

RESENTMENTS

Resentments are feelings of anger, indignation or injury, often unexpressed, about events which happened in the past. We relive the hurt again and again in the present. We keep fresh in our minds the painful words that were said to us or actions that were done to us, and our hurt grows out of proportion. The source of the hurt may no longer exist or may be unaware of the damage that was done, but we continue to nurture it so that it grows and flourishes and consumes our thoughts.

We hold on to the hurt. We feel sorry for ourselves. We may wish harm to the person and hope that they will come to realize deeply they have hurt us and damaged our lives. We may even play out scenarios in our imaginations of how we could get even with them. We pay no heed to the harm we do ourselves in thinking this way. We spend hours of our days thinking about the past rather than making today better.

When we harbor a resentment, we become the slave of the person we resent. We do not want to be the slave of anyone, least of all the person we resent. When we begin to be aware of what we are doing to ourselves and learn through the Emotions Anonymous (EA) program to ask our Higher Power for help and guidance, resentment begins to lose its power over us.

Letting go of resentments is not easy and takes time. We may not want to admit, even to ourselves, that we have these deep-rooted feelings. On the other hand, there may be a certain amount of satisfaction for us in being angry and feeling self-pity. As we learn to be more honest with ourselves, we can see just how destructive these feelings are to our peace of mind.

The key to releasing resentments is forgiveness. But how can we forgive someone or something that has hurt us so terribly? How can we just let go of the pain that has been with us a long time and has ruined so much of our lives and that was inflicted on us when we were so vulnerable and our self-esteem so low?

We can begin by praying for the willingness to forgive the person who hurt us. We can pray for the willingness to look at what may have been our part of the situation and to realize that we could have had a part in creating the problem. If we can be honest with ourselves, we can admit that sometimes we may do things which provoke negative reactions in others. Even if we honestly conclude that we had no part in creating the problem, forgiveness is still necessary if our goal is peace of mind. Being happy is more important than being right.

In EA we learn to forgive ourselves and others. We begin to see that our happiness does not depend on what others do or say. We feel accepted and loved in EA, and we are more willing to accept and love others. We are able to send out love thoughts instead of angry thoughts. We are finally free from the slavery and bondage of resentment. Resentments become mere memories of the past, and we can see them in perspective.

