



Patricia
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Cover:
*Betrayal by Skadj.
Drawing, 2b
mechanical pencil,
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timbrel connects today's Mennonite women in all our diversity by sharing our stories and perspectives. Through our conversations with each other, we seek to walk more closely with God and to show greater love for self and neighbors near and far. The perspectives expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of MW USA, timbrel, or the board of MW USA.

Betrayal and forgiveness

When we hear the words “betrayal” and “forgiveness,” we often think of deception, disloyalty, deluding, misleading, as well as letting go of resentment, or cancelling a debt owed. Both categories are difficult to manage, yet betrayal is a part of the human experience. Forgiveness, though, is somewhat optional. Many people think they must forgive a betrayal at once. Experts tell us this is not always healthy. On the other hand, some keep a mental scorecard of all the betrayals they have experienced in the course of their lives, and never attempt to journey toward forgiveness. Experts tell us this is never healthy. Forgiveness is not the same as condoning. The journey toward forgiveness is difficult and often can take years, but it is ultimately healing for the one who is betrayed and often for the betrayer as well.

You may wonder why we are having a dialog about this topic in *timbrel*. The reason is because betrayal and forgiveness not only affect the health of our own lives in some ways, they similarly affect the health of the lives of everyone we know. Betrayal and forgiveness also affect the health of the body of believers. Reconciliation is a core value for Mennonites, and forgiveness of a betrayal is essential if reconciliation is to occur.

In this issue of *timbrel* Shirley Hershey Showalter talks about the importance of forgiveness. Hatoko Inoue discusses betrayal and forgiveness as they are a part of her life, while Rachele Lyndaker Schlabach discusses betrayal and forgiveness within the context of Israel and Palestine. In addition, Dr. Chris McCarthy discusses the physical effects of betrayal and forgiveness seen in the medical setting.

Some argue that hope is the opposite of betrayal, therefore, Christians should not lose hope when betrayed. This may be easier said than done, however.

Sister Question for May–June

In preparation for the next theme of “the seasons of marriage,” consider: **In our own marriages or in those we have observed, which season of marriage seems most difficult? What scripture, book, or other resource has helped you or someone you know manage a difficult season of marriage?** Send answers to PattyB@MennoniteWomenUSA.org. We print a sampling of replies that include name, city and state. 📍