Fill in the gaps with the words from the box:

The Benefits of Forgiveness

grudges rift let go malicious one-up
wronged vengeance turmoil ward

1. Forgiveness reduces anxiety, stress and hostility

When you hold onto 1)_____, you carry the thoughts and expectations you had from a previous failed relationship to all your other current relationships. This leads to the expectation that the other party will hurt you even before they actually do anything wrong, which can cause feelings of stress and anxiety. Furthermore, we set the bar unfairly high for people who have not hurt us. A tiny careless mistake can be interpreted as 2)_____ and intentional, which inevitably results in the souring of the relationship. When we forgive, we release these negative emotions. We 3)_____ of the anger and resentment that often consume us. As a result, we experience less anxiety and stress, and our overall hostility diminishes.

2. Forgiveness stops the cycle of bad behaviour

When people hurt your feelings, is your first impulse to retaliate with harsh words or actions that are intended to wreak 4)_____ for what they've done? "Getting even" may be satisfying in the moment, but it sets you up for a vicious cycle where you're each trying to 5)_____ the other. In some cases, you may hurt innocent bystanders in the process. This is especially true for parents. Remember that your children are looking to you to set a positive example for how to deal with conflict. Without forgiveness, life is governed by an endless cycle of resentment and retaliation.

3. Forgiveness boosts physical health

It feels good to make up with someone you've had a 6)_____ with, doesn't it? But the effect isn't just in your head – forgiveness has physical health advantages. It has been associated with lower blood pressure, a key factor in heart health, and a stronger immune system. As individuals release negative emotions and stress through forgiving people who have 7)_____ with them, their bodies become more resilient, enhancing their ability to 8)_____ off illness and disease. Improved sleep quality is another reported physical benefit of forgiveness. By allowing individuals to let go of rumination and 9)_____, forgiveness contributes to better overall health. Some research also suggests that forgiveness can alleviate physical pain. This effect might be attributed to the stress-reducing nature of forgiveness, which can alleviate tension and discomfort in the body.