

Forgiveness Really Is A Gift

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Wow, these last few years have been wild. Emotions have been so intense for all of us; economic challenges, political arguments, wars, and rumors of greater wars. And let's not forget the big gorilla in the room, COVID. Some of us were angry that people didn't take it seriously. Some of us were angry that we were being brainwashed by the media who encouraged over reaction. And by now most of us have gotten COVID regardless of our vaccine status.

Our reactions to all this stress have varied. Some of us externally exploded. Some of us internally imploded, and some of us went into the cave hoping things would get better on their own.

And then there was the loss of personal freedoms that we were all exposed to: the mask controversy, supply chain issues, school shutdowns, weddings, travel restrictions, funerals, and hospital lockdowns when our loved ones needed support to name a few.



And then there were the absurdities that we all put up with. Many churches and small businesses were destroyed, but liquor stores were allowed to stay open. We were told porous masks could keep microscopic viral particles out of our bodies, but as soon as we sat down in a restaurant and took off our paper protector, the virus couldn't find us.

As a rule, I am pretty chill on most issues, but I was so angry that I know I over-reacted on many fronts. Because I was clear on my perception of what was going on, I didn't give the people that I came in contact with the respect and the freedom to

come to their own conclusions. I lived in a "why can't you see it" world. I'm sure you've heard the story about the boy who refused to sit down and then was physically forced to sit down. And he replied, "I may be sitting on the outside, but I am standing on the inside." Well, I may have been chilled on the outside, but I was angry on the inside.

In retrospect, I realize I was not kind and sensitive to other people that may not have had as much information as I did. And isn't that the height of ignorance, to expect other people to have the same information that we possess and disrespect them if they don't come to the same

conclusions? To sum it up, I was pretty self-righteous.

I always like to set personal goals for the upcoming year. This year I want to focus on listening and listening with compassion. And where appropriate, ask forgiveness for my self-righteous attitude. During crazy times, I think one of the greatest ways we can show kindness is to really listen and hear the struggles people are going through. We won't always have an answer. In fact, we rarely will have the exact right answer. But we can be present without a self-righteous attitude.

Here's another piece to that puzzle, and for many of us, just as important as being present with others and forgiving them. The piece I am referring to is to forgive ourselves when we do stupid things. I don't know about you, but sometimes I am guilty of some pretty stupid

things, when I get stressed. Having the humility to ask for forgiveness and then forgiving myself can bring healing on many levels. I'm sure we can all relate to that old cliché, "ulcers are not what you eat but what's eating you." Or how about, "Bitterness, which comes from unforgiveness, is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die." Forgiveness is one of the most healing, powerful forces on the planet. I find that when I exercise compassion and forgiveness toward other people, it's easier to experience those gifts myself. If you think about it, "forgiveness" really is a gift. Healing comes from increasing life. The more life, or life-energy, we possess the easier it is for our bodies to repair. It takes a lot of energy to hold an emotional grudge. If we forgive others and ourselves, we increase our life quotient.

Blessings to you and your family... and have a Happy New Year.