

Defining Forgiveness *a Process*

by Jean Kadkodaian

Have you ever defined forgiveness?

I have asked lots of people that question and they usually have a definition that keeps them in a wounded, stuck place. I then tell them Forgiveness doesn't mean that what happened was OK. Forgiveness means that you are no longer going to allow it to have power over you. Many of us are on a journey of self discovery and spiritual growth and love to learn new things and try to live a new way. But I have found that if you do not clear out the old there is not much room for the new seeds to ground themselves and grow. So I wanted to share with you a simple yet powerful exercise that has helped hundreds of people move beyond their inner victim to create the life that they want to live.

First write a list of resentments and regrets. Go ahead and feel your anger just allow it to pour out. This is not the time for being a good girl/boy this is time to vent and vent and vent. Many people don't want to face this ugliness inside so I require that they have at least 25 things on their list. Then after they are all out there, find 25 rocks or one to repre-

sent each thing on the list. Again, be bold and find really fitting rocks that fit the size and shape of your resentment. Some resentments are old and worn but others need a rock with jagged edges. Again you are the creator of this exercise so do your best and take the time to really think about it. Then carry these rocks around with you everywhere. If you are in the kitchen and need to go to the bathroom the rocks go with you. When you go to the grocery store the rocks go with you. You take your rocks everywhere you go just like carrying around your resentments.

Now that you have your rocks, I will teach you how to move through these resentments and to really let them go with complete forgiveness. Let's use the following resentment as an example. "I resent being fired from my job". Change the sentence to put the words I allow in front of it. You need to remember that the things that you struggle with in life are here to teach you and the first thing you need to do is own it. "I allowed myself to be fired from my job". There, you said it. Remember this is a spiritual journey— one that requires you

to take responsibility for all that has happened to you. Even if it was not your fault— *you* at some level agreed to have this experience to learn from it. Next, add the words "The reason..." like this: "The reason I allowed myself to be fired from my job is..." Now journal. Do not look for mundane reasons like I was late or my boss didn't like me. Look deeper, for example, I needed to learn to be OK even when I am rejected or I was scared to move forward and living well below my potential. Only when you can understand that the thing you really resent is really a gift or a lesson can you gain power over it and forgive and let go. Keep journaling and carrying the rocks for 1 week.

Then find a time where you will have at least 2 hours alone-time— preferably at sunrise or sunset— and find a body of water. I love lake Michigan, but any body of water will do. As you sit by the water, pick up one of your rocks and say "this rock represents... (insert resentment) and I am willing to let it go. I am asking for help from (the elements, God, the Universe, however you define this). And throw that rock with the intention that the energy will decompose and become something for the greater good of all living things. After all your rocks are thrown, burn or rip up your list and let that go too. Spend some time afterwards being quiet and being with your feelings. You can journal or just be aware. I promise that if you let yourself go through whole heartedly, it will be a wonderful step in clearing out the obstacles that will allow you to have a space to create the life you really want to have. ✨

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