

Are Old Hurts Holding You Back?

EMPOWER YOURSELF WITH FORGIVENESS

Everyone has the power within to free themselves of anger and hatred. That is not to say learning the skill is easy, but it is one of the most important skills you can acquire when seeking a happy and successful life. What is this skill? **Forgiveness!**

All of us experience injustices. Some wrongs will impact you more than others. When an injustice causes you to hold onto anger, resentment, or thoughts of revenge for an extended period of time, scientists have found one starts to lose mental clarity. Ultimately, it creates stress triggers that negatively impact your health. Forgiveness frees you from the noxious impact of these feelings.

Forgiveness is a generous act of mercy and compassion. Behavioral Medicine defines it as "the conceptualization of a cognitive-motivational-emotional experience of decreasing negativity and increasing positivity toward an offender in the face of adversity." What a mouthful! Basically, forgiveness is a coping skill that empowers the individual to be free of the negativity and anger, *which serves no purpose other than to destroy one's mental and physical well-being.*

Think about it. When someone hurts you and makes you angry enough to hold a grudge, that negative feeling pops up over and over again. It seems to intensify each time, making you miserable. But how is that grudge affecting the other person? It's not!

Holding on to anger does not bring justice. It just eats away at your soul and well-being. It's as if you locked a heavy ball and chain onto your *own* leg with the perpetrator's name and face on it. Now, you drag it with you everywhere you go. It's a constant reminder of an injustice you experienced. You become moody, tire easily, and you don't sleep well at night. For some reason, you are determined to hold onto the hurt until the wrong is corrected. The reality is that apology, public humiliation, or whatever you quietly seek will never happen. But that anger and hurt continues to grow like a cancer inside of you.

Then one day someone tells you that you are in possession of the key to unlock that ball and chain. All you must do is have empathy for the offender and forgive them. By doing so, you will release your ties to that person, their offense against you, and you regain your self-respect and enjoy life again. It will only cost you a bit of your pride. Unfortunately, many folks are wired to hold onto toxic negative feelings like badges of honor instead of choosing forgiveness and freedom. This is an instinct one must overcome.

While forgiveness comes easier to some people than others, everyone can learn to forgive. That

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does not imply that you should forget the past or allow a person to harm you again.

Learn to grow from the situation. That's *your* win!

Now a word of caution. Once you let go, do not go back to pick up that hurt! I repeat, do not go back and let it negatively impact your life. Refuse to react in ways that harm you. Ask yourself: "Is this person worth my time, thoughts, and health?" If not, let it go. Remember forgiveness is an act of will. You make the choice to forgive and move on — or not.

Aug. 4 was International Forgiveness Day. It serves as a reminder that forgiveness relieves us from self-imposed toxic feelings which we have the power to release. So give yourself the gift of peace, joy and contentment that comes from forgiving others!

- Deb Matz

THE JOY OF A CHALLENGE WELL-ACHIEVED

What I Learned While Hiking the Appalachians

Last year while everyone was hunkering down in the stay-at-home economy, I chose to go out and explore. I hiked the Appalachian Mountains in northern Georgia over several weekends, and it was a wonderful escape from the negative news. I found tranquility in the silence and magnitude of the forests. Yet those hikes were humbling as they were more challenging than I expected.

I'm fit and exercise regularly (although maybe not as often as I used to!), so I assumed the hikes would be fairly easy. You know, I was expecting just a walk in the park. Boy, was I surprised!

My hiking buddy and I may have been a little over optimistic regarding our physical abilities. The mountain put us in our place several times, and we had to adapt to each new challenge. It taught me that good hydration, a couple energy bars, an apple, and the right equipment made the 15 to 18-mile adventures much more enjoyable.

The experience prompted me to reflect on what it means to take on new challenges and face adversity in all aspects of our lives. When we step outside our comfort zone to try new things, we learn that our true potential has not yet been reached. Each time we overcome a challenge, we get a feeling of satisfaction that builds our confidence. We can't worry about what others think or listen to limiting beliefs. We have to "Just Do It!" as Nike would say. These are the moments that give one that feeling of standing on top of a mountain and seeing the world below. It's a powerful feeling! ... even if it took several rest-stops to get there.

As a business owner, you envisioned your businesses from that high mountain top view with enthusiastic anticipation. I doubt you focused on the challenges that could detour your plans, even though you knew some

would be lurking ahead. So let me share the parallels I saw between the challenges I experienced on my hikes and being a business owner. As a hiker I experienced heat exhaustion, washed-out trails and boulders in the trail, poisonous snakes, and lack of physical energy to get over the next peak.

As a business owner, we cause heat exhaustion when we burn ourselves out working long hours or implode our business by growing beyond our existing resources. The path detours occur when a major client leaves, a supplier goes out of business, or a successful marketing channel is no longer available (i.e. a Google algorithm change!). The snakes are new competitors, a dishonest employee, or changes in market demand. The loss of energy can come from the lack of sufficient cash flow, market leads, or personnel.

Challenges will always be part of our lives and our businesses. We achieve greater success when we prepare ourselves, learn new skills, and effectively use our resources to overcome our challenges. Sometimes we face challenges we cannot overcome on our own and need to seek assistance. If you slip off the trail into a crevice (aka a problem) and struggle to stabilize your footing or gain leverage to pull yourself out, don't let pride keep you stuck! Seek the help you need. That help will get you out of your predicament quickly and launch you towards new accomplishments. This type of collaboration is powerful and a lot more fun than struggling on your own.

So, onto the next challenge. Be prepared, be fearless, and enjoy the climb!

5 WAYS TO FIT EXTRA MOVEMENT INTO YOUR DAY

If you're restless at your desk, extra exercise and movement might be exactly what the doctor ordered. Even just a little bit of unplanned movement every day can help boost your mood and maintain good blood circulation. Here are five ways you can fit in extra movement without losing your productivity!

No. 1: Park farther away.

It might be more convenient to park as close to your destination as you can, but parking farther away can add some extra steps. It's a small difference that certainly can't replace regular cardio, but it doesn't hurt either!

No. 2: Drink more water.

Drinking plenty of water is healthy for flushing out bacteria in your system, but it's also a great way of helping you get up from your desk. The more water you drink, the more times you'll have to refill it in your kitchen or at the watercooler. And, on your way back to your workspace, take the long way around to say hi to your coworkers!



No. 3: Stretch in doorways.

Our shoulders and neck can quickly get sore from the amount of time we spend slouching in front of our screens. An easy way to relieve the stress is to press your hands on either side of a door frame, then lean forward as far as you can. If you don't have a doorway to use, you can try doing shoulder shrugs or neck rolls right at your desk to ease some stress or even just clear your head.

No. 4: Do more calf raises.

One of the easiest exercises to do in public or at home are calf raises. Do this by simply raising your feet high off the ground one at a time. Squats and lunges are also easy to do but may require more flexible clothing than you're wearing and a space where you can move freely.

No. 5: Walk for all of your phone calls.

Sometimes, people start walking naturally while they're on a phone call. Why not make it an intentional movement every time you take a call? Studies show that walking will keep your body in high gear by encouraging energy and productivity!

SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY WITH PURPOSE.

Part 3: What Do You Stand For?!

The previous two months, we have encouraged you to think about what you stand for at work and with your family and relationship. This month you'll be looking at where you stand when it comes to your community.

"What you stand for" is personal and is based on your beliefs and core values. Standing up for what you believe not only improves your self-respect but garners greater respect from others (even from those who don't always agree with you). That has powerful implications for your life!

As humans, we all seek to achieve some level of significance, purpose, or recognition. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to get involved in your community. Your community provides many opportunities to live out your purpose and be part of something bigger than yourself. The key is to find activities that align with what is important to you — something you can stand for.

What is important to you? Your faith? The environment? Animals? Hunger? Sports? Do you like working with organizations that support local or national charities? Do you prefer to work with political organizations, professional groups, or civic groups? Maybe you prefer serving the community informally. Are you the one who plows snow off your neighbor's walks and driveways, helps a stranded motorist, cooks meals for those in need, or visits elderly neighbors so they are not lonely? Whether you serve through an official organization or fill in where life calls you, you are an invaluable part of building up your community.

Grab a piece of paper (or your laptop) and write down the different ways you have helped others or served your community over the years. (This is not a brag list; it's a self-discovery exercise, so be honest with yourself.) Make a note of what patterns or trends you see. Then star each activity that makes you feel fulfilled or gives you a sense of purpose. Then draw a line through the activities that wear you out. Does your involvement reflect what is important to you?

Have you learned new skills or gained knowledge and experience that is helpful in other areas of your life? Has your involvement changed over time?

As you look over your efforts, **is your community involvement aligned with the person you WANT to be?** When your community involvement is in sync with your core values, you are living by what you stand for. These activities help you feel fulfilled, valued, and at peace because you are being true to yourself. However, when you serve to impress others or merely to put something on a resume, you are probably missing out on these benefits. Instead, it could cause you stress, so consider changing how and where you serve to eliminate any internal conflict. This will make your community involvement much more enjoyable.

If you are not involved in your community, it's not too late to start. Remember, your efforts do not have to be formal or require much of your time. You can assist a neighbor or friend in need. Even random acts of kindness can make a life-changing impact on the recipients. Choose something the helps you grow in self-love and confidence.

Isn't it wonderful to serve your community in ways that reflect what is important to you? So, don't sit back, stand up in your community and serve!

The Good News

"You are beautiful, for you are fearfully and wonderfully made."

Psalm 139:14

BRAIN BREAK

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Solution on Pg. 4

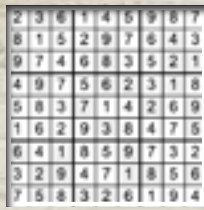
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How to Use Forgiveness to Find Self-Empowerment

What I Learned While Hiking the Appalachians

5 Ways to Fit Extra Movement Into Your Day

What Do YOU Stand For?: Part 3

The Good News!

Meet Odin, the Fireproof Dog

MEET ODIN, THE FIREPROOF DOG

This Great Pyrenees Guided His Goats Through a Wildfire

In October 2017, California was in flames. One of those blazes was the Tubbs Fire, which charred its way through 36,800 miles of forests and vineyards in both Napa and Sonoma County. More than 5,600 buildings were destroyed, and 22 people were killed. But when the flames finally died, a four-legged hero emerged from the ashes: Odin, the Great Pyrenees dog.

Odin belonged to Ariel and Roland Hendel, two farmers in Sonoma County. When the Tubbs Fire threatened to char their home, they packed up as many of their animals and precious items as they could. Unfortunately, their flock of goats wouldn't fit in the getaway vehicle — and their goat-herding dog, Odin, refused to abandon them. Great Pyrenees are prized livestock guardian dogs that will do anything to protect their charges, and Odin lived up to his

breed. "I said, 'Okay, Odin, take care of the goats. You'll be fine,'" Roland Hendel told ABC News.

Both Hendels were sure they were seeing their dog for the last time. Their hearts sank even further when they heard their home had burned down completely. But on a trip back to examine the ashes, something amazing happened.

"In the distance, I saw Odin's tail," Roland told ABC. "Sure enough, there was Odin coming at the head of all his goats."

Not only did Odin survive the fire and run right up to the Hendels for belly rubs, but he also kept every single one of his goats safe! A few wild deer even joined the goats, and he shepherded them through unscathed. The incredible story made the news, and Odin became a local legend.

Unfortunately, even legends don't live forever. This April, Odin passed away after a long life of tail-wagging, treat-eating, and goat-saving. In his honor, Great Pyrenees Rescue of Missouri gifted the Hendels two new Great Pyrenees pups: Buddy and Snowflake. They're following in Odin's pawsteps, protecting the goats he loved so much.