

From Forgiveness to Gratitude

Spiritual Wisdom

I have learned silence from the talkative, tolerance from the intolerant and kindness from the unkind.

—Kahlil Gibran

Somewhere along your journey through life, people will betray your trust in them. Someone will break his word or even break your heart, and you may end up feeling resentment for the pain caused by their harmful actions.

The problem with feeling resentment is, well, that you're feeling resentment. Who wants to walk around feeling resentment all the time? Or any of the time?

Plus, after you awaken to a more expanded, more spiritual view of life, you come to realize that there is no good reason to be angry or resentful toward anyone, at least not on a long-term basis, because you know that

- Everybody does the best they can with whatever they have to work with. You may think that someone could or should be doing better than they are, but each soul is going through an array of seen and unseen life lessons that can create bad habits, wrong understandings, and materialistic obsessions. These negative qualities can distort a person's ability to make good decisions.
- Everyone is an expression of universal spirit; therefore whatever they do is somehow part of the perfect universal plan — even if its plan is to tick you off! Just entertaining this point of view will help to make your spiritual journey happier and smoother. When someone is being really irritating, you can chuckle to yourself or even shake your finger at God saying, “You divine trickster. What a strange form you took to ruffle my feathers this time.”
- Resentment dampens the light of your own happiness. Resentment and anger also cause a lot of other potential problems, such as drawing to yourself more opportunities to feel more resentment and anger. As Chapter 15 explains, your thoughts are very powerful in drawing to you more of whatever you focus on.

Be Careful

Making efforts to forgive is a great spiritual practice, but pretending that you've forgiven when you haven't really done so can keep you from processing your thoughts and feelings properly so that you can eventually grow into true spiritual forgiveness. As with other challenging experiences, your angers or resentments must be acknowledged so that they can be brought forth from the shadows of hidden thoughts and into the light of divine spiritual awareness.

Forgiving someone's bad actions also doesn't mean that you should ignore or hide what they've done. Even with a forgiving heart, you can still take steps to keep yourself and others from being harmed by the person's actions in the future. The key is to respond without burning in the flames of anger, resentment, and hatred.

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Words from forgiving folks

"In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart."

—Anne Frank

"We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love."

—Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility."

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

"You must forgive those who transgress against you before you can look to forgiveness from God."

—Talmud

"Love in the making sees faults, but forgives them. Love in its grand fulfillment never sees any faults; hence it has nothing to forgive."

—Papa Ramdas

"To err is human; to forgive, divine."

—Alexander Pope