

Letting Go

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A monkey saw a banana outside a wooden gate. Its hand could just pass through the bars and hold on to the banana. When it wanted to withdraw its fist holding the banana, its fist could not get through the bars. The monkey is locked inside the gate simply because it cannot “let-go”. The hunter catches the monkey knowing that the monkey will not let go.

Letting go... It's easier said than done. It is difficult for us when we face situations and challenges. Yet life challenges us to face it again, again and again. It becomes part of our us, part of our life process.

“Letting go isn't a one day thing, it's something you have to do everyday, over and over again.” – Quoted from a film entitled “Dawson's Creek.”

Letting go is embracing the emotions and memories.

Letting go is neither to “forget” nor to “ignore” or “not to think about”. It does not mean blocking memories, cutting them off and burying them. The physical being is not the only thing that is hard to let go; there are also feelings of abandonment, disappointment, guilt and bitterness to contend with. In a death situation, it is not difficult to leave the person, but is the recalling of related events and emotions that lives on with us!

Letting go does not mean that we no longer feel angry, jealous or regretful about what had happened to us. We need to express and acknowledge our painful experiences. We may need to talk to someone to help us let go and let out our intense feelings, thus finding ways to say goodbye to the emotional baggage that we have been carrying with us. These memories will not “disappear” at once. In fact, we let go by cherishing the memories and learning from them. To let go is to be thankful for the memories that make us laugh, cry and grow.

Letting go is having the courage to accept change.

It is not easy to face changes in life. Sometimes we hold on because we are afraid that we may fall or we are not able to handle situations once we let go. There is fear of losing support or familiarity, fear of the unknown despite knowing that clinging on may cause more hurts and tension. However, letting go is not about running away from these pains, or giving in to life circumstances or giving up on life.

Letting go is about making a decision, not to allow previous life challenges to stifle us from accepting change. We may have to let go of our pride and judgements, to accept constructive advice which helps us to make sense of our loss. It is about having an open mind and confidence in the future, and gradually moving towards acceptance of the loss and change.

Letting go is learning form experiences and moving on.

When changes occur, we may not be aware of it. If we hold onto the events or persons, we are losing sight of what could have been. The important thing is not only the loss, but the far-reaching repercussions. In the case of divorce, the parents may not realise that their children modelled their ways of coping perhaps holding on to a belief that they need a “complete” family. We may want to hold on because we are fearful of change. When we learn to let go of the attachment to the experiences, we set ourselves free emotionally and move on eventually.

It is also about letting go our belief system. We have to let go of our mindsets and learn to listen to what our environment is telling us. We have to let go of our unrealistic expectations and move towards achievable dreams and goals. In this way we are not our own hindrance to growth and change.

Letting go is growing and glowing.

Many of us have difficulties letting go of set beliefs and perceptions. We may not have noticed that the world is changing and refuse to let go our ways of viewing them. This is particularly true of many parents of growing children. It is hard for parents to make the transition from treating their children as kids, to treating them as young adults. Refusal to let go may mean that we hinder the growth and change, not only of the children, but also ourselves.

Letting go is allowing our strengths and talents to be tapped and nurtured. It’s about all that we had previously, all that we have now and all that we will soon gain. We no longer live in a boundary set by ourselves, but have the ability to rebuild and re-invest in our continual personal growth. To let go is to open the door and embark on a journey that we have routed for ourselves.

Life after a loss, either through separation, divorce or death brings about tremendous challenges in the family. The family undergoes a period of transition and change, physically and emotionally, before restoring balance and stability again. Letting go may be a personal process, for the individuals or the family. However it is important that in this period of time, the family receives support to heal their hurts and let go of the pain.

Isn't that what we wanted all along

Freedom like a stone

Maybe we were strong

But I can say goodbye

Now that

The passion's died

Still it comes so slow

The letting go

Written & Performed by Melissa Etheridge

Sharings

Sharing from a Parent – Letting go...a child...for a camp

“Do you want to register your daughter for the camp this year?” asked my counsellor. I was really caught by surprise because I did not realise that my child was already old enough to attend a camp. Suddenly, an empty feeling engulfed me. For a moment, I was glad that she was old enough to attend a camp yet I could not help feeling a kind of loss in me too.

After much thought, I decided to send her to the camp. I kept telling myself that this was good chance for me to let go of her. Moreover, my counsellor had strongly encouraged me to allow my daughter to go for the camp to learn to be more independent. But, when I checked with my daughter, I was very surprised to learn that she did not want to go.

Everyday I asked her about the camp and told her how fun it was to be in a camp but she was not keen. At times when she was angry with me, she would say that I wanted her to go for the camp because I did not love her. Just one week before the camp, she told me that she wanted to go. I had to rush around to buy the things she required for the camp. There were just too many questions running in mind. “Will it rain?”, “Will she be well taken care of?”, “Will there be mosquitoes?”... Oh no! What about myself? What am I going to do while she is away! Finally I called my good friend and we planned to have our own activities while she was away. Now, I did not feel lonely packing her bag because i had a bag to pack too!

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