

Let Go of the Past

I am not suggesting that we forget the past completely; we will all have a few happy, joyous memories which we may wish to hang on to and treasure for the rest of our lives. What I *am* suggesting is that you try to let go of the more negative memories - the ones that still cause you such emotions as bitterness, jealousy, resentment and pain. Whilst we may feel justified in having these feelings if life has been unkind to us at times, unfortunately they can really hold us back, eat into our souls, and prevent us from moving on towards a better, brighter future.

You may have suffered from some form of bad parenting for example, and be left with a legacy of pain and grief - feelings which are natural and understandable. It can be hard to let go of these. There are ways of looking at things, however, that can help. Perhaps your own parent(s) received less than adequate mothering or fathering themselves, and were therefore ill-equipped to take good care of our own small selves. Perhaps they did the best they could given their own limited resources. Or we may still carry grudges towards other family members, to ex-employers or to certain friends from the past, because we feel we have been misunderstood or mistreated in some way. But remember the time-honoured saying: "To err is human, to forgive is divine". If your negative feelings persist, it may help to write them all down on pieces of paper, and then when you have expressed all that is in your heart and mind, you can set light to them in a ceremonial bonfire. This self-expression, and subsequent action, can really help to lighten the soul. The heat can go out of our feelings, and at the very least, make them more tolerable. You can practice this exercise with *any* unresolved emotional issues you may have.

We may also be burdened by regrets about things we have said or done in the past, and by mistakes we have made. But again, we are only human, and *self-forgiveness* is important too. Mistakes often provide us with valuable lessons, and it is often only through trial and error that we really learn and grow. You may even be able to help prevent others from making similar mistakes by passing on the wisdom you have now accrued as a result. So try not to regret the past. Tend kindly to your wounds, keep developing your compassion, wisdom and understanding, and remember – past painful experiences we have *survived* can be transformed into new-found strengths with which to proceed forwards.

Written by Sarah Graham BSc (Psychology) MSc (Health Psychology)

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