



May 2013 Newsletter

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to our new Managing Director!

Angie Kotler joined our small team over a month ago. Angie will be working with us to develop our ongoing strategy as the work continues to grow and diversify, both in the UK and internationally.

Angie brings 10 years' experience of running her own charity: Schools Linking Network, as well as many years as an educator in a range of settings.

New stories

Check out some of our most recent stories –



In 2008 Tim and Grace Idowu's third child, 14-year-old David, was murdered in the park opposite his home in South London. The perpetrator later received a minimum sentence of 12 years. In 2010 Grace met the young man responsible for her son's death at a restorative justice conference. [Click here](#) for the full story.



Assaad Emile Chaftari served as a senior intelligence official in the Christian militia during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) and was responsible for many deaths. In 2000, he wrote a letter of apology to all his victims which was published in the national media. [Click here](#) for the full story

TFP Resource for Teachers

We are nearly ready to launch our on-line educational resource and are at the finishing stages of designing the website and preparing an introductory animation. We hope that the resource will inspire teachers to explore, with creativity and sensitivity, stories of forgiveness and reconciliation. We'll be testing out the website with some teachers over the next couple of months so please get in touch if you are interested in giving us feedback: office@theforgivenessproject.com.

The website will be called LifeLine because we know that embracing forgiveness can pull people back from the brink. But also at the base of everything we do at The Forgiveness Project lie true life stories.

RESTORE: our prison & community programme



The coalition government's "Transforming Rehabilitation" programme means a lot of change for those of us in the voluntary sector working with offenders. Change is always challenging but there are definitely some exciting new opportunities on the horizon. For instance in July we start working with London Probation in Croydon delivering RESTORE to young people sentenced to community sentences or on license. We're also developing RESTORE in the community with partners in Gloucester, for the first time reaching women and families. In March we carried out two highly successful RESTORE programmes for sex offenders at Hull prison, and are exploring ways of developing a new mentoring programme which will have restorative principles at the heart of it.

We've carried out extensive work at Ashfield Young Offenders Institute in Bristol where, with funding from the Home Office's Communities Against Gangs, Guns and Knives Fund, we were able to embed the work into the fabric of the prison. In a report of this work programme by cultural scientist Christian Straub, a member of the prison staff described RESTORE as "very powerful" because it "delivered a strong message gently". [Click here](#) to read the full report.

In February we were sad to see our work at High Down prison cease (for now at least!) due to regime change. We piloted RESTORE at High Down in 2007 and have helped many change their offending behaviour. I posted the news of this final High Down programme on our [Facebook group](#) and was grateful to see a heart-felt response of shock and regret, including a recently released prisoner who commented: "I have spent over 10 years of my life in prisons all over the place and nothing I did to change my course of life worked until I met the people from The Forgiveness Project and learnt the skills and insight, confidence and ability to turn my life around. Had it not been for this I would probably still be in prison with yet more victims of crime suffering from the effects of being a victim." At the same time a survivor of violent crime who has shared her story many times in the programme wrote: "I have so many incredible memories of working for RESTORE at HMP High Down. Amazing transformation has come out of the project's work, life changing for many."

If you would like to better understand how the programme works I'd recommend this excellent [blog](#) by Phil Forder, Arts Interventions Manager and HMP & YOI Parc in Wales. Phil has witnessed RESTORE first hand over a number of years and concludes in his report for the G4S website "its efficacy is phenomenal".

The F Word Exhibition

"THANK YOU so much for it. I was blown away. Had to visit it in 3 doses as so much to take in and I was overwhelmed with emotion. I would actually describe it as a life-changing experience. It took me to the centre of my own humanity"

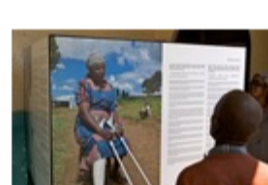
Visitor to exhibition, April 2013



In the UK the exhibition has been seen in Exeter, Gloucester, Marlborough, Oxford, London and Moray, Scotland. There have also been various private hires to both schools and corporations. Next week the exhibition will be in Wakefield Cathedral for a week with a night of performance by [CoActive](#) on the theme of the human struggle with forgiveness and reconciliation. If you are interested in hiring the exhibition or one of our speakers, contact rachel@theforgivenessproject.com.

In the US, the exhibition has recently been displayed at Bergen University. For enquiries into hiring the exhibition in the US or Canada please contact our Louisa at consultantshext@gmail.com.

We are delighted to announce that we have three new countries where the F Word can be seen:



A new version of The F Word exhibition was created to tour Kenya in the build-up to the elections on 4th March 2013, and beyond. The exhibition includes an additional ten new stories gathered in Kenya over the past six months. By showcasing stories of forgiveness and reconciliation in four travelling exhibitions, the project aims to help heal past wounds and explore the nature of forgiveness and conflict resolution. The stories all highlight the human cost of violence and the futility of revenge. <http://www.kenyaforgivenessproject.org>

A new exhibition has been created for Sweden in association with the [House of Peace](#) in April as part of an exhibition about forgiveness, genocide and democracy and will be further expanded in the autumn.

An Arabic translation of the F Word has been specially produced for Libya as part of [The Libya Initiative](#). The Libya Initiative - Al Mubadara Libya - is an action plan promoting social-healing and a political culture of social justice, forgiveness and reconciliation in Libya through a nation wide effort of listening, remembering and weaving personal and collective narratives.

New film: Beyond Right & Wrong

In January, at the Soho Hotel in London, we screened the documentary feature film *Beyond Right and Wrong: Stories of Forgiveness*. We are delighted to be a partner of *Beyond Right and Wrong* and are keen now to get the film widely viewed and discussed. Not only are many of the people featured in the film also connected with The Forgiveness Project but it adopts a similar tenor to The Forgiveness Project, focusing on exploration, inquiry and simple narrative, rather than promoting concepts of forgiveness as morally unassailable, a solution to all ills or an imperative within psychology. It is a film essentially about forgiveness which tells the stories of people from around the world who have had the ability to look beyond their pain.

Jo Berry, Pat Magee and Richard Moore, who all feature in the film, took part in a lively panel discussion afterwards. The film also features several others who share their stories with The Forgiveness Project. *Beyond Right and Wrong*, directed by Lekha Singh and Roger Spottiswoode, is a thoughtful inquiry into the complexities of forgiveness and a powerful instrument for change. [Click here](#) to watch a trailer.

If you're interested in screening the film or buying a copy please contact rachel@theforgivenessproject.com.

Diploma in Group Facilitation, Conflict Resolution and Counselling Skills

We will once again be running our Diploma in Group Facilitation, Conflict Resolution and Counselling Skills. The course is run in conjunction with NAOS and lasts one year, from October 2013 until October 2014. The course flyer can be downloaded [here](#).

The course will be held at the Resource for London, Holloway Road, London, for further information and to register visit [NAOS](#).

If you have any questions, email rachel@theforgivenessproject.com.

Annual Lecture 2013

Our fourth annual lecture will be delivered by [Professor Simon Baron-Cohen](#) on the subject of empathy. Alongside him, [Peter Woolf](#) and [Mary Foley](#) will share a personal perspective.

The lecture will be on Tuesday, 17th September in London - we will be sending more information out shortly.

Upcoming Events

If you can't attend the lecture, there are many other events over the next few months including:

Sat 8th June, London - "[Letting Go of the Past: transforming personal stories of mistakes and failures](#)". A one day workshop run by The Forgiveness Project with St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation & Peace.

Thurs 15th June, London - As part of the [School of Life World-Changers](#) series with John-Paul Flintoff, I will be presenting our work and creating a discussion around forgiveness.

Wed 19th June, London - In partnership with Combatants for Peace and Encounters we are proud to co-host a special screening of the award winning feature documentary [Within The Eye of the Storm](#) followed by a discussion with the director Shelley Hermon and protagonists, Bassam Aramin and Rami Elhanan. [Click here](#) for further information.

28th Sept - 4th Oct, Scotland - We are delighted to be collaborating with the Findhorn Foundation for their international Autumn Conference, "[Forgiveness the Great Undoing](#)".

Do keep checking our website for new events.

Winston Churchill Memorial Trust

I was thrilled to learn in February that I had been awarded a [Churchill Fellowship](#). This means that for the month of November I'll be travelling in America and Canada visiting offender focussed projects that use personal narrative and/or engage with victims in a restorative way. Please do get in touch with me if you have any relevant contacts!

Become a Supporter...

Please also consider joining our [Supporter's Programme](#). In April we were delighted to welcome some of our supporters to our special event sponsored by the Patron Lady Edwina Grosvenor. The intention was to present our work, introduce members of the Supporter's Programme to some of those who share their stories with The Forgiveness Project and provide another opportunity to see *Beyond Right and Wrong*.

My sincere thanks to all of you who already give. Without the support of individuals from all round the world who believe in what we do, we wouldn't exist.

Warmest wishes,
Marina Cantacuzino

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