

The Art of Letting Go

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I often wonder why it's so difficult to let go of things, and when I say things they are mostly negative in nature, for I don't believe people truly have difficulty of letting go of positive things in their life because in essence there's no need to. My first thought turns to evolutionary psychology. One of the many tenants of evolutionary psychology is the idea that people hold onto negative memories as a method of self protection, for survival. If you forget something horrible that happens there is a greater chance it will happen again. This survival function is hard wired into our reptilian brain. So the idea that you lack the desire, motivation or spiritual capacity to let go of negative life events is preposterous. These events are much like tattoos on the psyche that take can take a lifetime process of letting go. I often use the following analogy: Our lives are like an Egyptian rug, one of a kind, resilient but delicate as well. Each thread (each life event) builds upon another to make the entire rug (one's entire life). When something negative happens, one cannot just pull this thread out of the rug, they must learn how to make that thread blend with the rest, this is the process of letting go, it's life long and one must be vigilant and brave.

Here are just a few ways of starting the process of letting go:

1. Change your perception – a negative in one moment can become a positive overall
2. Don't suppress your emotions – if you want to cry, cry. If you want to scream, scream.
3. Sublimate – meaning make lemonade out of lemons rather than suck on the bitter seeds
4. Take care of your mind and body with health food and weekly exercise.
5. Journal – let yourself vent in your journal.
6. If possible confront those who have harmed you and express what their actions did to you.
7. Take responsibility for your future – horrible things happen everyday but with each day you are given another opportunity to do something different.
8. Empathize with others
9. Remind yourself that you only have three options: change the situations, leave the situation or accept the situation.
10. Identify what you have learned.
11. Get involved in any type of activity: political group, team sport, networking group
12. Pamper yourself – go for a manicure or a massage.

Remember, the art of letting go is understanding that there is no final destination, it's a journey that requires your active participation. Now, let start with that first step...

