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Never Underestimate the Power of Forgiveness

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Never Underestimate the Power of Forgiveness

By **Germane Graham**

UCF Forum columnist

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For many people, forgiveness issues may go undetected because they ignore the obvious signs that they have not let go of a past hurt. I believe that in order to experience total freedom in life, one must constantly do a forgiveness check – as I once did with my biological father.

If the heart is clogged with unresolved issues, anger, resentment and unforgiveness, then it is time to cleanse.

Studies at Johns Hopkins University found that forgiveness is related to heart disease, blood pressure, cholesterol, depression, pain, anxiety and sleeping-related issues. Cleansing starts with assessing all parts of our human nature because pain impacts us physically, mentally and spiritually.

During the process of a forgiveness check, issues may come up that one thought were resolved. You have not completely forgiven if:

- **This issue still causes a physical or emotional reaction when brought up** – Feelings of anger, sadness, rejection or pain are still associated with the person or event that caused hurt.
- **There is no empathy for the person who caused the hurt** – It is hard to understand the intentionality, circumstances and events related to the hurt that one was caused.
- **There is a feeling that the person who caused the pain got away with something** – The reason why it is so hard to forgive others is because somewhere deep inside one may feel that if they forgive the person who hurt them, then they are excusing what pain that was caused.

I saw how unforgiveness of my biological father was preventing me from moving forward in relationships. I was so angry with him that I was not aware of the wall that I

had built up around me. I completely felt justified for not forgiving him for abandoning me for most of my life. I was not able to see that this was negatively affecting me until I went to talk to him one day.

I went to see him to tell him how bad a father he was and to let him know that I had a right to blame him for my shortcomings, fears and insecurities.

The truth is I was holding up my own future with my unforgiveness. When I was 25 years old, I wanted to change this so I decided to go talk to my dad. Before I went in to see him, I sat in the car and prayed that I wouldn't do or say anything that was damaging. I had no idea what I would do when I walked into his office.

When I walked in, my fists were clenched and my heart was racing. I felt my blood pressure rise as I sat down. My dad and I had never talked about this before, which made it truly awkward. Before I could say anything, he began to apologize to me for all of the things that happened in my childhood. I was not aware that he knew how I felt.

I began to experience peace and at one point, I tuned out what my dad was saying. I just felt myself letting go of pain, anger, strife and unforgiveness. My fists unclenched and I felt my heart rate decrease. I begin to see how many decisions I had made were based on the unforgiveness I had toward my father.

As he was talking, my thoughts started changing. I saw how I had to release my dad from offenses, and I did right then and there. My thoughts and feelings toward him changed – and my life changed for the better.

Once I was free from unforgiveness, I begin to immediately see positive changes in my confidence, relationships, grades and, most importantly, my purpose.

I am so glad that I had a chance to resolve this issue before my father died. He was able to see me accomplish a lot in my life, including starting a family.

And this has taught me to never underestimate the power of true forgiveness.