



**Drop the Rocks – COUNSELOR INTRO VIDEO:** <https://youtu.be/kQ2x4PwNj4g>

READ: The Climber

A man was climbing a mountain to get home to his village at the top of a steep mountain. Unfortunately, there were some mean and hurtful people that lived along the trail on the way up to the top of the mountain. Every once in a while, one of these bitter and mean people would hurl a rock at the climber to try to prevent him from getting to the top of the mountain. Having rocks thrown at him by these bad people made the man very angry. So, what the man would do is catch the rocks that were thrown, and then he would put them in his backpack. The idea was that he would save each rock to then one day throw back at these bad people when he sees them again.

With time however his backpack got heavier and heavier. This only made the man angrier and angrier, and it slowed him down on his climb to the top. The man let his anger turn to hate and bitterness which fueled his grueling struggle with a backpack full of rocks. The struggle eventually became unbearable as the weight was too much to carry but still, he pressed on. One day a wise man told the man to just let go of the rocks so he can climb freely again and get where he needs to go. The man questioned “If I let go of these rocks, what am I going to use to hurt the people who tried to hurt me?” The wise man replied “Nothing. but if you let go of the rocks, you will reach the top of the mountain much quicker and easier, and all of these people will be behind you” –

The man emptied his backpack full of rocks and felt a huge weight off of his back, literally and emotionally too. The man then focused on his climb and then focused on dodging thrown rocks instead of catching and holding them any longer. Before he knew it, he reached the top of the mountain where he began living happily with the people who cared about and loved him. The man thought to himself “The way I was going I never would have made it to the top of the mountain if I didn’t drop the rocks - They were far too much of a burden to bear”





You have probably heard something similar to this before but holding on to resentments is like trying to climb the “mountain of life” with a useless weight on your back. Resentment slows us down in our progress as it is a useless burden to bear. Most people know this on some level still so many people refuse to “drop the rocks” and lighten their load in life. Why- because of faulty reasoning: Here are some myths and faulty reasons why people hold onto resentments:

Read and discuss each myth and corresponding truth. Some people who are holding on to resentments may feel strongly and struggle with this as sometimes letting go can be a challenge. So, if it feels like this topic may be a struggle for you, try to be open minded and listen

### **Resentments Myths and Corresponding Truths:**

**Myth: *Holding on is punishment for the person who hurt or wronged me*** – We can falsely reason that we need to hold resentments as if this somehow “punishes” the person who is the object of resentment.

- **The truth** is that by holding on to resentment a person is primarily punishing themselves. Resentments almost always cause more pain to the person holding the resentment than the person being resented. It is true that the person being resented may not like it however remember holding on to anger and hate does far more damage to us than it does to anyone else.

**The Myth of False Power** – Resentment is just old anger. Anger can bring a feeling of “power”, or a “rush” People can faultily reason that resentment empowers and strengthens them.

- **The truth** is that resentment weakens a person. It takes a lot of wasted energy to hold on to resentments. Sadly, some people don’t ever let go long enough to find out how much better it feels

**Myth: *Forgiveness is weakness*** – People may reason that holding on to resentment means they are “strong” or “tough” like a grudge holding gangster or vigilante seeking revenge on their enemies like in the movies.

- **The truth** is that it takes a lot of strength and courage to let go and to forgive. Holding resentment is often based on fear of being hurt again rather than strength. Letting go is a brave journey

**Myth: *Letting go means they “win”*** – A person who is experiencing resentment may believe that they “lose” a conflict and the enemy “wins” if you are the one to let go. This can result in a sick contest to see who can hold on to the hate longer

- **The truth** is again that letting go of resentment is not “losing”- To the contrary it is a “win: for you emotionally if you can be the bigger person and let go

**Myth: *It’s Ok to hold on to resentment like a bad habit*** – Resentment can become habitual just like anger can become habitual and so can complaining and a lot of other negative behaviors if we repeat them long enough. Just because something like resentment becomes comfortable does not mean it is good for us.

- **The truth** is that like most bad habits, we can break the cycle of habitual resentment with time and effort, and it is worth it to work on it and move on

**Myth: *The person never apologized so I must hold on to resentment*** – Sadly. people can wait a lifetime for an apology that may never come.

- **The truth** is that apologies do make letting go of resentment much easier. However, people can struggle with this fact: An apology is not required for letting go. We do not need to wait for an apology (that may never come) in order to let go. Remember again we let go of resentment for *ourselves* not for them. We cannot force someone into a sincere apology no matter how badly we may want that



apology, but we can work on our own emotions for our own self improvement regardless of the other person.

**Myth: My resentment protects me** – This is the thought that resentment builds a figurative wall around us which keeps the person who hurt or wronged us away. This in a sense is true but its not the best way to go about it:

- **The truth** is that you can still distance yourself from someone without holding on to resentment. Resentment is just a feeling and nothing more. If a person in our lives is dangerous or toxic, we can choose to stay away calmly without resentment or anger. Letting go might make a person feel vulnerable but that does not mean you are not safe if you let go. You can still protect yourself in healthy ways by using supports and surrounding yourself with people who care. You don't need to be angry to be emotionally safe

**The Myth of Justification** - This may be one of the most common reasons for holding on to resentment. A person may reason that because they are justified in feeling anger, hurt and resentment then this is good reason to hold on to resentment. ***“I am entitled and justified in holding on to my anger and resentments!”*** Another way a person may view this is: ***I must hold on to my resentment because I've got good reason to*** – There are plenty of “reasons” a person may use to hold on to resentment including:

***They hurt me***

***They cheated me***

***They lied, mislead, and deceived***

***They disappointed me***

***They took from me or stole from me***

***They backstabbed me and betrayed me***

***They were not there for me when I was in need***

***They abandoned me***

***They took advantage***

*(Or they did these things to a person whom I care about)*

- **The truth** is that your feelings are valid and the reason you feel angry may be completely justified. However, letting go of resentment does not mean we are condoning the offense. It does not mean that we are saying the person who hurt or wronged us is now innocent. Letting go of resentment in no way means that we are saying that what happened is “ok” - It just means we are no longer carrying the emotions with us any longer and that is it.
- **The truth** is that all of these reasons may be 100% true – The person may have done awful things. However, letting go of resentment is not about justice. You are not giving a “not guilty” verdict to someone who has hurt or wronged you or someone you love. In the universal court of justice, nothing has changed – wrong is still wrong however you are just letting go of a negative feeling for your own good and no one else, and that's what you need to focus on

***Can the group think of any other reasons or rationalizations why someone may hold on to resentment?***



## Some Key Points on Letting Go:

Letting go of resentment is healing

Letting go often is not easy and takes time

Make the choice to work on letting go- It's your choice to work on it no one can make you do it. It's often process and not just an event (Although with experience it does get easier and easier). The worse the hurt, the harder it may be, but the reward may be a great relief in the end

Focus on coping with emotions – Get help for your emotions if you cannot do it alone: The anger, the hurt, the trauma, the pain, etc. – Process these in therapy if your support system is not enough. Still use your supports too as friends and family mean so much in this process

Move away from focusing on being a victim to a focus on being a survivor by releasing the power that the offending person had over you. Again, you are letting go of resentment for your own growth – For you

Use your coping skills regularly and as needed – Learn new ones if you feel you are lacking in this area

Remember as an added bonus: *All of your other issues will get better when you let go of resentment.* There are scientific studies showing that letting go of resentment is tied to improved outcomes with all of these conditions and symptoms:

- Substance use disorders (Letting go of resentment promotes recovery)
- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- Mood instability and emotional dysregulation
- Aggression
- Relationship problems – (Friendships and romantic relationships all improve when resentment is removed)

Letting go of resentment promotes serenity, recovery, longevity, and inner peace

Whatever you may believe in personally, consider the “spiritual” aspects of letting go: Your goals, your purpose in life, your sense of meaning and belonging as well as whatever spiritual beliefs you may have will all be enhanced when you let go of resentment. If you do have a more defined spiritual belief system, use that to your advantage because resentment does not fit into “the big picture” in the greater scheme of life. Let it go

**“Resentment is nasty. What makes it so ugly is that it has a tendency to turn you an otherwise kind and reasonable person, into someone who is so angry at their own life situation that is nearly impossible to recover. Bitterness and resentment make it hard even for the people who love you to be around you.”**

**Martha Bodyfelt**

## **Resentment.**

Forgive yourself for what you allowed and for the things you had no control over. Letting go of resentment doesn't diminish what they did to you. In fact, letting go allows you to take your power back.

*-Ash Alves*

**“Anger, resentment, and jealousy don't change the heart of others – it only changes yours.”**

**Shannon Alder**

 TheMindFool