

"Live every day as if it were your last because one day it surely will be."

- H.H. "Breaker" Morant

As we say goodbye to 2016, this quote couldn't be any more appropriate. Those of you who know me well know that my family suffered a tragic loss right before Christmas. While there's never a good time to lose someone we love, losing them around the holidays seems to make it much more difficult. It's times like these when I'm reminded that everything happens for a reason, and while we may never know "why", we have to accept it and move on with our lives.

Sudden death got me thinking about the power of an apology. A simple "I'm sorry" can have a huge impact. I'm fortunate that we had a great relationship and I truly don't feel as if I had anything for which I needed to apologize before a life was cut way too short. But we're not all so lucky. So while I'm not a fan of New Year's resolutions, I am a big fan of goals. So as we welcome the new year, make a list of those people to whom you feel you owe an apology. Then tell them you're sorry and ask what you can do to make it right. Otherwise, they may not be around for you to get that opportunity in the future.

Yours in health,



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The Power of an Apology and Forgiveness



Several months ago, I got a message on both Facebook and Linked In from someone I'd known since I was a teenager, but hadn't seen or heard from since I was in my early 20's. It was on this person's heart to tell me he was sorry for something that happened a long time ago. I hadn't thought about this person in a long time, but he was one of those people you never forget. Hearing the "I'm sorry" after so many years was quite a gift. It made me think about people I had possibly hurt along my path of life and how freeing it would be to tell them I was sorry. I have started that process. Telling someone you're sorry really is a gift.....to both them the receiver of the apology and to you the giver of it. They then have two options: they can accept your apology or they can reject it. Whichever option they choose is okay because you'll have done your part. You can't control their reaction.

We've all been hurt by well-meaning people who didn't necessarily mean to do it. But they hurt us. There are some hurts we can all ignore, but there are others that wound us deeply. It's as if they remain stubborn stains in the fabric of our memories that aren't easily washed away. Some people can let anything go....they don't hold a grudge, they don't remember hurts from long ago. The pain they felt yesterday dissolves with the promise of tomorrow. Forgiving is love's toughest work and it may feel unnatural to do it. But I remember what my dad used to tell me: "If you don't forgive, the only person it

hurts is YOU.” But that’s only half of the story. The other half is being able to say you’re sorry and ask what you can do to make it right. If you choose to walk down this path of apology and forgiveness, here are some things to keep in mind:

- We can only forgive people, not circumstances.
- When you forgive someone for hurting you, it helps heal your soul. Detach the hurt from the person and let it go. Not only will you feel better, but you’ll know in your heart that forgiveness has begun when you think about the person who hurt you and you just want to wish them well. Forgiveness is love’s antidote for hate.
- If you’ve forgiven someone and decide you want that person back in your life, be realistic enough to think about what has happened in both of your lives from the time of the event that caused the hurt to the actual forgiving. You’re both probably very different people then you were then.
- Forgiving is not forgetting. If you forget, you actually won’t be able to truly forgive. Remembering is your storage of the pain and why you need to forgive in the first place. You need to forgive precisely and once you’ve forgiven, only then can you truly forget. We only have the power to forgive something we actually remember.
- Excusing someone for what they did is not forgiving. It’s actually quite the opposite. We excuse people when we UNDERSTAND why they did what they did. We must be able to hold them accountable for their actions before we can actually forgive them.
- Accepting people is not forgiving them. It may feel like it, but it’s not the same at all. The difference is simple. We accept people because of the good people they ARE FOR us. We forgive people for the bad things they DID TO us.
- Often, the hardest person to forgive is ourselves. It takes a lot of courage to forgive yourself. We’ve all been there....blaming ourselves for something that wasn’t our fault. I went through this after my dad died of an overdose of chemotherapy. I blamed myself for not knowing the things then that I know now, which could have possibly saved him. But then I realized that maybe they wouldn’t have saved him at all. Maybe it was just his time and there was ABSOLUTELY NOTHING I could have done. To forgive yourself is to essentially act out the role of the person who is both the forgiver and the forgiven. When you forgive yourself, it heals your soul.

So as my broken heart once again starts its process of healing, I ask you to set this goal for 2017. Tell someone you’ve hurt that you’re sorry and ask what you can do to make it right. If someone apologizes for hurting you, choose to forgive them. They will be blessed for the act of making the apology and you will be blessed by the act of forgiving. When we forgive, we do it silently, invisibly, freely. It allows us to reverse the flow of pain that began in the past and could potentially poison our future. We heal ourselves and we help heal the person who apologized. The bottom line is this: forgiving is risky, but it’s a risk I believe is worth taking because we end up healing the hurt we never deserved in the first place.

Happy New Year!