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Spiritual Wellness- Article Review- JAG

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Vince Gowman Healing For A New World

Vince Gowman explores what it means to forgive authentically and to not surpass those feelings. In western culture, there is a quick fix mentality. This involves moving on, letting it go, or rising above to surpass one's deep rooted feelings. Forgiveness takes time, and requires one to look deep within themselves and work out traumatic events or things that have triggered them to need to forgive in the first place. When one just “lets go”, there is no room for one to experience authentic forgiveness. Inauthentic forgiveness looks past the human experience of feeling pain, and the normal bodily functions that happen when one has traumatic experiences or deep rooted trauma (Millington & Gowmon, 2019).

Clients that work with Vince Gowman would often go to him with the mindset that they accepted the abuse in their home, to move past it and to not add anything extra to the tumultuous household. Clients would say they moved on from their trauma. This only normalizes dysfunction and again, causes inauthentic forgiveness to occur. The concept that simply choosing to forgive someone that caused you pain, seems to now be a myth. Snapping one's fingers and saying “I forgive you” does not remove all of the actions and does not take away the fact that people, and in this article, parents, were not there for you, or were absent (Millington & Gowmon, 2019).

When people are stuck on their trauma, the statement “stop playing the victim” is something that is commonly thrown around. This statement invalidates the fact that people who are seeking to forgive, were in fact victims. The insensitivity takes away from a victim's experience which results in shoved down feelings disguised as forgiveness (Millington & Gowmon, 2019).

John Hopkins Medicine Health Forgiveness: Your Health Depends on It

Having and holding onto unresolved trauma or conflict can have detrimental effects to one's health. Not even mental health, it can manifest itself into physical health issues as well. When one forgives it can lead to better health including; lowering the risk of heart attacks, improving cholesterol levels, better sleep, lower levels of anxiety, and lower levels of depression (*Forgiveness: Your Health Depends on It* 2021).

Forgiveness is a continuous effort and process of letting go of negative feelings. This goes onto even forgiving people who seem to not deserve it or have not apologized. Truly releasing those negative feelings often have the opposite effect on the person who wronged you. Oftentimes one is able to feel positive emotions towards the person who wronged you. There has been substantial evidence that has shown that some people are naturally more forgiving than others. People who are naturally more forgiving or have learned to be more forgiving tend to have happier and more satisfying lives. When people hang onto something or hold a grudge, depression, anxiety, and even PTSD start to become more common (*Forgiveness: Your Health Depends on It* 2021).

Swartz goes on to talk about different steps one can take to become more forgiving. Three of the most important steps were “reflect and remember,” “empathize with the other person,” and “forgive deeply.” Reflecting and remembering is taking yourself back to what happened, how you felt, and how the hurt has gone on to continuing to affect your life. To empathize with the other person is to understand where they are coming from. This can give an alternative angle to why they hurt you, which humanizes both them and the situation. Forgiving

deeply is something that is a process, but very important. One must understand that nobody is perfect, one study showed that people who accepted this were more likely to be able to resume a normal friendship or relationship with the other person (*Forgiveness: Your Health Depends on It* 2021).

Holistic Mind Body Healing: What is Forgiveness and Why is It Important?

Forgiveness has a lot of different definitions. At the core, forgiveness is a decision. This decision comes from one's spiritual mind and heart. When one sees the hurt and releases themselves and the person who did the harm from judgement and anger, it can be a liberating but hard thing. Forgiveness is not saying that bad actions are okay, and it does not condone the bad action. Forgiveness is taking the situation into your complete control rather than having your unconscious mind decide how you feel and react to a situation. Forgiveness of oneself is a form of self acceptance and love (Silver, 2009).

Religion has a lot of outlooks on what forgiveness is and its power. In Christian gospel, Jesus modeled forgiveness in countless ways but primarily when he asked God to forgive those who killed him. Islam teaches that one must forgive others for their wrongdoings of Allah will forgive ones personal wrongdoings. In Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist teachings, they promote seeking forgiveness and granting it (Silver, 2009).

The book *Radical Forgiveness* is a book that has a completely different view on forgiveness. The author Colin Tipping says that there are no wrongdoings because “all is as it should be.” This then means that forgiveness is not needed since there are no mistakes and that everything happens for a reason. Another part of Tipping's book is that when we get mad or

despise someone for a negative trait, we actually see that trait within us, causing self loathing (Silver, 2009).

When we forgive, we must take a step back and try not to pass judgement onto anyone else. Forgiveness is not forgetting what happened to us, it is going through the hurt and letting go of the negative emotions that a triggering event caused. Forgiveness can be a daily choice. I have experienced significant betrayal by a person I love dearly. The experience was a turning point in my life and although I would not want to go through that again, it has made me a more empathic person. I recognize the benefit of forgiveness, as freeing my heart to love and move forward.

Works Cited

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