





Forgive to Save Your Life

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We all have a number of people to forgive -- those who caused us pain in our past, made us suffer or took our goodness for granted. Forgiveness comes more easily when we acknowledge its life-saving grace. Forgive comes from an Old English word originally meaning, "to give completely" or "to give up." In that sense when we forgive, we do give up. We forgo the anger, bitterness, and frustration that arise from retaining resentment against a person. We return these feelings to the universe and shun them from our personal energy field. Relinquished are the negative emotions and the brutal impact they have on our being. When we forgive - we detach.

Being unable to forgive is detrimental to our mind, body, and spirit. Emotionally, pent-up feelings increase in force and influence over our state of well-being. We become cynical, distrustful of others, and insecure in our faith. Mentally, clusters of neurons form and begin to dominate our thought patterns. The more we hold onto our anger, the more we become angry. The more we linger on a bitter memory, the more bitterness overtakes our everyday mood. Science has proven that adverse emotions release harmful chemicals into our bloodstream and enter our cells. Physically, harboring the past in our hearts makes our bodies sick. Truly, resentment is toxic on all levels of being.

But you can break free from heavy memories and their burden. First, you must understand the four

truths of forgiveness:

Understand why. To forgive earnestly, you must pinpoint the reasons it is necessary. Are emotions originating from an un-peaceful past affecting your present? Do the effects of a former betrayal, breakup, breakdown or broken heart continue today? Recognize the need to forgive. Identify whom you need to forgive. Then, you can begin the process.

Take time. Forgiving is a process, not a result. You cannot instantly forgive someone, because you must slowly wean yourself from the overwhelming emotions involved. But you can certainly reach forgiveness, step-by-step, day-by-day, through small acts that fortify your intention to absolve another. Forgiveness takes time but once you have pardoned - you are liberated.

Forgive yourself. The way you treat others is a reflection of the way you regard yourself. You must be happy with yourself in order to foster positive relationships that progress. Being happy with yourself begins by excusing your prior mistakes, however costly they may have been. Remember -- there are no mistakes -- only solutions in the making.

Count your blessings. Only when you realize the measure of where you were and where you are can you incorporate forgiveness into your life. Summarize the lessons you have learned. You are not who



you were when you wrongly trusted someone who later hurt you, or when you gave too freely to someone who did not deserve it. Counting your blessings serves to show the long, long way you have come.

Once you have evaluated these elements of forgiveness, you can speak your desire to grant pardon. Practice these affirmations to solidify your resolution to forgive:

I forgive (name). I break the painful bond between us. Each day, I am learning to forgive those who have hurt me. Their actions are powerless over me. I forgive the mistakes of my past and step into a brilliant future. Forgiveness is a virtue I am mastering as I heal my soul.

In addition to speaking your intentions, you can practice simple exercises of forgiveness, such as this example:

Think of a person who has caused you harm and write his or her name on a piece of paper. This can be anyone from a former friend, lover, or family member -- anyone with whom you share outstanding ill will. Underneath their name, write the words you associate with this person or scribble how you feel about them. Breathe deeply and allow the raw emotion to surface. Do not inhibit yourself. Release what you can onto the paper. At the bottom write, "I forgive you." If necessary, write this phrase more than once. Fold the paper and hold it tightly in your hand. Know that all of the negative emotions within you have been transferred to this object. Continue to breathe deeply as you feel your energy shift. You will feel lighter as the weight of your harmful feelings lift. Say a prayer of forgiveness, asking the divine to empower you as you abandon animosity. Then, dispose of this paper. You can tear it up, discard it, or throw it into the ocean.

What is important is that you let it go to signify letting go of the sentimental attachment to this person.

It is never too late to forgive, nor is any wound too deep to heal through the miracle of clemency. Forgiveness begins through daily introspection, calming affirmations, and small acts that reflect your intent to forget and forge ahead. In time, you will thank yourself for your decision to forgive. Forgive today to save your life. 