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RICHES IN REALITY

A legend tells the story of a fisherman called Aaron. Aaron lived on the banks of a river. Walking home with his eyes halfclosed one evening after a hard day's work, he was dreaming of what he could do if he was rich. As he walked his foot struck against a leather pouch filled with what seemed to him to be small stones. Absentmindedly he picked up the pouch and began throwing the pebbles into the water. "When I am a rich man," he said to himself, "I'll have a large house". And he threw another pebble into the river. He threw another one and thought, "My wife and I will have servants and rich food, and many fine things". And this went on until just one stone was left. As Aaron held it in his hand, a ray of light caught it and made it sparkle. He then realized that it was a valuable gem. He had been throwing away the real riches in his hand, while he dreamed of unreal riches in the future." This legend summarizes the situation of many Christians. We have been given everything we need or could want, it has been placed in our hands, and we have been invited to enjoy it. But for some reason we do not look into our hands, we do not take what God has given us, and actually use it. Instead we dream of the day when we will be richly blessed, we dream of the day when the joy of the banquet will be ours.

Lesson: We are all given riches to live with. What is important is to be aware of the riches we have and to make use of them in the right way at the right time.

FLY

So high above the world I'm flying,
the only breeze is an angel sighing
The warm glow of the sun shines down on me,
as I drift ever closer to my destiny

Floating through these beams so bright,
I push myself to reach new heights
I don't know when, but someday soon,
I'll be there dancing on the stars, on the moon
On the ground I hear them cry

to get back on earth, and out of the sky
I'm not meant to touch the stars,
They're just too bright, and much too far
And just when I stop flying, start falling

I hear the voice of an angel calling
I listen well to her sweet sound,
saying, Fly on, and don't ever look down

By Smith Geo

NINE STEPS TO FORGIVENESS

1. Know exactly how you feel about what happened and be able to articulate what it is about the situation that is not OK. Then, tell few trusted people about your experience.
2. Make a commitment to yourself to do what you have to do to feel better. Forgiveness is for you and not for anyone else.
3. Forgiveness does not necessarily mean reconciliation with the person that hurt you, or condoning of their action. What you are after is to find peace. Forgiveness can be defined as the “peace and understanding that come from blaming less that which has hurt you , taking the life experience less personally, and changing your grievance story.”
4. Get the right perspective on what is happening. Recognize that your primary distress is coming from the hurt feelings, thoughts and physical upset you are suffering now, not what offended you or hurt you two minutes - or ten years -ago. Forgiveness helps to heal those hurt feelings.
5. At the moment you feel upset practice a simple stress management technique to soothe your body’s flight or fight response
6. Give up expecting things from other people, or your life , that they do not choose to give you. Recognize the “unenforceable rules” you have for your health or how you or other people must behave. Remind yourself that you can hope for health, love, peace and prosperity and work hard to get them.
7. Put your energy into looking for another way to get your positive goals met than through the experience that has hurt you. Instead of mentally replaying your hurt seek out new ways to get what you want.
8. Remember that a life well lived is your best revenge. Instead of focusing on your wounded feelings, and thereby giving the person who caused you pain power over you, learn to look for the love, beauty and kindness around you. Forgiveness is about personal power.
9. Amend your grievance story to remind you of the heroic choice to forgive.

Frederic Luskin, Ph.D.

- Forgiveness is the most effective way of restoring inner harmony and balance in our minds and hearts, in other words in our personal lives. There is a mental treatment guaranteed to cure most of the sicknesses: Sit for half an hour every night and forgive everyone against whom you have any ill will or antipathy. Jesus urged us to forgive emphatically. "If you hold anything against anyone, forgive him" (Mk 11:25).
- The only way to keep ourselves free from the assaults of perplexing thoughts is to spend a few minutes each day cleaning out our thinking. Has someone hurt you by her/his comments? Were you publicly insulted by someone? Did a friend fail to come through for you? Pluck off each offending layer of thought and dispose of it just as we dispose or delete the mails in our inbox. Doing so ensures that a vague irritation does not transform itself into a deep resentment and an intense hatred in future.
- To become a generous forgiver of major pains, we can practice forgiveness on small hurts. A good place to start is by forgiving promptly the small slights inflicted by strangers - a rude clerk at the office, a driver who cuts you off, a doctor who keeps you waiting, the auto driver, the public transport operators, etc. Use those events and people as practice time to prepare you for the tougher task of forgiving major hurts.
- Forgiveness is much easier when you give up irrational beliefs which can fuel frustration, anger and hostility, the expectation that other people will or "should" always act in the way you want.
- Beware of the shoulds and musts in your thinking and speaking: He shouldn't have done this to me. She shouldn't act this way. He should have known better. I've worked hard, so I should have been rewarded.
- Whenever you find the word "should" and "must" in your mind and talk, challenge yourself. Tell yourself it is unrealistic to expect that people will always act decently and respectfully toward you. Remind yourself everyone is fallible and capable of making a mistake.
- Keep in mind that there's a strong connection between anger and a wide spectrum of health miseries - chronic stomach upset, heart problems etc. Without question, the more anger we experience within, the more stress we're under," . Let me give an example, when people forgive during retreats healings take place. When people make sincere confessions healings take place. So whenever a hostile or hateful thought enters your mind, try to be fully aware of the harm that resentment can do to you, even making you ill. Let that knowledge further motivate you to forgive and let go.
- Withholding forgiveness and nursing resentment allows another person to have control over your well-being. It is always a mistake to allow such negative emotions to influence your living. Forgive and you will be able to direct your life in positive thoughts and actions.

He was a monk of the abbey of Melrose in the Scottish border country, and died in about 700. When living as a layman in Ayrshire he underwent a 'near death' experience, from which he recovered, and which terrified those who had come to mourn him. The experience brought about a change of life; he divided his property between his wife, his sons, and the poor, and joined the Melrose community. He was also influenced by a vision which he saw on the life of the beyond, which he was to write down, amid which was to be the earliest of its kind in these islands. In its complex understanding of the divisions of hell, purgatory and paradise, it anticipated the much more famous "Divine Comedy" of Dante written some 600 years later. Drythelm's monastic life style was extremely austere; he would stand in the waters of the River Tweed even in the depths of winter reciting the psalms, for example. Although no cult of him ever really developed, the Venerable Bede gives a full account of his life in his "Ecclesiastical History" and the popularity of the History was in part due to the prominence given to this now obscure saint from the North.

The remarkable thing is that we really love our neighbor as ourselves: we do unto others as we do unto ourselves. We hate others when we hate ourselves. We are tolerant toward others when we tolerate ourselves. We forgive others when we forgive ourselves. We are prone to sacrifice others when we are ready to sacrifice ourselves. ERIC HOFFER

Repentance is another name for aspiration. HENRY WARD

It is easier to forgive an enemy than to forgive a friend. WILLIAM BLAKE