Take Care of YOU

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Find Freedom through Forgiveness

We've all experienced hurt, disappointment, and betrayal. Whether from an unkind comment, a broken promise, or a deep emotional wound, the actions of others can leave lasting pain, anger and resentment. While these feelings are natural, holding on to them can take a toll on our health and well-being.

Forgiving someone who has hurt us—while it doesn't erase what happened or make the hurt less real or valid—offers a way forward. It allows us to release the emotional burden and reclaim the energy we spend dwelling on the past.

Forgiveness also extends to ourselves. We all make mistakes and regret past decisions, but carrying ongoing guilt or self-criticism can prevent us from moving on. Self-forgiveness means recognizing our imperfections, learning from our experiences, making amends, and allowing ourselves to grow.

Practicing forgiveness also supports whole-person health. Although not a cure for health conditions, it is linked to lower stress, anxiety, and symptoms of depression, as well as healthier relationships and greater life satisfaction.

Of course, forgiveness is not always easy. But it begins with acknowledging what happened and allowing ourselves to experience the feelings that followed. With time and willingness, we can work toward considering different perspectives, recognizing what is in our control, and gradually releasing the resentment. Practicing forgiveness in small situations develops patience, empathy, and emotional resilience. Journaling, reflection, and talking with someone we trust can also help.

Importantly, forgiveness does not mean excusing hurtful behavior or pretending nothing happened. We can forgive and still maintain healthy boundaries, expect accountability, and protect our safety, dignity, and well-being. Forgiving someone who has hurt us is as much—if not more—for ourselves as it is for them.

Ultimately, forgiveness is a personal journey, not a one-time decision. Some hurts take longer to release than others, but each step creates room for healing, hope, and peace of mind. We can't change the past, but we can work toward changing how much power it holds over our present and future.

Questions to Guide Forgiveness

- Am I still carrying a past hurt, disappointment, or regret?
- How is it affecting my well-being and my life today?
- Am I giving it more power and energy than I want to?
- What can I learn from the experience?
- What is within my control, and what do I need to accept?
- Can I let go while maintaining healthy boundaries?
- What would I gain by practicing forgiveness?
- What would letting go and moving forward look like for me?