

Becky's corner: Healthy forgiveness

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No matter how we define our spirituality, we all have the same need for forgiveness. We need to forgive others and we also need to forgive ourselves.

While we focus on the physical and emotional needs we have, we tend to overlook our spiritual needs.

Life is about finding balance between the physical, the emotional, the social, financial and the spiritual.

Taking a personal inventory of our emotions, conflicts, actions and omissions can be a powerful tool. Such an inventory can yield valuable insights into the direction we need to take.

Looking deep into ourselves can reveal things that we thought were long buried – but they can be there, ready for discovery. Finding painful things, bringing them to the light and dealing with them, can be extremely healing.

- The first step: Acknowledging that there is someone or something we need to forgive.
- The second step: Deciding that we do need to forgive.
- The third step: Working out a plan for forgiveness and finally,
- The fourth step: Releasing that which we need to forgive.

To start, it may be helpful to write a letter to yourself outlining the who, what, where, and when. Doing so can help you organize your thoughts and make them tangible. Seeing the thoughts in writing lends a reality to the situation.

Forgiveness can lead to feelings of understanding, empathy and compassion for others, but also for ourselves.

Forgiveness doesn't mean we forget pain that has been done to us or that we have done to ourselves or others. But it does mean we make peace with it and we find a way to move forward.

Being willing to forgive someone can be a very difficult thing. We feel pain. We hold onto bad memories. We want, on some levels, to get even. Reaching out and forgiving requires commitment and motivation. It may not happen overnight, but with persistence and focus, you can get there.

It is a strength to be able to forgive.

We must also be willing and able to forgive ourselves.

The act of forgiveness yields a wealth of healthy benefits. It can feel like a huge weight has been lifted. Our spirits are lighter as well – and there is an overwhelming sense that we've done the right thing. Emotionally, physically and spiritually, we are stronger in the end.