

Forgiveness



We can't live life without getting hurt and hurting people, whether directly or indirectly. The question then is, how do we deal with it? There's a quote by Joyce Meyer that really resonates with me, "Harboring unforgiveness is like drinking poison and hoping your enemy will die." When someone wrongs us, we have two options: to forgive, or to hold resentments. When we

forgive, what we get in return is peace. We're able to let go of what is weighing us down.

By not forgiving, we're holding onto baggage that only makes us sick. It taints and affects each and every one of our actions. Sometimes we're so angry when someone has wronged us, and forgiving seems hard. We'd rather take it into our own hands to make it even. But when we try to defend ourselves and we open our mouths or move our hands, the results are ugly and ineffective, only causing more problems.

Often times those who have wronged us have moved on, and they aren't even thinking about us or whatever might have happened, so the only one suffering is the one who finds it hard to forgive. Note that forgiving does not make the situation right, or fix however it might be that you were wronged. What I've learned however, is that many things naturally have a way of resolving themselves when we just wait it out rather than acting in the heat of the moment and having regrets later on.

We also have to keep in mind that it's only right of us to forgive others because we too have been forgiven when we asked or hoped that we

would be forgiven. Imagine where we would be if we were not forgiven, whether by family or friends, for our own mistakes. Essentially, holding onto resentments long after situations have passed, is like punishing others because of their past. Nobody is qualified to punish others in this sense, because we've all made mistakes. How we evaluate our mistakes on the scale of what's bad and what's worse is all perspective and there's no need for that. When we hold people's mistakes against them, we close their potential for what's next and we prevent them from changing.

Though many people have wronged us and will continue to wrong us, forgiveness is always the healthiest and best option for all parties. Forgiveness keeps the past in the past and while it may not promise a different outcome for the future, it opens the doors for the possibility of change. Everyone deserves that.

I'm certainly not perfect in this sense. I cannot say that I've forgiven everyone for everything that has ever been done to me because that's not true. It's definitely challenging, but it's what I strive for, for my own peace of mind. Not thinking about certain matters is one thing, but truly com-

ing to peace with them, is totally different. A lot of unforgiveness is rooted in anger towards someone. When we think about that person or situation it just makes us angry. But anger is actually a secondary emotion. Underneath that anger may be sadness, pain, guilt, or shame, among many emotions.

When we find it hard to forgive someone for something they might have done, it actually reveals a lot about ourselves. Consider:

Why is it that this specific situation is so hard for me to fathom or swallow?

What might it say about my values or beliefs?

What might it say about my personality?

Where might I be too stubborn?

Why is it so hard for me to forgive?

Whether our forgiveness occurs face to face or internally, these are the questions that will allow us to grow and learn so that we do not continue to harbor the same or similar animosities in the future. Again, the only one who loses is the one who finds it hard to forgive, learn, and move on.

Most importantly however, we have to learn to forgive ourselves. Sometimes we are our own greatest critic. If the aforementioned applies to others, it surely applies to us as well. Everyone is deserving of the same forgiveness. Forgiving yourself for your own mistakes, small or large, is one of the most freeing and enabling things you can do for yourself. Don't stand in your own way. We are all holding onto resentments from the past; meditating on these resentments can be truly rewarding if we allow ourselves to get there.

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Sample Chapter

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