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Relationship First Aid - The power of forgiveness

By Ma'at Seba
SUN COLUMNIST

How do you find forgiveness after an affair? How do you forgive your victimizer? How do you forgive your abuser? How do you forgive yourself? Any situation that requires forgiveness is usually a very painful situation and it seems that the greater the pain that was involved, the more difficult it is to find forgiveness. But, how is it that some people who have experienced emotional devastation have been able to find forgiveness? Finding forgiveness is not a mental exercise; it can only be acquired through connecting with the Divine Source. Forgiveness requires the trinity: Surrender, Non-judgement and Love.

Ø Surrender means having the ultimate trust in the Divine Source and the forces and principles at work in the universe as well as a knowing that everything is unfolding into the plan of the Divine for your greatest benefit. Surrender means having no desire to hold onto the hate, anger and fear, but to choose to live life in peace. Holding on to toxic emotions locks the door to an emotional prison. Forgiveness is the key to the prison's cell door. Those who have learned the gift of forgiveness understand that it is the catalyst to their spiritual growth and part of the plan to them living their best life.

Ø Non-Judgement means choosing to release any judgements about why the situation happened and what you feel needed to be done to the person that did it. Non-judgement means to release all expectations as well as placing blame about the situation, and to know that sometimes the things that happen in life are beyond our understanding, and that everything happens for a reason, even though that reason might not be revealed for a time. There are no accidents in life, only lessons and grand opportunities for spiritual growth. Non-judgement is a knowing that all is in a divine order regardless as to what it looks like at the time.

Ø Love is the pill, cure, antidote and solution to any and every problem on earth; however, it is at the apex of the trinity. Think of your heart as a container. When you are "in love", you feel like your heart is filled up and overflowing with love. In contrast, when you are feeling angry, resentful, guilt ridden or hateful etc., your heart feels so shriveled up it does not even feel like it is there anymore. There is just a hole that is so deep that it swallows up all your toxic emotions with plenty of room left over. Now, which one feels better, Love or all that toxicity? Which one is more empowering, nurturing and life sustaining?

Finding forgiveness begins with a conscious choice to surrender the situation to the God ("With the Divine Source, all things are possible"). It can and usually is a process because when emotional pains are very deep, a person must allow themselves to go through their healing process. Some people need to feel and work through their anger, whereas others possess the ability to immediately release that anger so that they may move forward unfettered. Everyone's self-healing abilities and processes are different.

Let's look at the word Forgiveness a little differently, first the definition:

- Forgiveness – to give up resentment against or the desire to punish: stop being angry with; inclination to forgive or pardon; to give up all claim to

Next, let's change the letters around a little and see what other words (with their definitions) can be found in the word Forgiveness:

- Forge – to move forward steadily, as if against difficulties
- I've (I have) - to hold in the hand or in control; own; possess; an understanding of; to know; mastery of
- give - to sacrifice; relinquish; surrender
- ness – state, quality, or instance of being; action
- Free – not under the control of some other person or some arbitrary power; able to act or think without compulsion or arbitrary restriction; independence; having liberty

The word Forgiveness can now be interpreted as: I possess the ability and understanding to move beyond this situation, into a higher state of being. I acknowledge my behavior; I relinquish and surrender all anger. I AM FREE!

A suggested process to forgiveness is:

· Prayer - ask the Most High for the strength to find forgiveness within your heart and also to face the challenge

· Face It - acknowledgement that forgiveness is needed; acknowledge your possible role in the situation and accept responsibility for your actions or inaction's; acknowledgement of the source of the anger, resentment, guilt or fear that is the catalyst behind the need for forgiveness.

· Erase It – once the problem has been identified, work to bring closure or resolution to the situation

· Release It – let the situation go and move on with a peaceful heart, without blame and no longer hold the other person or yourself emotionally hostage to the situation

· Replace It – with positive thoughts which will bring about peace and freedom to the heart, mind and the Spirit

Love is the most powerful act that a person can give and receive. The second most powerful act is Forgiveness. Forgiving others is important, but it is just as important to forgive ourselves. Forgiveness of self might have stemmed from being involved in an abusive situation, from an action or an act that was taken, or an action or an act that was not taken, from words spoken or words gone unsaid. The inability to forgive can ultimately lead to deep seeded emotional problems as well as physical ailments. The price of non-forgiveness is always high. We all must learn to forgive because none of us have been saints, and at some point in our lives we have hurt someone and wanted forgiveness. Learn to forgive and love others. It will bring a joy to your heart that you have never imagined. Be bold enough to take the first step in forgiveness, after all look at what you have to gain or lose.

Goddess Ma'at Seba is the founder and facilitator of RELATIONSHIP FIRST AID, a program which uses spiritual principles as the tools to identify and resolve the causes of unhealthy, toxic or stressful relationships, whether it is with your mate, children, friends, co-workers as well as yourself. Ma'at can be reached for speaking engagements, classes or lectures at: Relationshipfirstaid@yahoo.com or Maatseba@gmail.com

Mom on the Rebound

By D. L. Gibson
SUN LIFESTYLE COLUMNIST

I gave Sister Girl the evil eye, hoping that she would follow my lead and remain silent when the officer asked about other pictures.

It was none of his business on what evidence I had at home. He should stick to his job and file charges against Marsha to get her to pay restitution to cover the costs to replace my back window.

The nosey officer looked Sister Girl in the eye and asked, "Where are the other pictures?"

Fear struck across her face, and she answered, "I don't know. What pictures are you talking about."

That's my girl! She played dumb like a seasoned actress.

The officer then turned back toward me and said, "I know you're hiding something."

I looked him dead in the eyes and asked, "What about my back window?"

He was focused on seeing racy pictures of the deacon getting a lap dance from a transvestite at the club, instead of the real matter at hand.

Yes...the pictures are what triggered Marsha to go crazy and do stunts around my car and then bust out my back window with her bare hands, but again it's none of his business. That was a matter for the Lord to handle, not the local police department.

I grabbed the picture out of his hand and said, "This is my personal property. You have no right to it."

He could sense that I was getting angry by the tone of my voice.

"It's not against the law for me to have a picture of consenting adults, is it," I asked.

The officer's curiosity was getting the best of him, so he radioed back to the officer who had rescued me from the crazy deacon.

"Officer Smooth can you come back to the scene," he asked.

The officer responded back, "We have an officer down. The woman we rolled in on the gurney apparently responded to the IV the paramedics gave her, then she went crazy. The officer was hit in the head with an object. He's receiving medical treatment. And, now they've just called a code blue."

The nosey officer looked at Sister Girl and I and said, "You're free to go. Officer Smooth has your contact information, so we'll be in touch."

Sister Girl and I didn't know if we should obey his command and leave or go back to the hospital to find out what was going on.

Our curiosity was getting the best of us. Should we go or stay?

Mom on the Rebound is based on actual events.

The DeMarco Project Speaks: Self care, you first

By Kim J. Clark
Aka Expanding Love

"You cannot give what you do not have." Years ago, a friend was lamenting about loving a guy who was not returning her affection. In fact, when she expressed her love he seemed to be irritated and resentful. My friend and I were speaking with an older woman who listened patiently. When my friend finally stopped talking, the woman looked at each of us and uttered these words. "My Dear, you cannot give what you do not have." The woman went on to explain, that until we have a healthy relationship with ourselves, it was impossible to have a healthy relationship with anyone else. Then, she applauded the young man for being wise enough to avoid the "emotional trap" and not to take on the responsibility of my friend's happiness.

At the time her words made no to sense to me. However, over time, in my quest for peace in my being, her words would come to mind… "You cannot give what you do not have." Over time the words became crystal clear and selfcare became a very important part of my life. This writer feels very strongly, that because of the healthy habits learned, when life knocks me down, I get up, dust myself off and keep pressing forward. Do I do this perfectly? Absolutely not. However, because, of self-care, I am able to continue to fight through grief and not give up on life or myself.

As a mother who lost her son to suicide, a lot of time has been invested in blaming myself for what happened to DeMarco. Selfcare dictates, that I learn how to stop blaming myself for the choice he made. The fact is, DeMarco wanted the noise in his head to stop. Unfortunately, he made a choice this family will never recover from. Since the past cannot be changed, it is necessary for me to figure out how to keep moving forward. Some days are better that others. Deadlines have been missed, appointments forgotten, countless sleepless nights, uncontrollable tears… No matter the emotion, bottom line- quitting is not an option. There are always at least two choices, have a "pity party" or figure out how to enjoy the day. I choose to enjoy the day.

A big part of self-care for me, is to keep the lines of communication open with positive people. I believe God works through people and all I must do is be willing to receive help. This is a very important tool. It is essential to have a core group of people who help you through the rough spots. Please note, this DOES NOT include people who join you in your pity party. There have been times when I have called someone in my core group and on said, "I hurt" and the person on the other end has taken it from there.

My greatest desires are to help traumatized veterans and help the family members of veterans who have committed suicide. In order to do this, I must be the healthiest me possible. Therefore, taking good care of myself is of paramount importance. For those of you who are trying to help a loved one, the very best thing you can do for that person is to take good care of you self, then you will have something of lasting value to give, without hurting yourself in the process. Although, "You cannot give what you do not have" you most certainly can give what you do have.

This writer strongly believes that it would not be possible to continue (in a healthy way) to help traumatized veterans if self-care is not done on a regular basis.

Kim is the mother of a veteran who loved his country and was willing to lay his life down for the freedoms he believed in. She is the Founder and CEO of The DeMarco Project, Non-profit organization. Her life's mission it to save veteran lives and improve the quality of life for traumatized military service persons. If you would like to support her in the work, donations are welcome. Visit www.TheDeMarcoProject.org.