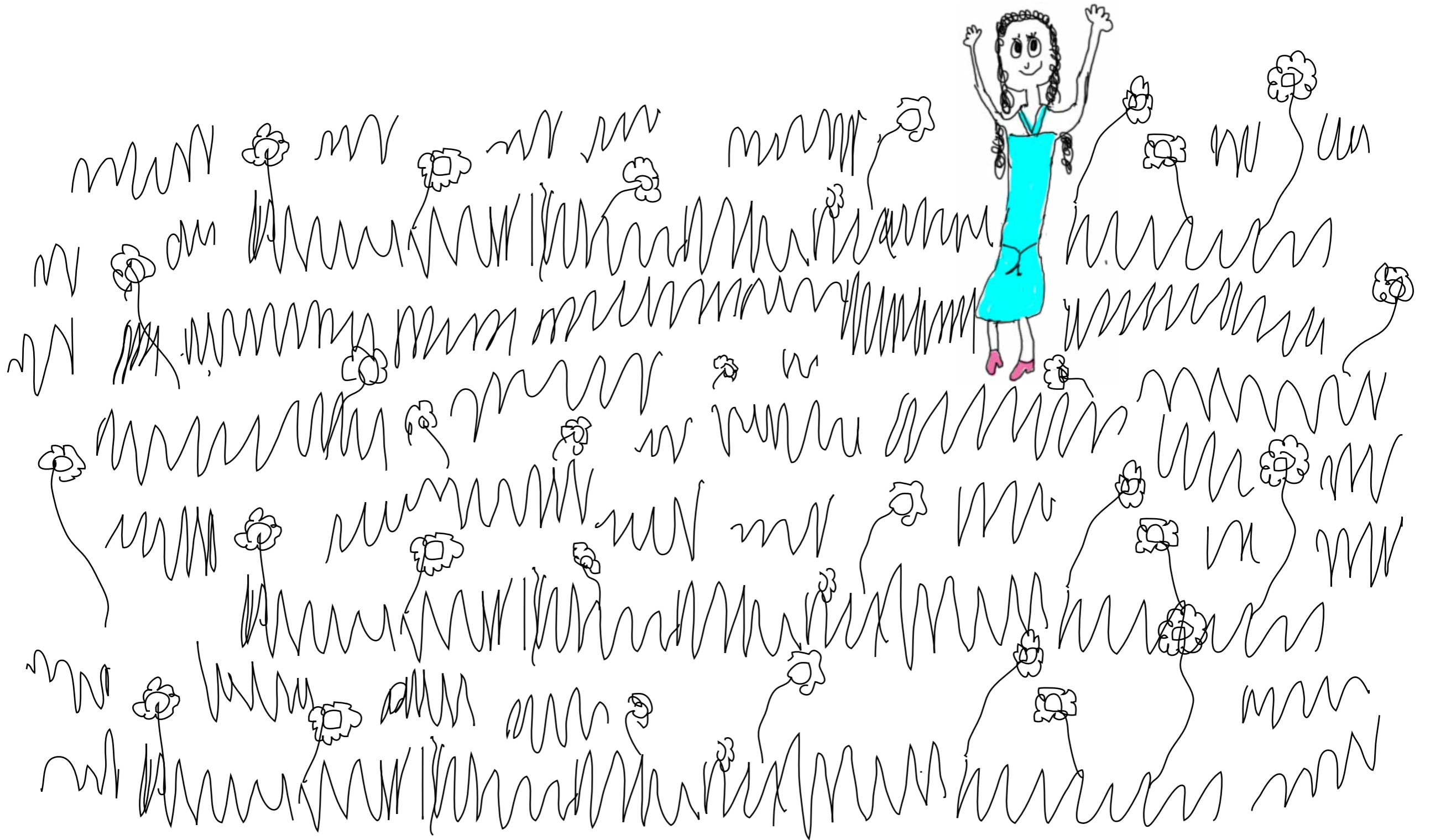
You want to feel the grass beneath your feet as you run carefreely through the field of forgiveness



FREE from anger and hurt.

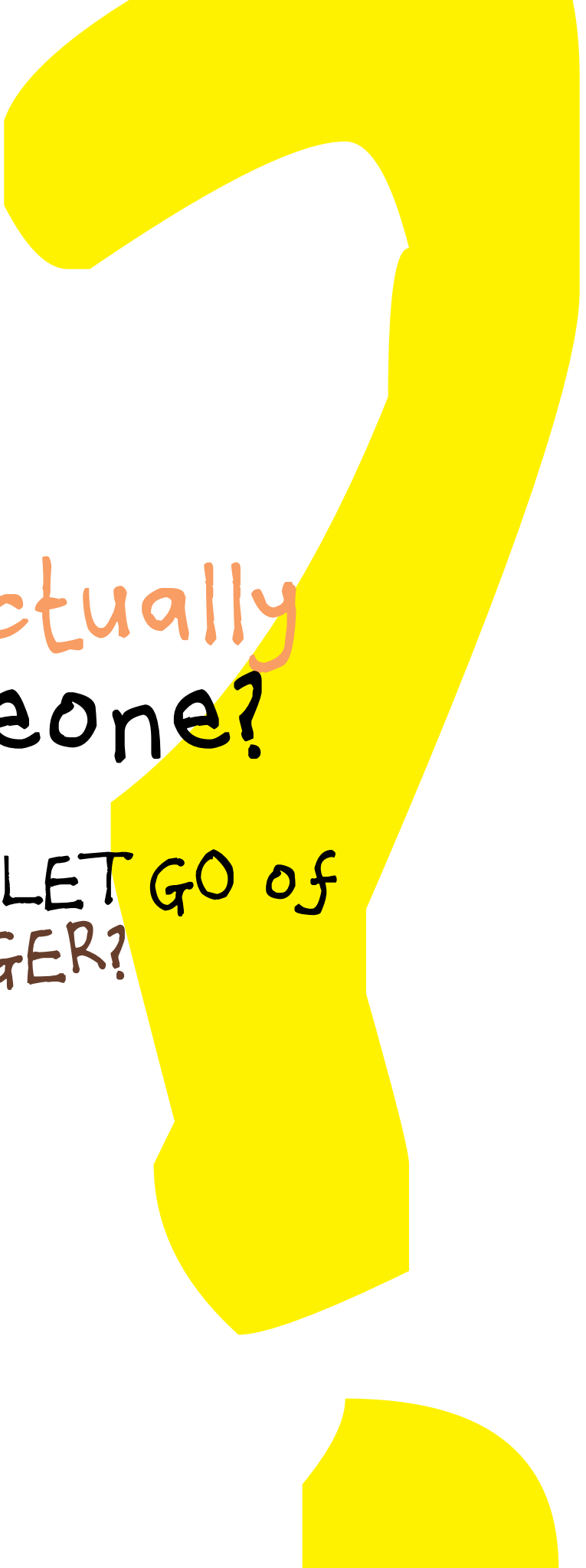


FREE to build genuine connections
and lasting relationships.



And all that jazz.

The tricky bit of course is ...



How do you **actually**
FORGIVE someone?

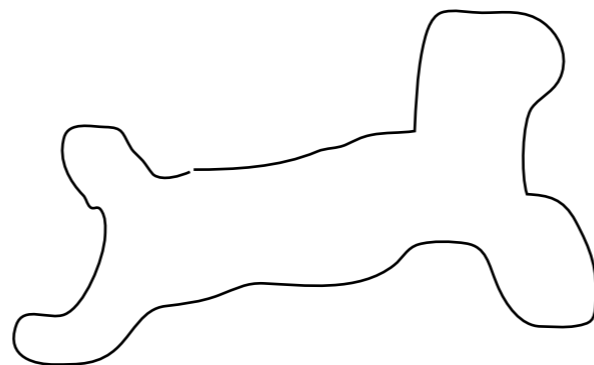
How do you **genuinely** **LET GO** of
RESENTMENT and **ANGER**?

Because it's easy to understand
forgiveness, intellectually...



I should forgive him.
Anger is toxic. I'm
only hurting myself.

But it's another to actually FEEL it.
Like, in our bones

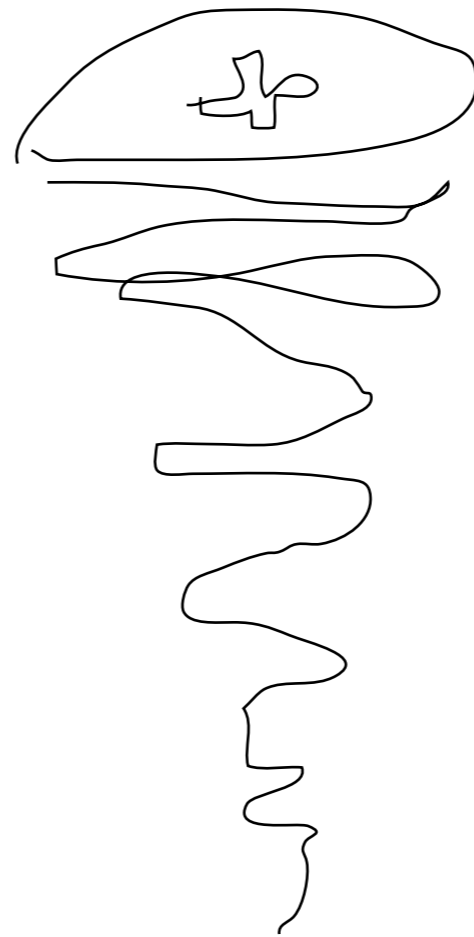




○ ○ ○

But then again, he was such a pig. It's changed everything.

Trying to FORGIVE, the way most people do it, is like trying to unscrew a screw that's really stuck.



We know undoing the screw
will make us feel better:

1. It's attached to flotsam which is
HEAVY & not conducive to "carefreeness,"
2. Everyone says it will.

So we get a t-towel to help us grip the screwdriver.

But still the screw won't turn.

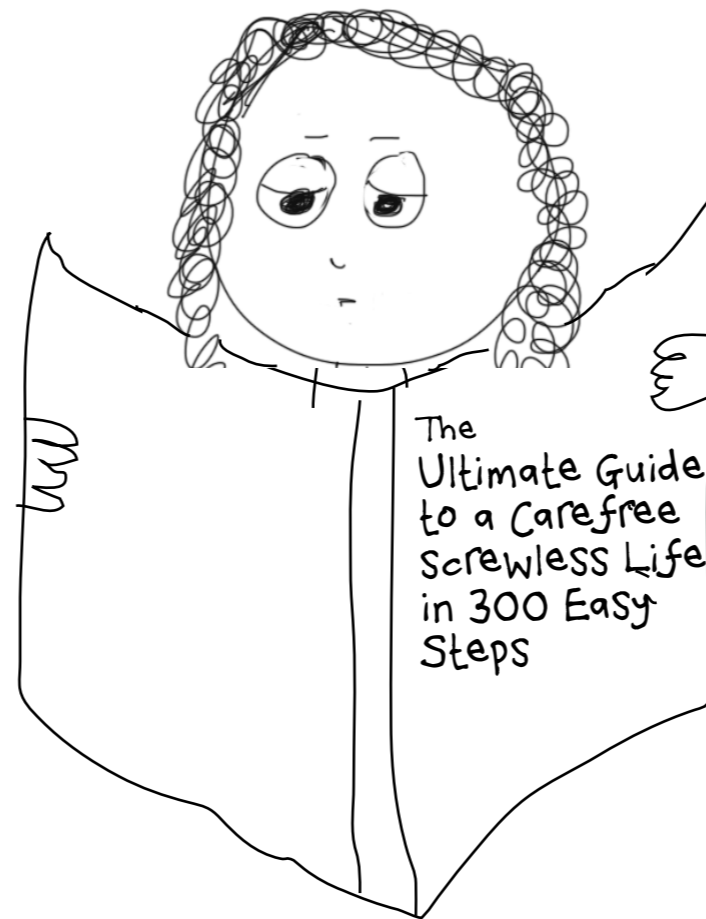
WE ask our muscley HUSBAND or our
FREAKISHLY strong girlfriend to help us.

But they can't undo it either.

Exhibit A: Muscley husband
(Also known as, "OMG did Lisa finally get
married. Her parents must be so relieved.")



We read books about how
to undo the screw.



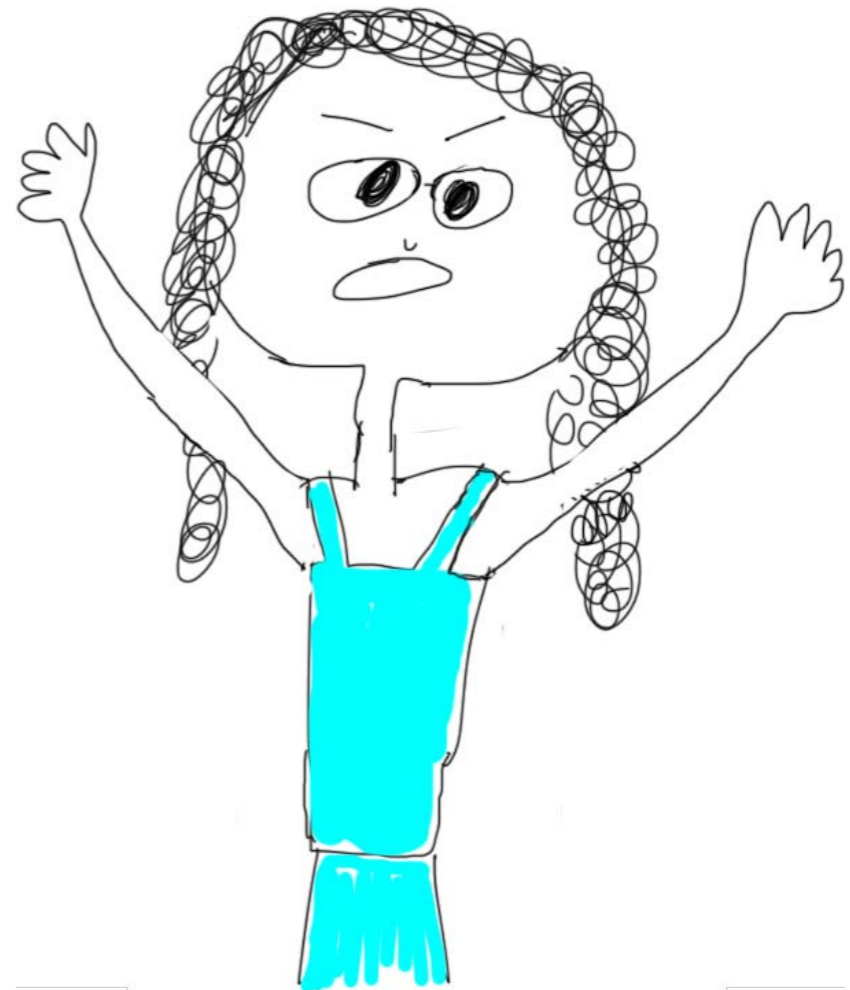
We write down all our feelings
about how sad it makes us
to have the screw done up
when we want it undone.



We can see how **happy** and **Sunshiny** our life would be if we could just undo the screw.

But no matter what, it's still stuck.

Stupid blinking crappy
mutinous asshole
of a screw.



Then someone comes along and tells us we're turning it the wrong way.

And we're like. "No way man, I'm not."

"EVERYONE says to turn it this way."

Idiot.

So we don't even try.

Not just because they can't be right,
but because it can't be that **easy**.

And anyway, we've got used to
carrying it round.

But it IS that easy.

Turn it the other way
and it loosens effortlessly.
No force required.

So how DO YOU turn the screw of
forgiveness the other way??

I'm so pleased you asked.

There are FOUR steps. Like a 4-Step formula.
Because formulas are very popular these days.
That was a lie. It's more just an idea.
A 4-step idea.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR HOW TO READ THIS BOOK:

The method in this book is very simple.
If you disagree with something, either:

1. I'm wrong, or
2. You're still trying to turn the screw the wrong way.

This isn't one of those books that says,
"If you disagree with me it's because you're not
enlightened enough to see the truth"

I hate those books.

It's just, sometimes, it's hard to see a new way.

Give these ideas time to settle. Wait a few days.
THEN if you still don't agree, send me an email
telling me why this method doesn't apply to you.

But wait first, Okay?

Step (Idea) 1.

Stop thinking in terms
of "FORGIVENESS"

It's confusing.
There's too much pooh.

Forgiveness is a trap word.

It keeps us thinking
something bad was DONE TO US.



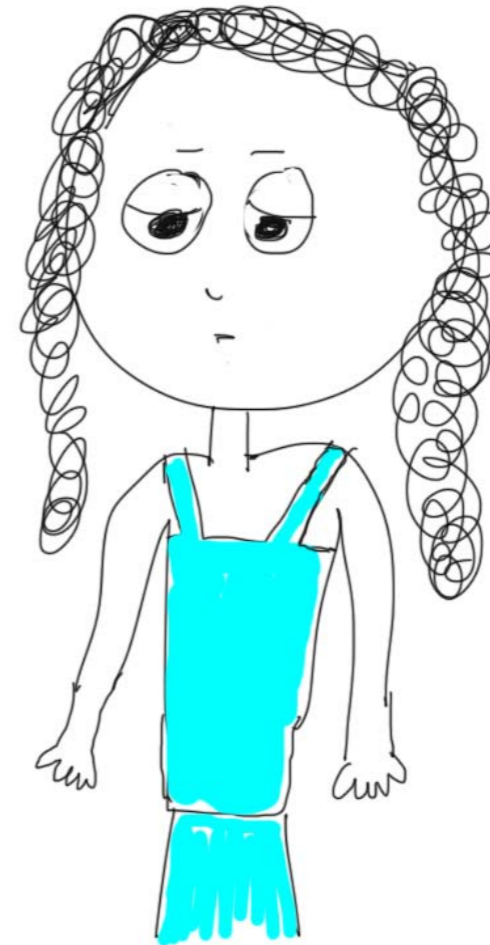
But something bad was
done to me

We'll come back to that.

But first,

You want to feel good,
right?

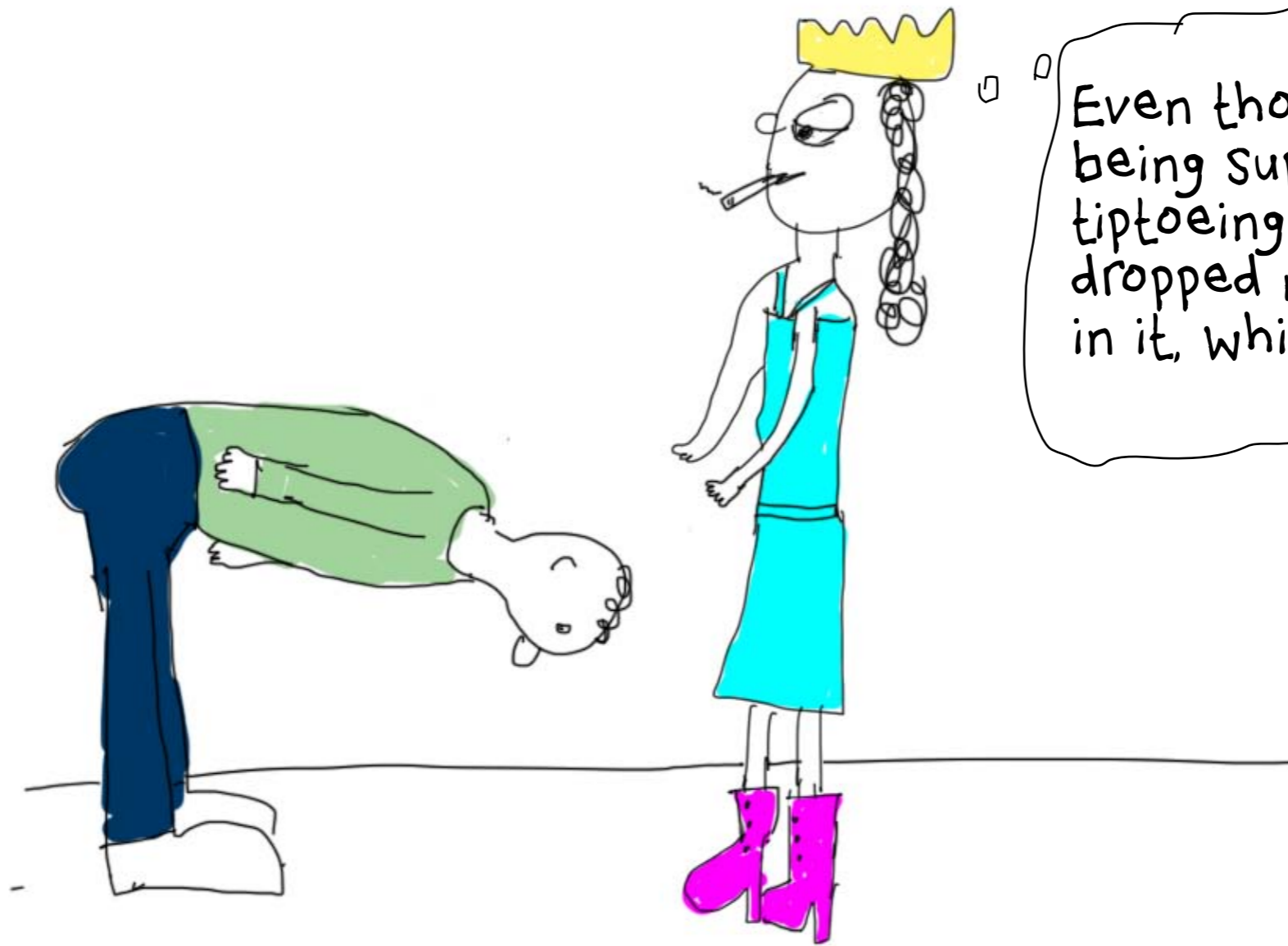
Yes.



FORGIVENESS, as in "I will forgive you," implies that YOU are superior to the ratfink who did you over.

It's like some great pardoning ceremony.

I forgive you for peeing on the street behind my car.



Even though, despite being super careful, and tiptoeing around your pee, I dropped my groceries right in it, which was gross.

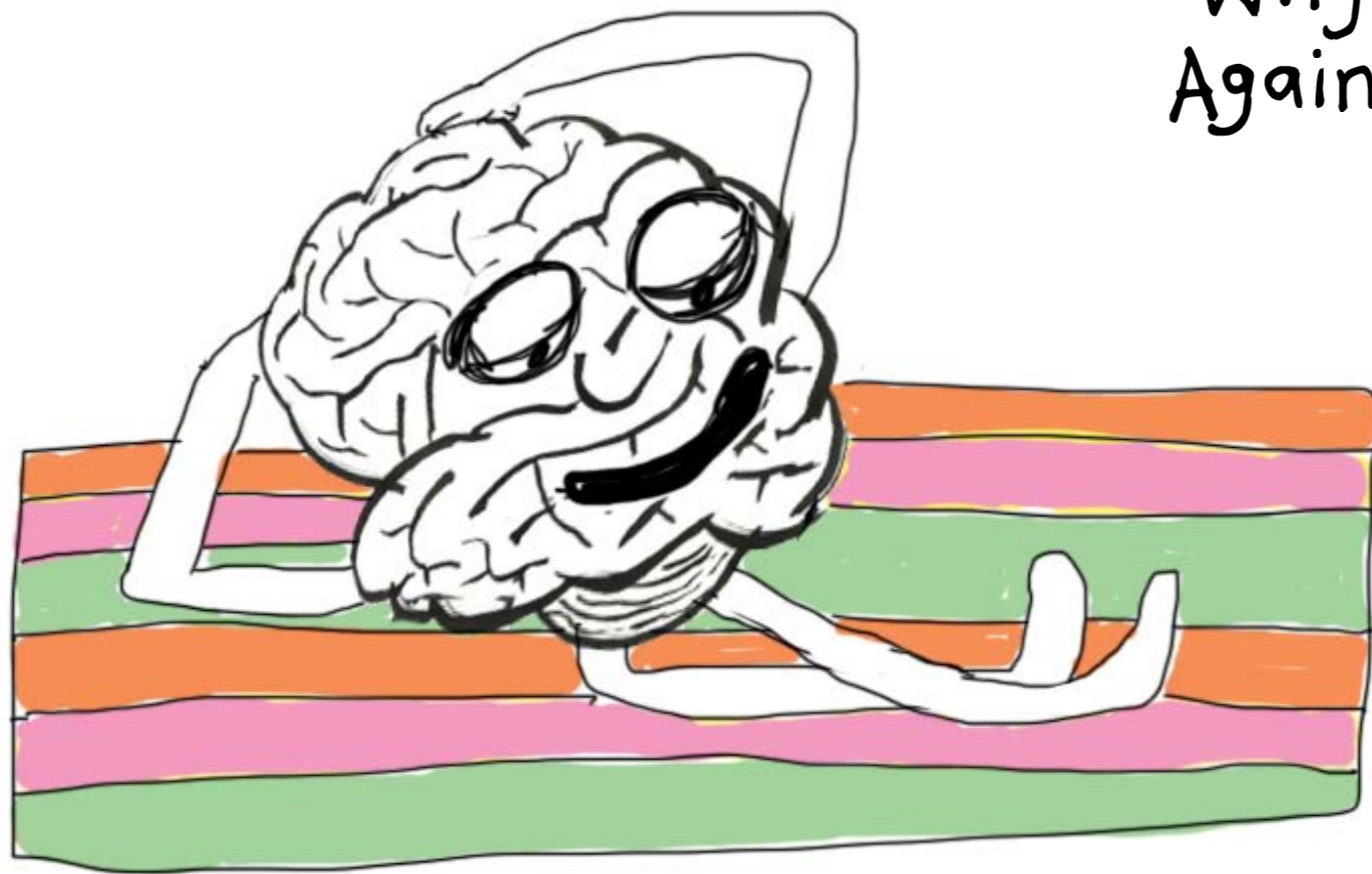
The problem is: **It doesn't work.**

We're still thinking about how WE had to wipe
pee of OUR groceries.

We're still resentful.

It's like half of our mind is thinking ...

"Sure. I forgive my mother
for making my childhood
like a supporting role in
"Why Is My Mother Drunk
Again?"



While the other half is screaming:

"She made my childhood like a supporting role in
"Why Is My Mother Drunk Again?"
She ruined my life. She made me broken!!!"

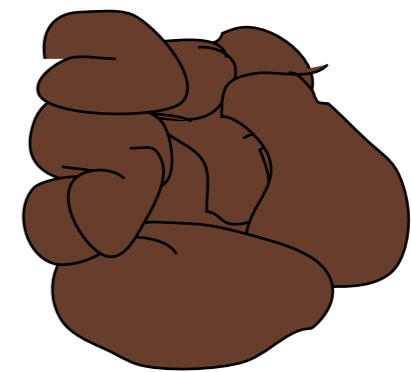


PS: I've got my share of "my mother screwed me up" stories but this isn't one of them. My mother says she's never been drunk. Though frankly, Mum, if you're reading this (which she won't be because she has no idea what I do), we don't buy it. For starters, if someone else makes your drink it still counts.

Thinking in terms of FORGIVENESS
keeps us focused on the incident.
It's like poohing in the area you want
to clean.

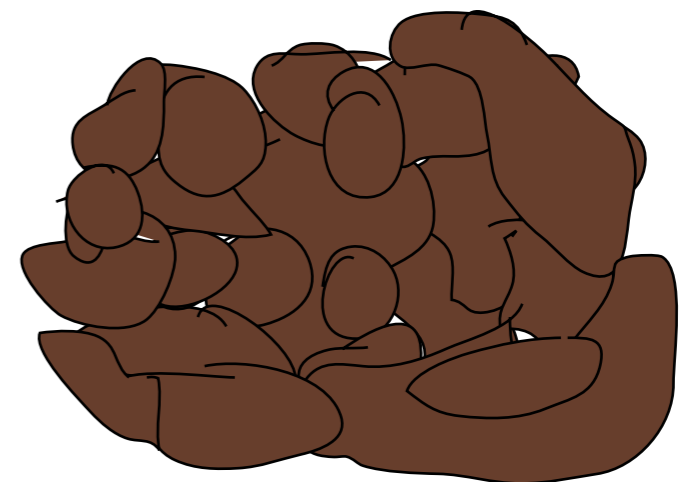
"Write down all our hurt
feelings in our journal."

Pooh.



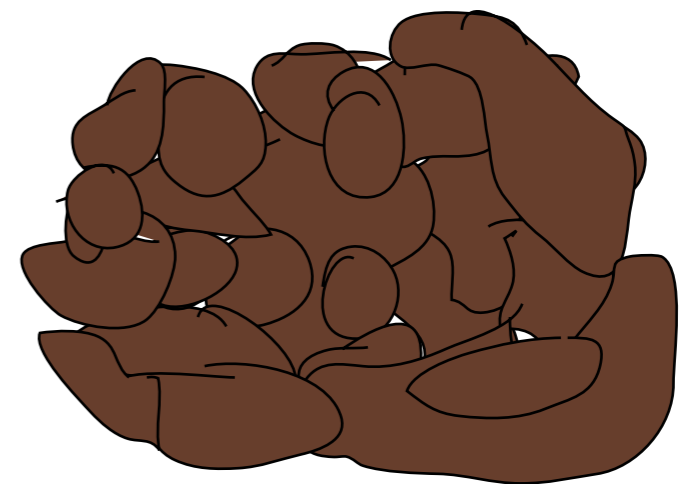
"Talk it over, week after week, with your therapist."

Pooh.

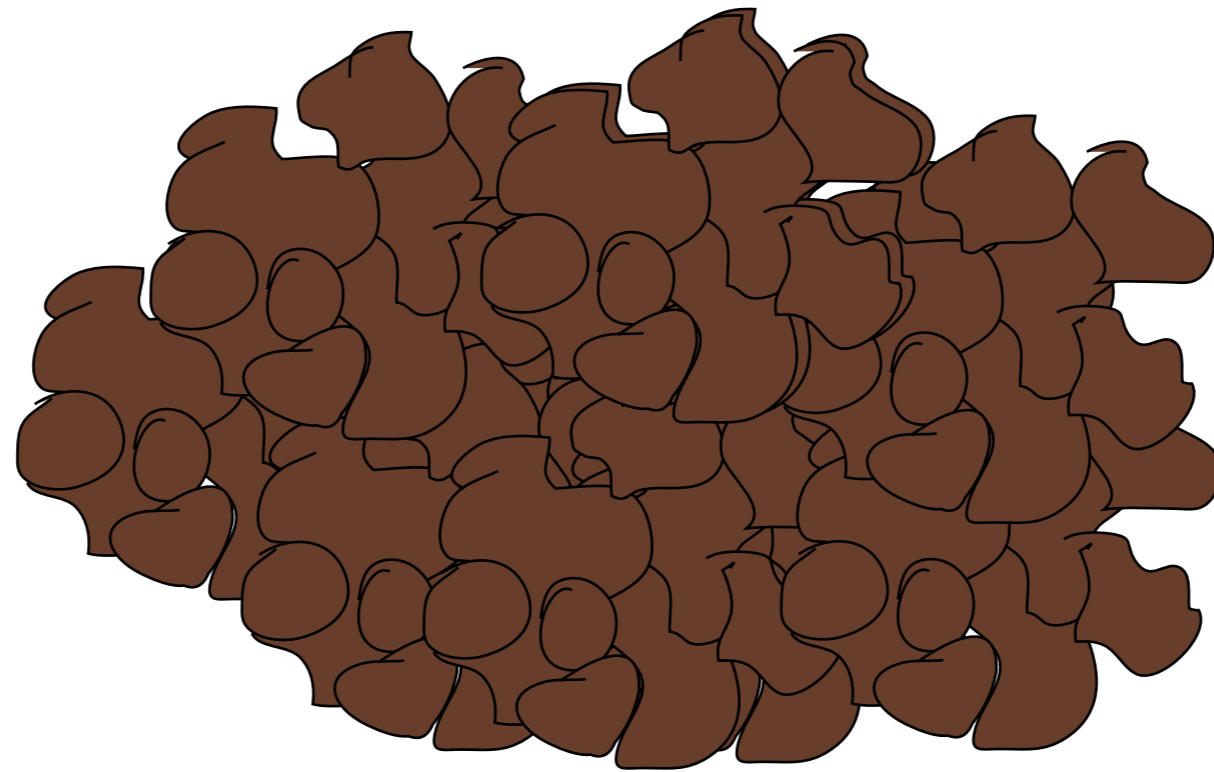


Draw a flow chart of how it affected you.

Definitely, pooh.



These are all common ways that people try to let go of resentment. But every time you focus on what was "done to you" you add more pooh.



Your mind gets fixated on ALL the ways
you've been wronged.

ALL the reasons it's not possible for you to
move on and let go.

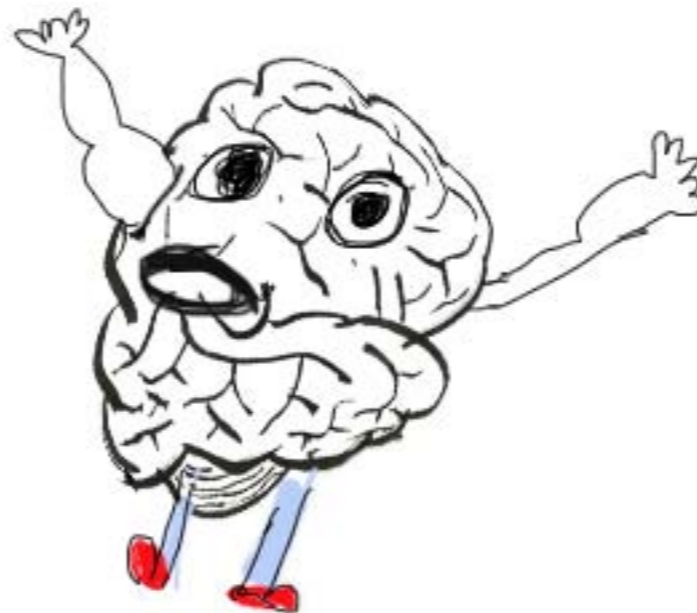
I could forgive if they were sorry, but in my case he was a sociopath."

"But what they did was wrong."

"I can't let her get away with this."

"There was actual harm done."

"Research shows this is a really bad thing to have happen."




If this sounds familiar, don't worry. It's actually not that hard to free yourself from the web of poohs and screws.

Just takes a few new ideas.

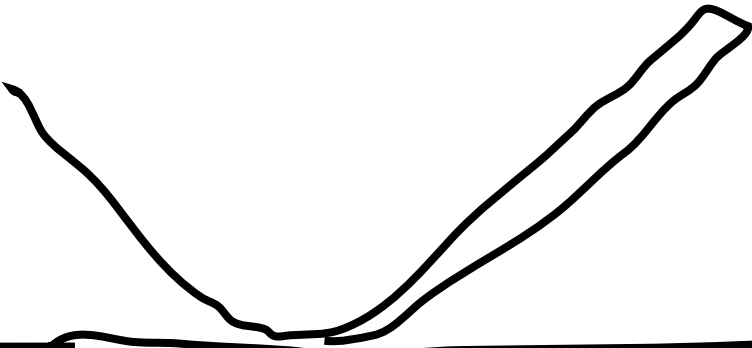
Stop using the word
"forgiveness."

Better words are: "parsnip" "cockamamie,"
"bobsy-die" or "salamander."


These might not be that useful. But
still, they're better than "forgiveness."

Lie # 2
↓

(I'm sorry for the toilet references.
This has never happened before. I'm actually very ladylike.
But I will try harder for the rest of this book.)



Step (Idea) 2.

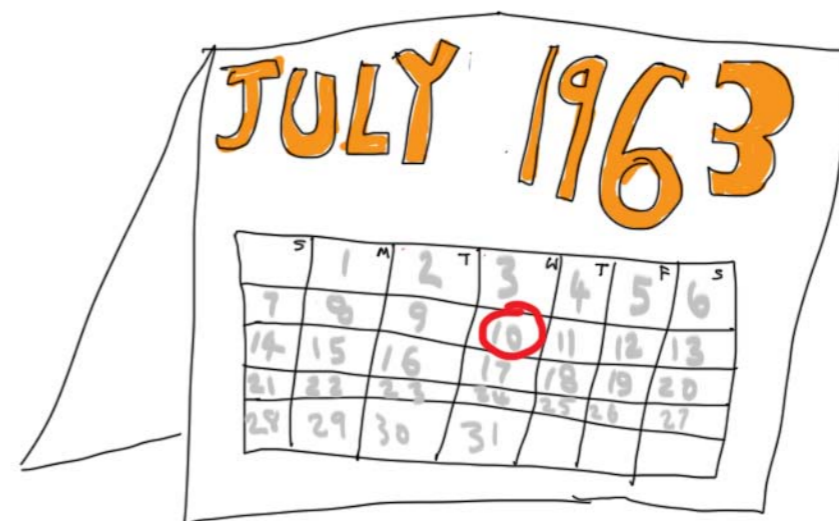
Check Your Diary

When did the incident happen?

Is it happening right now?

Yesterday?

Earlier than yesterday?



Unless it's happening right this minute, the problem isn't

Le incident*

It's your thoughts.

* Boyfriend cheating, business partner stealing your stapler, father not showing you enough love, grandma giving you herpes the last time you kissed her, spending the first 5 years of your life locked in a sow crate, friends going to the movies without you ...

There's a good reason why our mind holds onto grievances - it's trying to keep us safe. It doesn't want us to get hurt again.

But the honest to mashed potato truth is our mind is being a dick.

A well intentioned dick, but still a dick.*

* Apologies to my Dad, whose name is Dick, and to Dick's everywhere. It's just an expression, you know. And sorry for all these footnotes with little stories. This is the last one. ← Lie #3

A few years ago a friend told me she didn't want to be friends anymore.

Something about my obsession with pooh and wee.

Kidding. It was more like this.

Meryll said she can't be friends with you anymore because you don't go out. And all those weird treatments you do are just weird. I feel the same way. Couldn't you come out to the pub for once?



I was very gracious and wasn't hurt at all.

Because I write books like this.

And I never get upset.

←
Lie ≠ 4

OK. So it was more like this ...

They're all such dorks. Why did I ever think they were cool. I'd never do this to them.



After a while I began to see that if my sense of self-worth had been rock-solid, I would've more easily seen their side of things.

I might still have felt sad.
But I wouldn't have taken it so personally.

THEY didn't make me feel bad.
I did it all by myself.

Can I be honest?

It feels GOOD to ride the
"I'm good, they're bad" train.

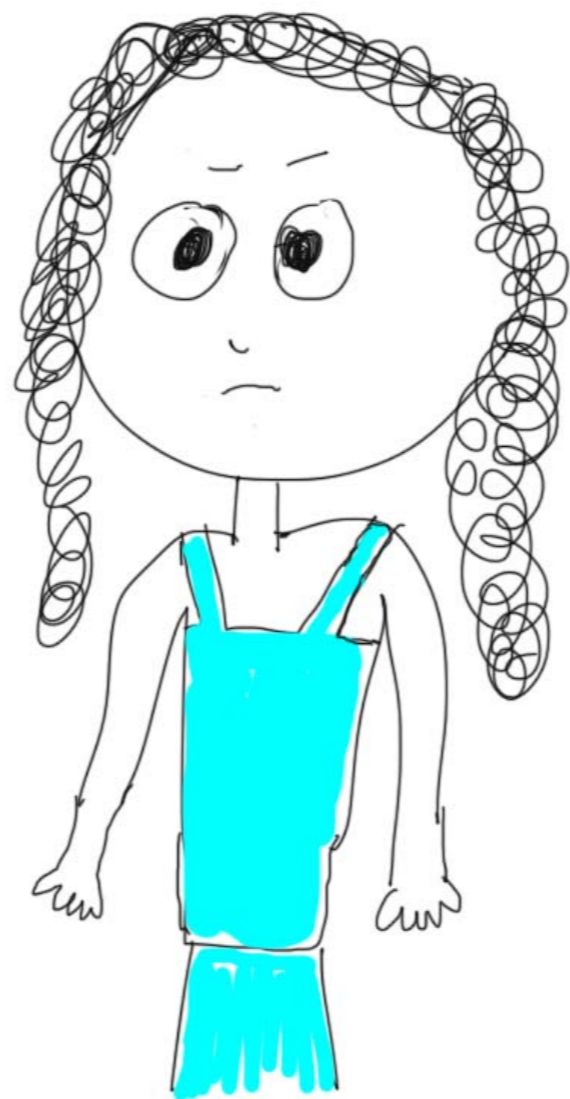
But it doesn't help. It keeps us stuck.

If we really want to let go, we need to take
responsibility for our part.



But I didn't do anything
wrong, they did.

I thought we'd put that aside?



OK. Sorry.
I forgot.

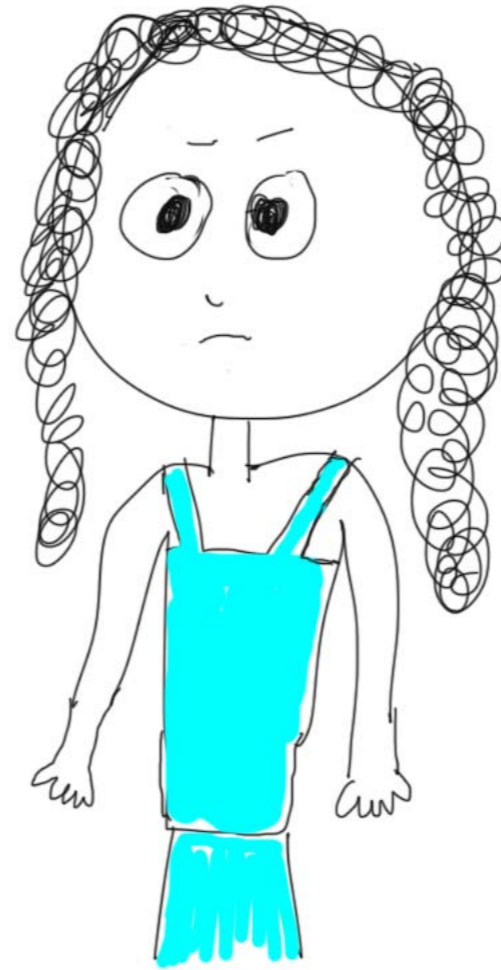
When we feel hurt, it feels like it's because of what someone did to us, but it's not.

Our feelings are the result of what we tell ourselves about what happened. It's our thinking causing our pain.

This is why trying to THINK our way out, only makes it worse.

We get into knots.

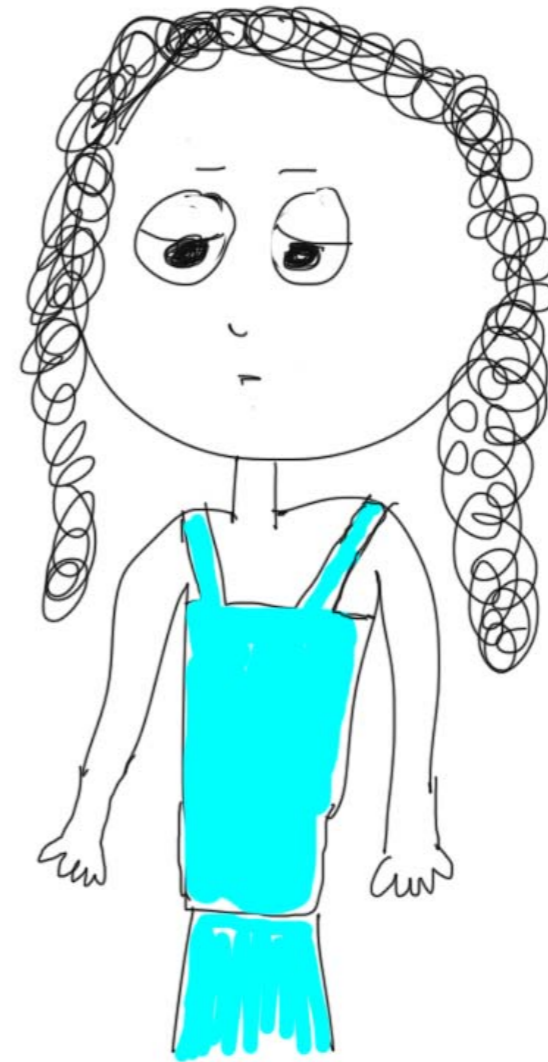
Think?



Yeah.

Like when we try and intellectualize what happened. With analysis, or looking at what the research says.

What about when I go to
my support group for
Getting Over Having
Terrible Parents, and we
share stories?



Exactly.

Everyone at the meeting wants to get past it and not have it affect them.

Yet you're all feeding each other "Why I can't forgive" food.

And every time you say, I want to forgive my mother for being a drunk. All your mind sees is that other people didn't have drunk mothers so why should you.

OUR thoughts
cause OUR feelings.

Which means, we need to stop blaming others
for how WE feel.

Aren't you being a bit mean?



It's not about blaming yourself. It's more just a case of knowing that this is the what our mind does.

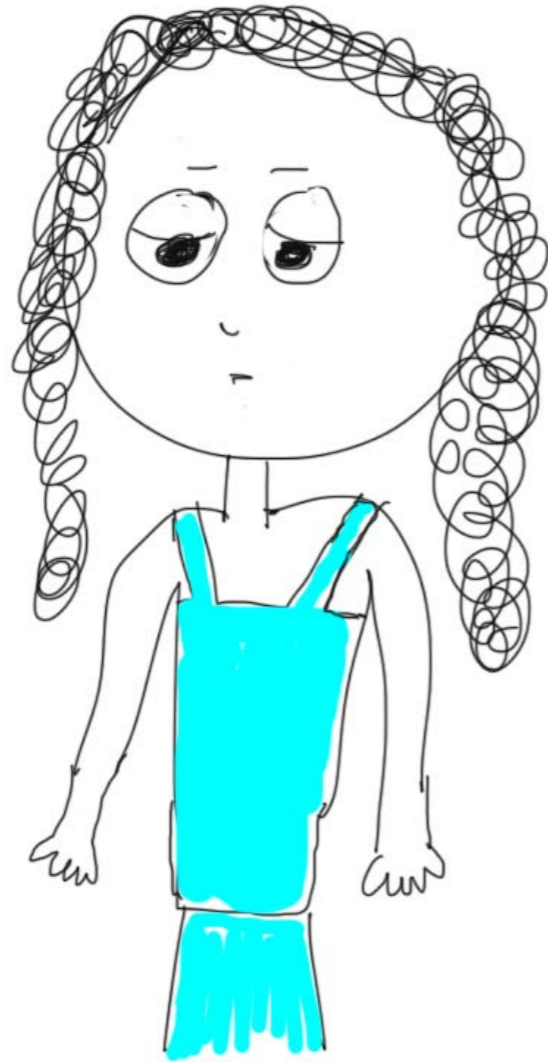
It happens to everyone.

If you find yourself getting caught in how it "wasn't right." And how bad society would be if we let this happen.



These might be valid talking points.
But not for you. Not right now.

Be selfish. Leave the fight to someone else.

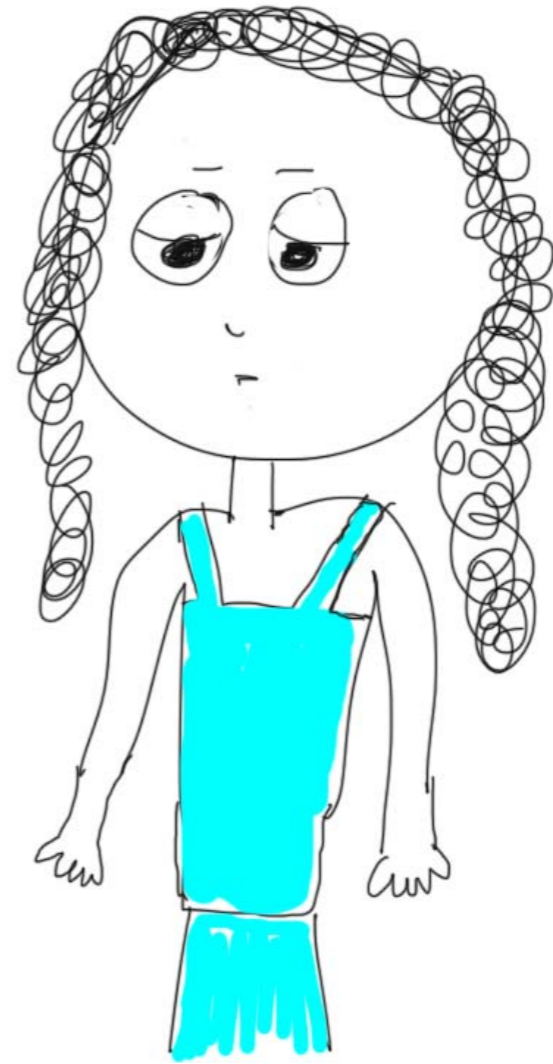


But I just need someone
to believe me?

Do you REALLY?


Our mind is brilliant at devising ways for us to hold on to our pain.

I don't mean to be rude,
but my problem is a lot
worse than just having a
few friends not like me?



There are as many people feeling angry and bitter about so-called SMALL issues as there are about BIG ones.

Consider that these simple principles apply to all situations, big and small.

A hand-drawn diagram consisting of two arrows pointing towards a central, irregularly shaped box. The arrows originate from the top center and point downwards and outwards to the top corners of the box. The box has a black outline and contains text.

Step (Idea) 3.

Don't be Fooled By
People Telling You
to Change Your
Thoughts.

But didn't you say
my thinking was
the problem?



Yes, but...



So how do I change my thoughts?
What should I change them to?

Remember how I said this was going to be easy.

OK.

Here's the easy bit...

You DON'T

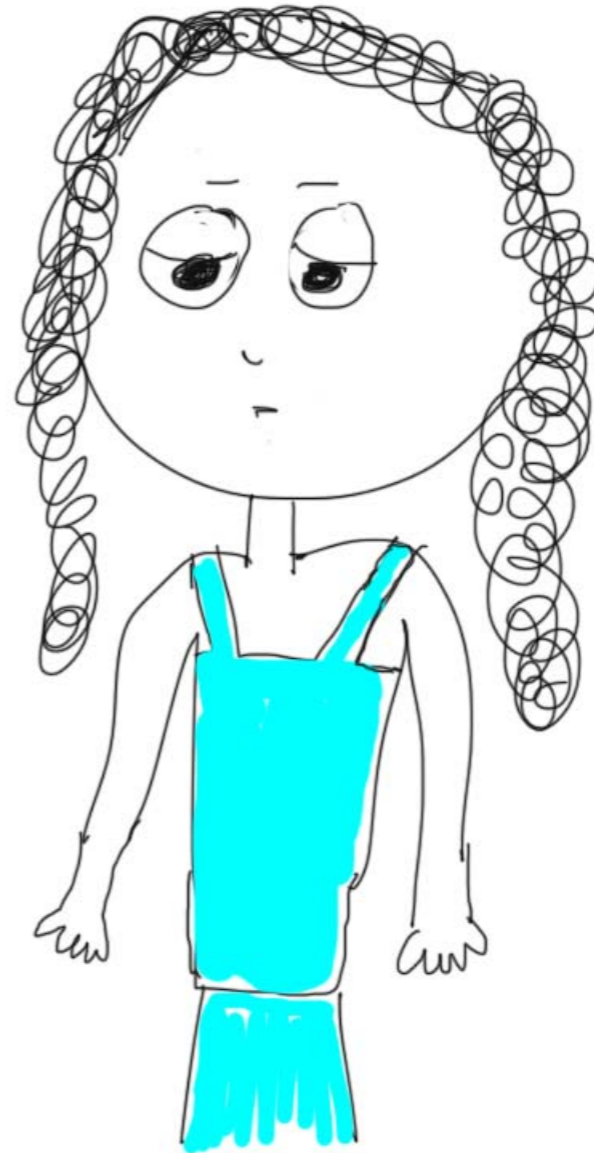
need

to change

your

thoughts

Are you sure?
If they're bad, I want
to change them.
That's what I was
doing with all that
journaling. Please
just tell me how to
change them.

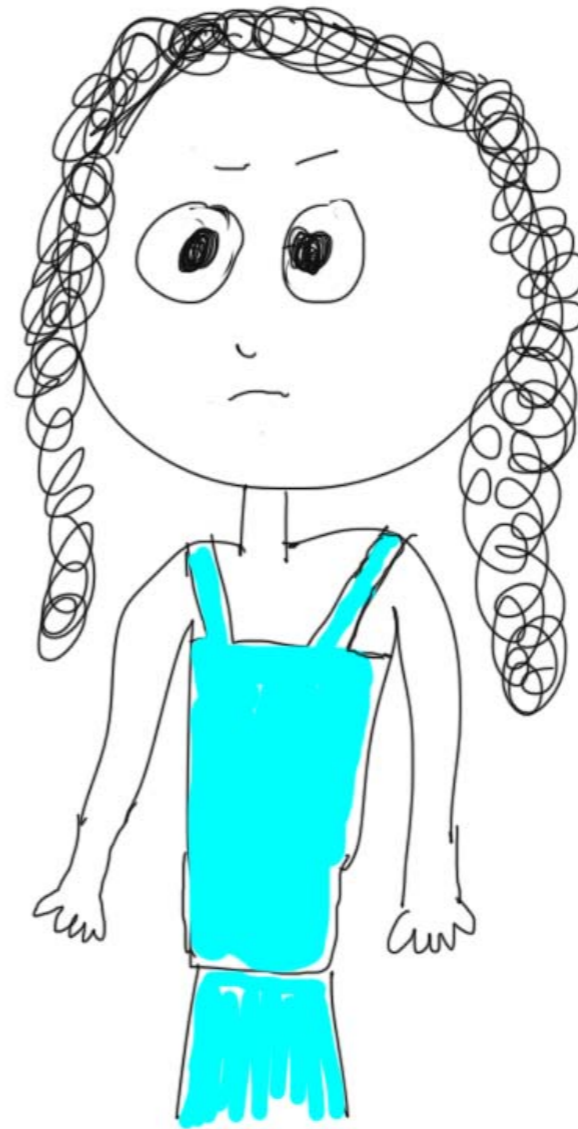


Your thoughts aren't bad.

They're just faulty.

Knowing that they're faulty is
all you need to do.

But wouldn't it be easiest to just change them?



Trying to change our thoughts is hard.

I mean, impossible.

Unless you're Tony Robbins. And he won't be able to intentionally change his inner "I'm not good enough thoughts" anymore than we can.

This shit runs deep. No offence Tony.

Try this...

Rather than try and think a different thought, like gratitude, or even forgiveness, just notice your thoughts without getting caught up in them.



How is this going
to work?

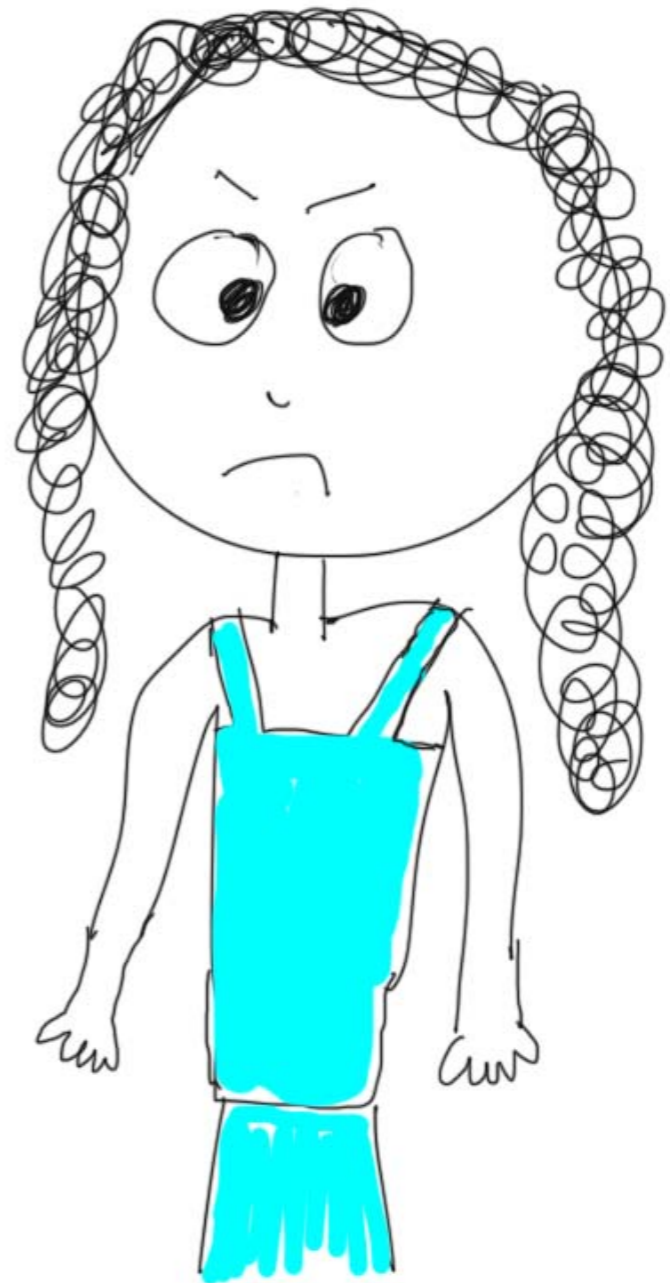
We tend to think we have to DO things to heal.
But when we don't judge our feelings
or blame them on anyone else, healing happens
on it's own. A shift happens.

It can take time.
But it does happen.

And I don't have to do anything?

Like, I can just walk to the park and notice all my annoyed thoughts? And you're saying that one day I won't feel annoyed?

I'm sorry. BUT I'm calling it.



The reason you feel bad about anything, at the very bottom of the pile of reasons is

(and you might know what I'm about to say)

...

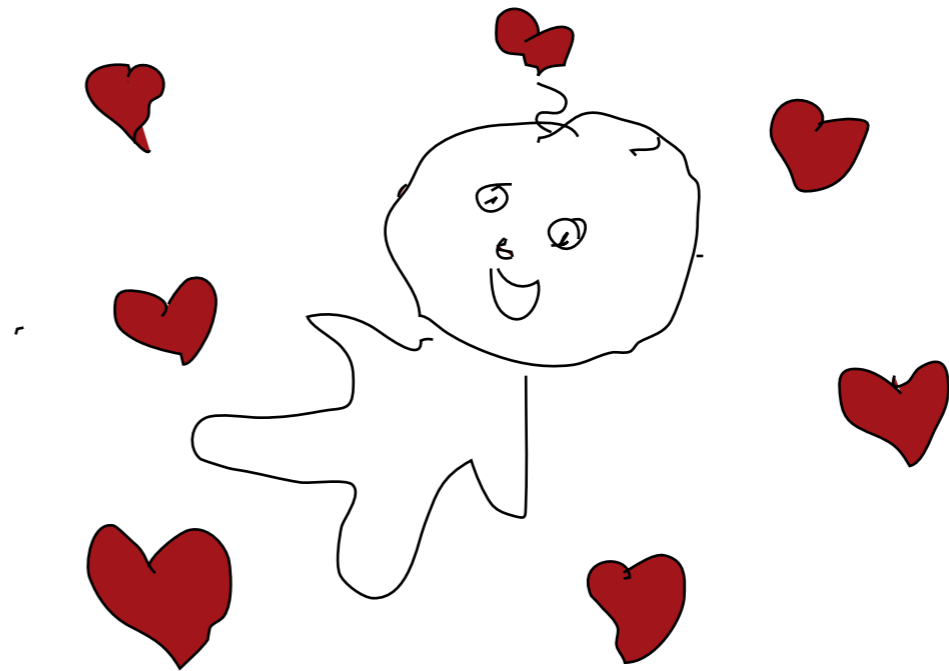
LOVE

Not how much other people love you,
but how much YOU love YOU.

When you were born you LOVED yourself and everyone around you, COMPLETELY.

There were no RULES or CONDITIONS.

Babies don't say, I will love myself if I do a solid pooh this morning, They just already do love everything.



AS we grow up, Our MIND picks up beliefs that say we aren't good enough or worthy of love and these beliefs COVER OVER our self love in this area.

Like a patch.

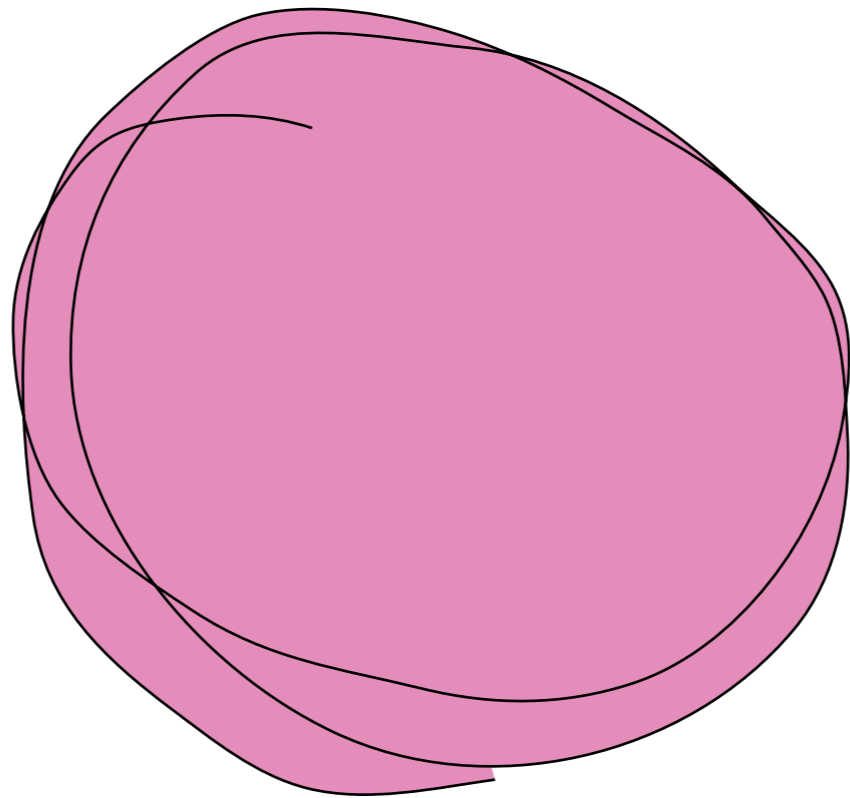


This has nothing to do with the story

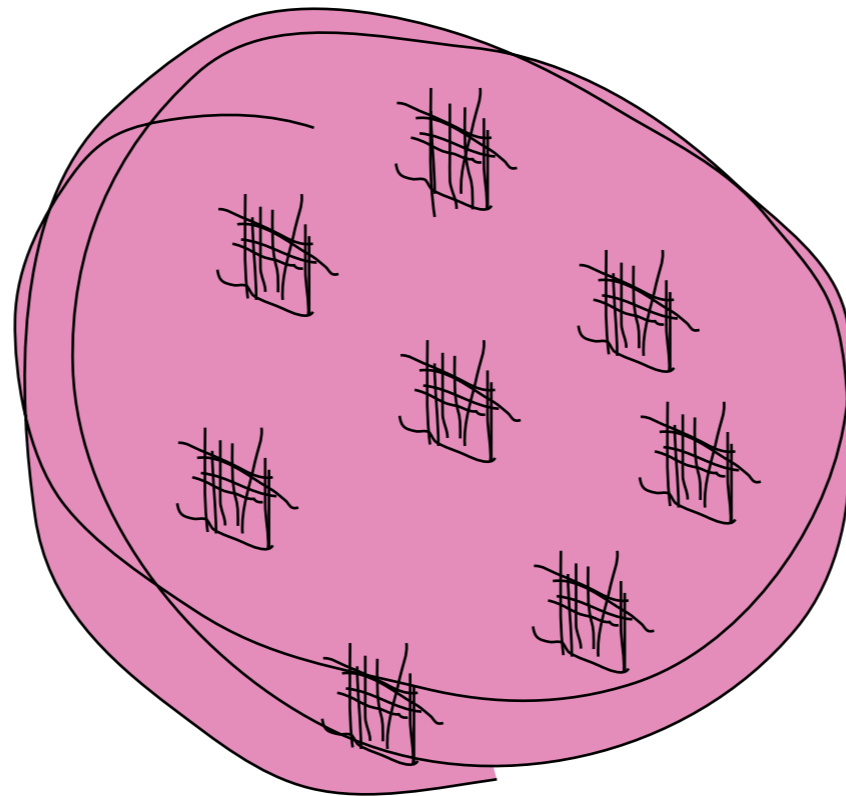


(I had to wear a patch when I was little to try and fix my bad eye. But it didn't work so my parents always worried about my good eye and they made me wear large plastic goggles when playing squash. Except no-one knew about my bad eye they just thought I was being overly cautious.)

So if this pink ball is all the love you started with as a baby ...



This is what it looks like now with all its patches on it.



This happens to ALL of us.
We're all covered in patches.

Which seems bad, but it's not
when you look at it in 3-D.

[image]

People think they need to DO something to feel more love. AS if their LOVE got damaged.

But it didn't

You have as much LOVE
within you as the day
you were born.

It's all still there.

Some people think we should investigate all the events that caused us to feel bad about ourselves.

Like a detective.



investigative Report:

Why Do I feel angry when people call me red-head?

Was it because I had to look after my sister?
Or because my mum was never home.
Or ...

Don't do that.

It's your mind causing you to feel bad
in the first place.

What's more useful is knowing, in
GENERAL TERMS, this is what happens.

Next time you feel sad or angry, think:

"Boy that really triggers an insecurity of mine."

You might recognize what that is. Or you might not know.

The more you do this, the more the patch loosens and falls away.

The HUGE gift in all of this,

Is that in the process of letting go, we uncover a deeper sense of love within.

We feel more connected to ourself.
And others too.

The pain probably won't go away immediately,
but it sure loses its sting.

Step (Idea) 4.

Consider that there was
nothing to "FORIGVE"
in the first place

Over the years I've thought about the shift that happens when we go from feeling angry and hurt to loving and peaceful.

Are we learning forgiveness or do we simply reach a point where we now see there was nothing to forgive in the first place?

Is forgiveness so tricky because the real "cotton dress running through the fields" feeling we're after only comes once we realize there's nothing to forgive??

Here's a trick I find useful.

Stand back.

AS in WAY back.

AS in ON THE MOON back.

I imagine a kinder, wiser and more compassionate version of myself sitting on the moon

Perhaps kicking back on a deck chair, drinking cocoa with Alice Kramden, looking down and watching, as the earthly me muddles my way through life ...

Watching myself hold onto
dodgy beliefs and making
some epic mistakes.

Watching children born into
challenging times and seeing how this affects
their sense of self-worth and how easily this
passes on to others.

Watching people learning to love
unconditionally. Trying, failing, and
succeeding, as we do.

I figure this wise
cocoa-drinking self would
conclude that everyone in
their own unique way was
doing their best.

When we take a more broad view it's easy to
see that every one tries hard.

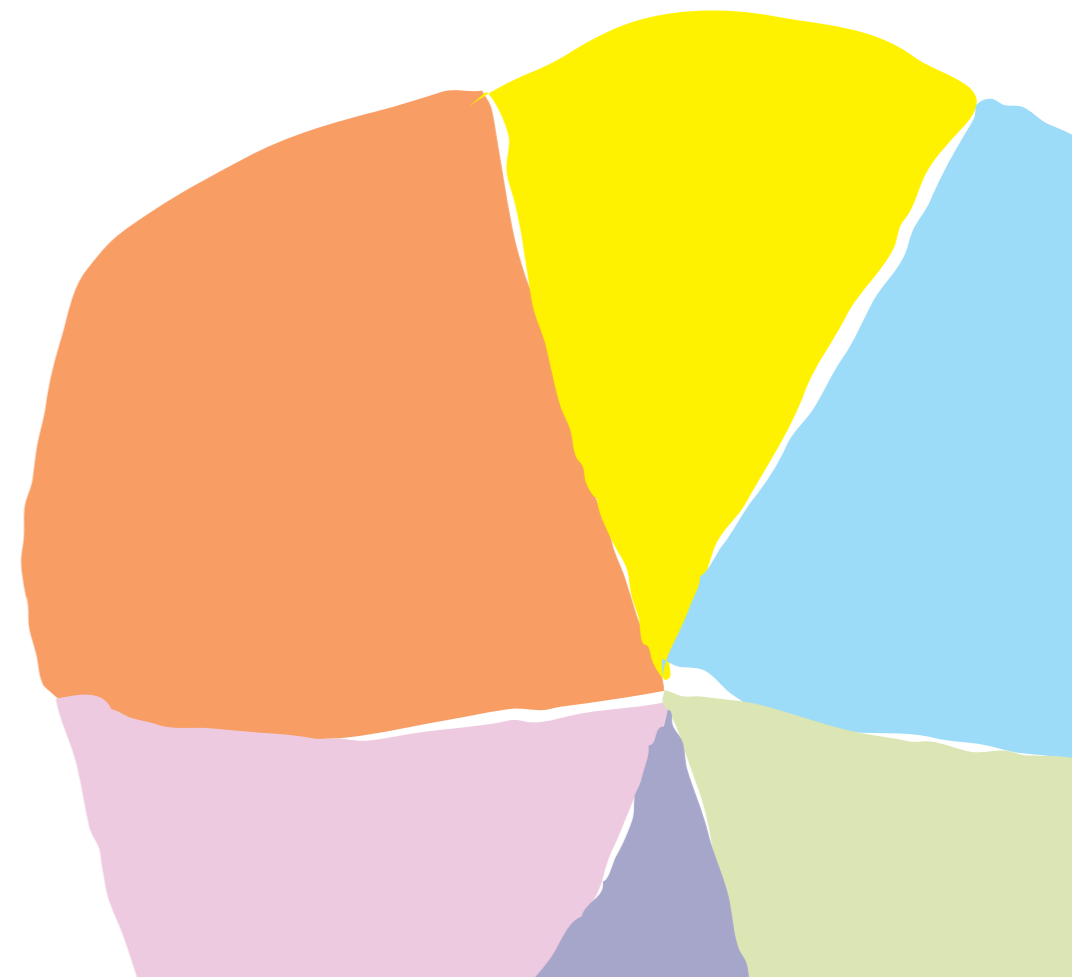
It's easy to see that there
are no good guys and bad
guys, not really.

And how confident are you, that given the same circumstances and resources that you wouldn't have done the same thing?

If everyone's doing their best, what's to forgive?

Toss around the idea:

Forgiveness is understanding
there's nothing to forgive.





It's big, but when it sinks in, it really helps.

Final Word

Please be gentle with yourself.

You're doing fine. We're all doing fine. Even when it feels like we're not.

(Like yesterday. When I frowned and moped like an Olympic moping champion.)

Lots of love
to you,
from me,

Lisa.
XX