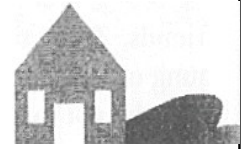


# CHARACTER



*Forgiveness*

*February 2008*

**FORGIVENESS: "To give a person another chance."  
"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong."  
– Mahatma Gandhi**

On January 15th, 2008, a vehicle entering the highway from a store parking lot cut off another in downtown Midvale. The driver of the vehicle that had been cut off pulled out a handgun and fired several shots into the offending vehicle. One of the shots struck the front-seat passenger in the back of the head, and he later died. As is true with most road-rage incidents, someone felt wronged by the actions of another, and decided to right that supposed wrong by taking matters into his (their) own hands. A sobering question is this – "Would the man be alive today if the driver had been more patient and forgiving in his response to the supposed offense?" I suspect we all know the answer to that question.

George Herbert once stated "He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself". It can safely be said that none of us is perfect – therefore we are all in need of forgiveness at some point in our lives, usually on a daily basis. Those of us who believe we are better than others ought to look in the mirror once in a while. None of us escapes the personal foibles that seem to be part of our everyday existence. Therefore, we should be slow to anger and quick to forgive others, since we will likely hope for the same response from others when we ourselves do something foolish or even accidentally offend. As a wise person once reminded us "...it is not so much what happens to us as what we do with what happens to us that makes all the difference".

Charles Dickens once counseled "Try to do to others as you would have them do to you, and do not be discouraged if they fail sometimes. It is much better that they

should fail than that you should". The responsibility to forgive lies with us first. Many times we are offended by someone who has no idea they caused any offense. We would do well to approach that person in an appropriate setting and explain that we were offended, and also explain why we were offended. In many if not most instances, we will find that the offending act was unintentional, and the other person may apologize profusely for offending us. Sadly, this approach is not always followed, and some offenses are never resolved, leaving behind bitterness and recriminations for no good reason.

Many times we are very forgiving of others, but can't seem to forgive ourselves. It has been said (tongue in cheek) that "Good Decisions come from Experience – Experience comes from Bad Decisions". Since none of us is perfect, we regularly have the opportunity to learn from our mistakes. At the same time, when we make mistakes, we should make amends for our errors and then move on with life. Constantly reliving our mistakes after having done all we could to correct the wrongs is unhealthy and non-productive. Often time we find that the only person who has not forgiven us for an offense is ourselves.

We would do well to forgive ourselves as well as others. The reason we should forgive and not judge is that we cannot look into the heart of another person. Only by forgiving others do we exhibit real charity.

*R. Wayne Gardner  
Lindon City Resident*

**"Life is an  
adventure in  
forgiveness."  
– Norman  
Cousins (1915-  
1990)**

**"It takes one  
person to  
forgive. It  
takes two  
people to be  
reunited."  
–Lewis  
B. Smedes**

**"To err is  
human, to  
forgive divine."  
– Alexander Pope  
(1688-1744)**

## Book List

### "A Regular Flood of Mishap"

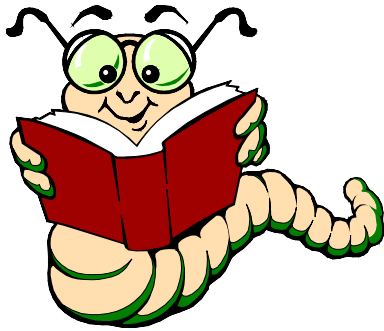
by Tom Birdseye

### "Down the Road"

by Alice Schertle

### "Babushka Baba Yaga"

by Patricia Polacco



## Family Activities

**-Have each family member place a penny or small pebble (signifying a grudge or an offence) in his shoe, then play a game of soccer.** Afterward talk about the big irritation that a small item can cause. Grudge holding hurts the grudge holder the most. *Forgiveness removes the irritation.*

**-Have family members make a valentine for someone who has offended them.** Perhaps, family members can write poetry on the changes that come in a relationship with forgiveness.

**-Make a maze of large objects. Have a family member shut his eyes and walk backward through the maze.** Have him repeat the process, this time facing forward with his eyes open. Discuss the two journeys through the obstacle course. *Talk about how focusing on the wrongs and injustices of the past and being blind to the good slows our progress.*

## Kid's Corner

Sometimes my friends fight with me. They gets mad and take my toys or be rude and won't let me play with them. But I forgive them. We go back to being friends. We laugh and play and don't fight. I'm glad to have friends. They are nice back to me when I am mad.

Seth, age 5

**We, at Character Connection would like to focus on helping parents access character materials by using the web site located at [www.lindoncharacterconnection.com](http://www.lindoncharacterconnection.com).**

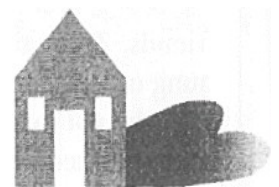
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Lindon Character Connection  
c/o Alpine Foundation  
575 N 100 E

American Fork, UT 84003  
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