



Protect Yourself From Your Own Thoughts

By Sadhvi Parananda

“Protect yourself from your own thoughts” is one of my favorite Rumi quotes. Our minds simply are amazing, aren’t they? They spin and react and misunderstand and fabricate. Basically they spend a lot of energy making us crazy. Even when we make a very conscious effort to be thoughtful and centered, this mind takes us for a ride, oftentimes creating troubles in our relationships and stealing our happiness. There is a solution to this problem:

Don’t Believe Everything You Think

At the last retreat Swamiji spoke of the importance of “Uplifting our Spirits.” How wonderful. We recognize how important this is to our total well being, but often we are at a loss with regard to achieving it. We hold on to our thoughts as truth and they burden us. This mind of ours has an inborn proclivity toward the negative; and because of this, Swamiji also spoke of the importance of forgiveness as a necessary tool for uplifting our spirit. We must drop the baggage holding us down.



Even if we are ready to forgive, we often don’t have an effective method to do so. Saying “I forgive you” has no effect when the words have no heartfelt connection. We need to find the place within us from which we truly can let the situation go.

Holding onto to any past hurt can cause real *physical*, in addition to mental and emotional, problems. Many years ago now I went to my natural healer because my heart was acting oddly. It was not functioning as it should. There was no physical cause for this problem, yet there it was. My healer asked whether I was grieving. I denied it. That surely was not the problem.

Then, being honest with myself, I realized that I was, in fact, grieving. I was grieving not just the loss of my exquisite canine friend, Rumi, but I was grieving because I felt that I had not done right by him. I had retired him prematurely because my younger dog was a more proficient worker. Rumi had done nothing wrong, yet he was left behind. It was not right of me and I was

truly sorry. You might find it odd that one might feel this way toward an animal. Clearly I don’t. ☺

There is a lot of popular literature about how to forgive ourselves or others. We all know we should forgive, but we aren’t always so good at it. In a way, if not done well, it is ineffective. Ineffective forgiveness is like, for example, an ineffective apology. Any apology that includes “but,” is NOT an apology, but rather it is an excuse. An apology includes a statement of being sorry and an empathetic

acknowledgment of the impact of the offending action. No “buts” about it.

A good forgiveness exercise forgives ourselves, forgives the other person (being), and acknowledges of our part in the situation. It takes a conscious and sincere effort. As Rumi (the poet, not the dog) said

“Get yourself out of the way and let joy have more space.”

Rumi

So, back to my own need for apology, my healer gave me this exercise. I was deeply surprised by the depth of the release it had for me. I actually sobbed for a half hour. I have done it many times since I learned it. It is powerful and an important tool in releasing burdens so that we can uplift our spirit. Here it is:

Sit down and quiet yourself, breathing deeply and fully. Think about what interaction is troubling you and who is the perpetrator of your distress.

Step One: *Unconditionally* forgive yourself for letting this circumstance adversely effect you. (Sit with this until you feel it in your heart of hearts).

Step Two: *Unconditionally* forgive them for their actions that caused you harm or distress. (They never have to know you are doing this).

Step Three: Ask them to *Unconditionally* forgive you for any part you may have played in this situation. (Again, they need never know of this. It is about you changing your state).

Sit with this experience until you feel a release at the core of your being.

When we forgive we release the deeply held tensions and burdens. As we feel them fall away we almost immediately begin to feel our spirit rising and then we can begin growing love at a whole new level. Give it a try. It could change our life.

“You’ve always the Power my dear, you just had to learn it for yourself.”

Glinda -- Wizard of Oz

Namaste,
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