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15 Illustrious Thinkers Pave a Path for Reconciliation and Peaceful Future

In a time where requests for forgiveness are met without true reconciliation, where high profile, nationwide apologies elicit a meek response of indifference, there arises a need for something deeper. In February 2010 golf phenomenon Tiger Woods publicly asked for forgiveness for his extra-marital affairs, and a nation yawned. In March 2009, money broker Bernie Madoff pleaded guilty to defrauding thousands of investors of billions of dollars, apologized to his victims and added, "I know that doesn't help you."

So what is missing? For 15 prestigious visionaries who point the way towards healed relationships, peaceful communities and a world beyond forgiveness, the answer resides in one word: "atonement."

Atonement – what **Arun Gandhi**, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, calls "the other side of the coin" – is the much-overlooked aspect of the reconciliation process and is the focal point of ***Beyond Forgiveness*** (Jossey-Bass, February 2011), a new book edited by **Phil Cousineau**. In it, high-profile thinkers and activists such as **Huston Smith, Michael Beckwith, Azim Khamisa, Rabbi Michael Lerner, Jacob Needleman, Diane Powell, Michael Nagler** and **Arun Gandhi** show how acts of atonement – making amends, providing restitution, restoring balance – can relieve us of the pain of the past and give us a hopeful future.

In one excerpt, Azim Khamisa tells of meeting Tony, the murderer of his son, Tariq, and offering Tony a job in his foundation to help the cause of ending youth violence once he gets out of prison. This will give Tony an avenue of atonement – to give back in redemption for his actions.

The incidents of atonement and lack thereof are found within every corner of our society. As in many stories of our culture and movies of our time, the 2007 movie "***The Kite Runner***" carries a clear message of atonement. After spending years in California, a guilt-ridden Amir returns to his Afghanistan homeland to rescue the son of his old friend Hassan. The act of liberating the boy is his way to redeem himself and – as a mutual friend indicates – to find "a way to be good again."

Book author **Phil Cousineau** is an award-winning writer and filmmaker, editor and lecturer, cultural observer and TV host. An author of 26 nonfiction books, he has been a judge for the **Emmys**, an expert on **CNN, The Discovery Channel**, and **Fox News** and an interview source for **Time** and **Newsweek** magazines as well as the **New York Times**.

To schedule an interview with the contributors of ***Beyond Forgiveness*** or to receive a complimentary copy of the book, contact Jennifer Geronimo at JMgeronimo@aol.com or (619) 713-6756.
