

Friends of Silence

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“Is there enough Silence for the Word to be heard?”

Greetings dear friends! Recently I listened to a man recounting an incident that had led to a falling out with a friend he had known for thirty years. His sorrow and regret were palpable as he agonized over how to mend the wound that had opened up between them. “He won’t even talk to me. How can I say I’m sorry?” If even this relatively benign infraction was so difficult to overcome, how much harder is it to forgive the unspeakable cruelties we humans inflict on each other and on the world around us? Yet how can we heal wounds without the grace of forgiveness?



Forgiveness is the essence of peacemaking and begins with ourselves. First, we find the wisdom to be gained from whatever mistakes we have made or failures we have experienced and give thanks for it. Then we forgive ourselves by releasing blame, guilt, and pain. We also need to forgive others who have hurt us. We do not have to condone what they have done, but we do need to release our anger and resentment toward them... Since our inner world is reflected in our outer world, peace, joy, and love (the fruits of forgiveness) will flow into the world’s environment and help people who are having difficulty forgiving themselves or others.



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~from “Creating Good in the World” by Theresa Magness, in *Sacred Journey*, Dec. 2000

As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I know if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I would still be in prison.

~Nelson Mandela

Authentically empowered people forgive naturally. They forgive because they do not want to carry the burden of not forgiving like heavy suitcases through a crowded airport...Forgiveness and harmony go together. When you forgive someone, nothing stands between you and that person. Even if the person you forgive does not like you, you have laid your suitcase down. You travel lightly.

~from SOUL STORIES by Gary Lukav

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Giving forth positive energy in the name of blessing instead of giving forth negative energy in the form of cursing is forgiveness.

~Don Roth

<http://www.manataka.org/page2693.html>
Manataka American Indian Council



Forgiveness is not just some nebulous, vague idea one can easily dismiss. It has to do with uniting people through practical politics. Without forgiveness there is no future. To forgive is the only way to permanently change the world.

~Desmond Tutu

Friends of Silence



God's forgiveness is unconditional; it comes from a heart that does not demand anything for itself, a heart that is completely empty of self-seeking. It is this divine forgiveness that I have to practice in my daily life. It tells me to keep stepping over all my arguments that say forgiveness is unwise, unhealthy, and impractical. It challenges me to step over all my needs for gratitude and compliments. Finally, it demands of me that I step over that wounded part of my heart that feels hurt and wronged and that wants to stay in control and put a few conditions between me and the one I am asked to forgive. This "stepping over" is the authentic discipline of forgiveness.

~from RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON
by Henri J. M. Nouwen

Those who cannot forgive others break
the bridge over which they themselves must
pass. ~Confucius

Perhaps it's possible to forgive in one grand swoop, but I didn't experience it that way. I did it in bits and pieces. You forgive what you can, when you can. To forgive does not mean overlooking the offense and pretending it never happened. Forgiveness means releasing our rage and our need to retaliate, no longer dwelling on the offense, the offender, and the suffering, and rising to a higher love. It is an act of letting go so that we can go on.

~from THE DANCE OF THE DISSIDENT DAUGHTER by Sue Monk Kidd

Write injuries in sand,
Kindness in marble.

~French proverb

What keeps us from forgiving the people who hurt us is that we have not yet healed the wounds they inflicted. Forgiveness is the gift at the end of the healing process. We find it waiting for us when we reach a point where we stop expecting "them" to pay for what they did or make it up to us in some way. Yet, forgiveness is moving on. It is recognizing that we have better things to do with our life and then doing them. ~from YOM KIPPUR READINGS,
ed. by R. Dov Peretz Elkins

A few old trees remain standing in the pasture that had been the schoolyard. In addition, five young evergreens now grow along a nearby fence row... They rise heavenward, quietly pointing to the Divine Grace that somehow enabled the community to forgive within hours of the violence.

~Donald B Kraybill in "Amish Memorials:
The Nickel Mines Pasture and Quiet
Forgiveness" HUFFPOST, 2011

In our society, forgiveness is often seen as weakness. People who forgive those who have hurt them or their family are made to look as if they really don't care about their loved ones. But forgiveness is tremendous strength. It is the action of someone who refuses to be consumed by hatred and revenge. ~Helen Prejean

I wondered if that was how forgiveness budded, not with the fanfare of epiphany, but with pain gathering its things, packing up, and slipping away unannounced in the middle of the night. ~from THE KITE RUNNER by Khaled Hosseini

The healing of our present woundedness may lie in recognizing and reclaiming the capacity we all have to heal each other, the enormous power in the simplest of human relationships: the strength of touch, the blessing of forgiveness, the grace of someone else taking you as you are and finding in you an unexpected goodness. ~Rachel Naomi Remen



Blessed are those who have confessed
their erring ways,
who have asked for forgiveness.
Blessed are those whose burdens
have been lifted,
who are able to respond with love.
For the Beloved walks with them and
speaks to them in the Silence;
With mercy and compassion, they
are held in Love's heart;
All who are at one with Love will
live in peace and harmony.

~from PSALMS FOR PRAYING, 94,
by Nan Merrill

Forgiveness is twice blessed. It frees the one forgiven from guilt and you from bitterness. Forgiveness sheds light on the subject. It lets love, instead of judgment, shine in. Judgment curdles the soul; forgiveness invites your spirit to burst into bloom. ~from HEART AND SOUL
by Daphne Rose Kingma