

'...probably one of the most important projects in the world today.'

*Emma Thompson, actor*

· · · · Marina Cantacuzino

the

# FORGIVENESS

project

stories for a  
vengeful age

Forewords by Desmond Tutu and Alexander McCall Smith

# Foreword

For many years now the work of The Forgiveness Project has shown us that true greatness is found in humility and compassion. The world watched South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission with a sense of awe; when victims and perpetrators of gross human rights violations came forward to describe their experiences and actions it had an impact that we could never have foreseen. In post-conflict situations around the world people saw a different model of conflict resolution. Since then, words such as 'reconciliation' and 'forgiveness' have been taken from their more spiritual contexts to become common currency in secular and political conversation. It was as though the world had come to a dead end in finding solutions to resolve intractable problems and the people who came to the TRC to tell their stories shifted the log jam and created new possibilities.

'The F Word' exhibition that was created by Marina Cantacuzino and opened in London in January 2004 confronts us with images of perpetrators and victims – together. They are deeply moving and shocking as they speak to us of our own brokenness in the face of such magnanimity. The exhibition continues to be seen by many people around the world. It is a powerful contribution to the understanding that all of us, given certain circumstances, are capable of the most ghastly atrocities. It is also a testimony to the fact that all of us have the capacity to rise to a generosity of spirit that can transform the world.

To forgive is not just to be altruistic; in my view it is the best form of self-interest. The process of forgiving does not exclude hatred and anger. These emotions are all part of being human. When I talk of forgiveness I mean the ability to let go of the right to revenge and to slip the chains of rage that bind you to the person who harmed you. When you forgive you are free of the hatred and anger that locks you in a state of victimhood. If you can find it in yourself to forgive, you can move on, and you may even help the perpetrator to become a better person. From the stories that I've heard, read and seen through The Forgiveness Project I have been witness again to the power of forgiveness.

*Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu*  
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