

Forgiveness is a Gift You Give Yourself

"Are you someone who walks around feeling angry with your spouse or loved one much of the time?"

Do you have a little inner voice that constantly reminds you of all of his or her wrongdoings?

Have you become expert at remembering all the minute details of past injustices just so that you can keep score?

If this describes you at all, please read this and take it to heart.

Lack of forgiveness imprisons you. It takes its toll on your physical and emotional health. It keeps you stuck in the deepest of relationship ruts.

No matter how justified you feel about your point of view regarding your partner's insensitive behavior, you still are miserable. When you wake up each morning, a gray tint shadows your life. You walk around with a low-grade depression.

You can't feel joy because you're too busy being angry or feeling disappointed.

In the face of these fairly obvious disadvantages, you hang on to your belief that, since you feel let down, you must not "give in." To you, giving in means forgiving, letting go, making peace. To do so, would be tantamount to giving up your soul.

So, you keep your distance. You interact in perfunctory ways, never allowing your partner to step over the emotional line you've drawn. And though the distance often feels intolerable, forgiveness is not on your short list of solutions to your dilemma.

I have worked with so many couples who say they want to heal their relationships. And yet, when they're offered the tools, they can't seem to move forward. These are the couples who, instead of finding effective ways to get beyond blame, continue to repeat their mantra, "Our problems are your fault and you must pay."

As long as they maintain this mindset, they are doomed to failure.

How very sad.

Even sadder are their children who, on a day-by-day basis observe their parents being "right" but "miserable." What lessons are they learning about love?

If any of this strikes a chord with you, internalize this. **Forgiveness is a gift you give yourself.**

Letting go of resentment can set you free.

It can bring more love and happiness into your life. It opens the door to intimacy and connection. It makes you feel whole.

Forgiving others takes strength, particularly when you feel wronged, but the fortitude required to forgive pales in comparison to the energy necessary to maintain a sizable grudge.

The person most hurt by holding out or blaming is YOU, no matter what the circumstances.

"All this sounds good," you tell yourself, "but how can I ever forget what my partner did to me?" Good question.

You don't! Forgiveness is not the same as forgetting.

You will probably always remember the particular injustice(s) that drove you into your corner. But what will happen is that when you forgive, the intense emotions associated with the event(s) begin to fade.

You will feel happier, lighter, more loving. And these renewed positive feelings won't go unnoticed. Others will be drawn to you.

Just keep in mind that forgiveness isn't a feeling. **It is a decision.**

You decide that you are going to start tomorrow with a clean slate.

Even if it isn't easy, you make the determination that the alternative is even harder, and that you are going to do what you must to begin creating a more positive and loving future.

So promise yourself, that no matter what the reason, you will not go another day blaming your partner and feeling lonely.

Make peace.

Make up.

Make love.

I promise you that the benefits of deciding to forgive go far beyond anything you can picture in your mind's eye at this moment.

Indira Gandhi said "forgiveness is a virtue of the brave".

Be brave.

Your decision to forgive will create a ripple effect of exponential changes in your life."

by Michele Weiner-Davis

