

## The Power of Forgiveness

One of the most common sources for stress and anxiety in today's world is found in one word: resentment. When you are angry at someone your mind becomes preoccupied with past events and this can be a source of frustration and anger. The solution to this is forgiveness. Forgiveness relieves you of the burden of a hyperactive mind and reduces stress.

If you have difficulty making amends for the past, the future will continue to be unsettling. In fact, being mentally stuck in the past will bring you stress in the present and sabotage the future. The best way to create a better future is to forgive the past.

In my own experience, forgiveness saved my marriage. Many years ago, my wife and I had difficulty have children, a medical condition known as infertility. During this time I blamed my wife and harbored resentment for our difficulty to conceive. When I finally got my sperm tested, I was humbled to learn that I was the infertile one. Thank goodness my wife forgave me for my misdirected blame.

The current financial turmoil in our country is a timely reason to be forgiving. Anger and resentment adds to the stress of financial hardship. Money also can trigger difficulties within our family relationships. You are only human and it is natural to be upset about economic conditions. No one has been spared from the economic contraction. The solution is the same. Forgive yourself and others if you get upset about finances.

There is a verse in *A Course in Miracles* that summarizes forgiveness, "Do you want to be right or happy?" What this wisdom can teach us is to give up the stubbornness of wanting to be right. The insistence on being right can cloud your judgment and leads to resentment. Let bygones be bygones as they say and you will notice more happiness come into your life.

The following are some actions steps you can take to incorporate forgiveness into your life:

Remember September 11<sup>th</sup>. After 9/11, we all became familiar with the tape recordings of phone calls of those who were trapped on the upper levels of the World Trade Center. What is so compelling about those calls was that the stranded people all called loved ones. No one called their stockbroker or real estate agent. They called home. They called home to say I love you and I am sorry. Many asked for forgiveness for some trivial episode of anger they regretted in that fateful moment. Take a moment yourself and consider what you would have done if in that same situation. Before you die, it will be the relationships that you wish to make amends for that will be on your mind. Life is precious; don't wait to forgive.

If you recognize you have been hurtful in a relationship or you realize you made a mistake, promptly admit it and make amends. Ask for forgiveness. You will be surprised

at the response you will get. Mistakes are a part of life. The relief you will feel will be worth any perceived sacrifice of pride.

Write a letter and burn it. This exercise is perfect if you have difficulty with seeing someone face to face. Write a letter and get out on paper any and all angry and resentful feelings. Don't hold back how you feel. After you write it out, burn it! Don't read it to the person and don't dwell on what you have written. Just burn it. Forgive yourself and move on.

Every time you forgive you will feel lighter, healthier and happier. All forgiveness is a gift to yourself. So if you want to be happy, don't insist on being right, just forgive and watch what happens.