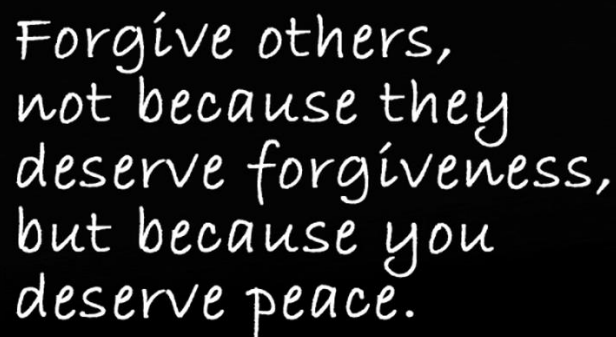




FORGIVENESS – Some Thoughts to Help Cope

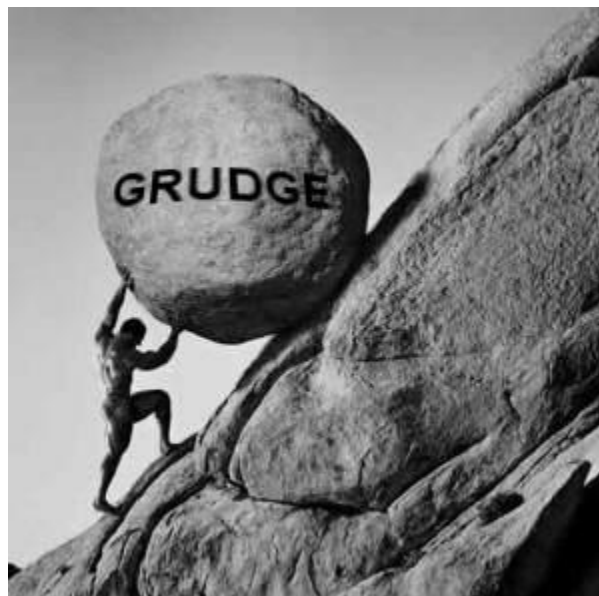
Review and discuss the following ideas and principles that can help an individual who may be struggling with forgiveness. Take note of any that particularly stand out to you as helpful for your personal situation:

Learn to be “Ready forgive” – It is inevitable that other people are going to get you upset, disappoint you and at times hurt or offend you. The fact is however, that if you are always looking for reasons to be offended and hurt, you will find them a lot quicker than someone who has prepared him/herself to be ready to overlook small offenses. Instead, try to look for the good in others the same way that you would want them to focus on the good in you.



Forgive others,
not because they
deserve forgiveness,
but because you
deserve peace.

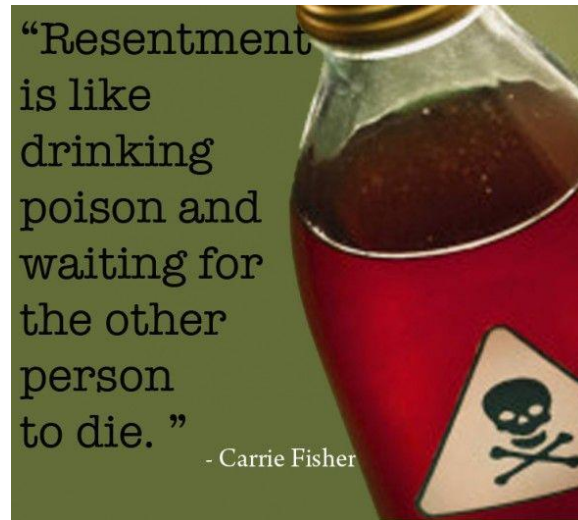
“Being right can be overrated” – Being right is nice and being right is good. However, sometimes holding on to the desire to be “right” in a disagreement comes at the expense of peace and forgiveness. Sometimes just dropping the dispute over who is “right” and who is “wrong” and focusing on letting go and moving on is better than stubbornly holding on to a grudge



It can take a whole lot of effort to carry a grudge



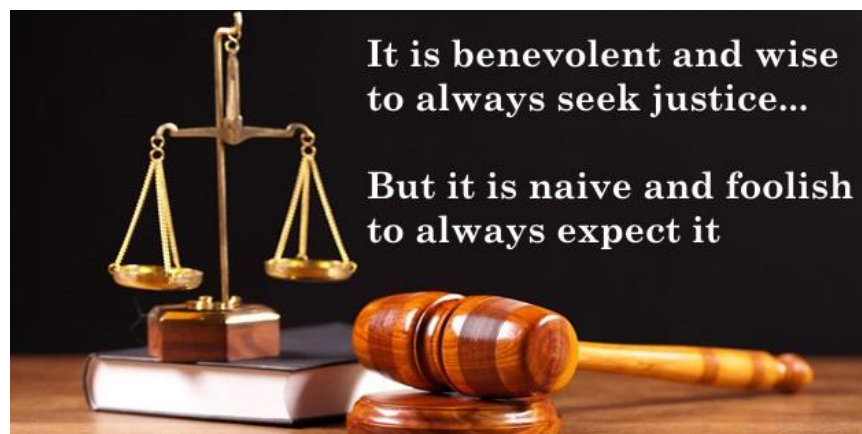
Convince yourself of the fact that RESENTMENT ONLY HURTS YOU – Resentment (Holding on to anger over insult or injury) serves no purpose for your own well-being. It may falsely feel like it is useful to hold on to resentment and to keep reliving the past but in actuality it only hurts you. ***Forgiveness is for your own good***



Sometimes you have to let go of the myth of fairness – Fairness and justice are beautiful and important principles that we should strive for and value in life. However, a person can spend a lifetime being angry over unfair treatment at the expense of moving on and maintaining their own inner peace. Sometimes life is unfair and out of our control in spite of our strongest desires for fairness and justice. Consider the following example:

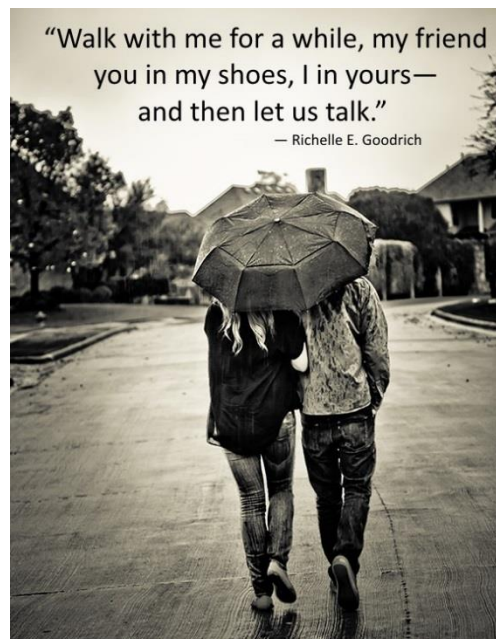
- **EXAMPLE** – Fred and Jim were both dedicated employees who gave their all to the company they worked for. Then one day, unfairly and out of nowhere, they are both unfairly let go due to the company CEO deciding to move the company in a different direction that does not include their training and skill set
 - **FRED’s REACTION** – Fred spends the next year wallowing in his anger and resentment which leads to depression and inactivity which holds him back from finding a new job.
 - **JIM’s REACTION** – Jim is just as upset as Fred over the injustice of being let go without warning. However, Jim talks to his friends and family and moves on. He focuses his energy on bettering his situation in spite of the injustice

Which reaction makes more sense?





- **Practice empathy** – In some situations, when you can try to understand why someone may have done something hurtful, it can help you to move past it. Some examples:
- “My wife probably lost her cool about me coming home late again because she is so stressed from taking care of these kids all day. Even though I am upset she yelled, I should try to be more understanding”
 - “My neighbor has been acting like a real tense jerk for the past few weeks, but it is probably because she is going through a divorce so I’ll let it slide for now”
 - “My daughter was clearly misbehaving lately but instead of getting upset I sat down and talked to her and found out that she is really just scared about starting a new school at the end of the summer”



- **Address your pain** – When it comes to more serious issues such as past trauma, it can be very important to seek the help and support you need so that with time you can let go of the pain and sustain the healing process. This can be both an emotional and spiritual* journey toward acceptance and peace. *(Forgiveness is about letting go, seeking peace, looking outside of oneself, healing and personal growth – all of which are aspects of many people’s faith, however even you do not have specific beliefs, forgiveness in itself is very spiritual)

