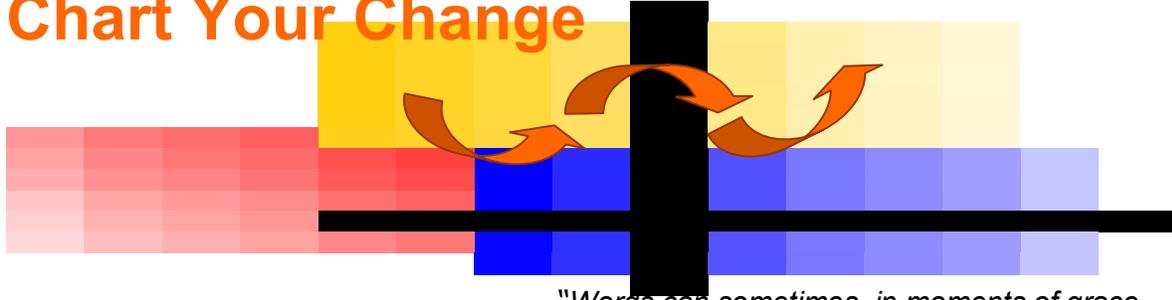


Chart Your Change



*"Words can sometimes, in moments of grace,
attain the quality of deeds."*

– Elie Wiesel



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Welcome to Chart Your Change

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1. QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"If we practice an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, soon the whole world will be blind and toothless."

- Mahatma Gandhi

"When you hold resentment toward another, you are bound to that person or condition by an emotional link that is stronger than steel. Forgiveness is the only way to dissolve that link and get free."

- Catherine Ponder

2. A STATE OF GRACE / A GIFT OF HEALING

As a little girl, I learned that being in a state of grace was being close to God. My grown-up version is a Zen-like ideal of being in alignment with nature and the bigger cosmos, if you will. Being in a state of grace reminds me of Wayne Dyer's thoughts on being connected to Source – knowing that there is something bigger than ourselves and that we are all part of this bigger picture. Here and now in 2006, there's a disturbing recall in all our psyches, of widespread terrorist

bombings and raging violence touching us all with a narrow degree of separation. Yet, in stark contrast, I sit here typing away listening to Kenny G's Holiday Album, and being intermittently conscious of the shuttle astronauts circling our planet – I wonder what they're thinking? How many of us are **not** crying out for peace and reconciliation? Yet, how many of us are willing to extend to each other the treasured gift of healing.

That gift is the miracle of forgiveness. The psychologist, Robert Enright believes forgiveness should include both love and letting go of anger in spite of unjust injury. I am reminded of the movie "Home Alone," when Kevin, the little boy takes refuge in a church and meets his neighbor, an elderly gentleman, who is watching his granddaughter rehearsing in the choir (he hasn't seen her in years). Kevin asks him why he hasn't spoken to his son for so long and the old man alludes to having been slighted by his son and vowing never to speak to him again. This is when the old man begins to question his motives. He realizes that the pain he feels is not his alone. His son and his family have been denied the benefit of a grandparent. He eventually feels the compassion and willingness to forgive his son and overcome his fear of rejection.

What does it mean to give the gift of forgiveness? I believe it's a state of grace that can change our attitudes and feelings. We can then give up resentment and anger with that person who has caused us pain; to excuse a mistake or offense; to let go, to release from punishment. Yes, it is a state of grace, a loving place; a place of being bigger than just ourselves, as we leave our petty ways, grudges and the need to hold in place the wrongful actions of others, behind us. Forgiveness is a choice.

But we are human and not often willing to give up our hurt or that we have been wronged because it then feels like the other person is "right." So we hold on to hurt and anger because it makes us "right." Yet, what are we sacrificing? How much energy are we devoting to being "right." Wouldn't we rather be happy and joyful. To paraphrase Freedman and Enright (1996): When one forgives one does not open a jail cell door but has an emotional, cognizant and possibly behavioral transformation toward the injurer; one can forgive and see justice realized.

I am sure you too have experienced this act of forgiveness in such a way as to no longer need to punish. The act itself has somehow, miraculously given you justice. You will know if you have truly forgiven if you no longer harbor ill will and resentment. If you are now thinking that you have forgiven, has your attitude totally changed towards the offender?

Forgiveness is not for the weak-hearted. Kent Nerburn in *Calm Surrender*, is quite blunt about the challenge of forgiveness: "Forgiveness cannot be a disengaged, pastel emotion. It is demanded in the bloodiest of human circumstances, and it must stand against the strongest winds of human rage and hate...It must be able to face the dark side of the human condition." Having said all that, I am not advocating being a willing victim. Regrettably, forgiveness doesn't always lead to reconciliation. You can't just forgive someone who has betrayed you, destroyed your career, ruined your life by simply saying, "I forgive him." It requires grace, a willingness to let go, and lots of practice; a change of heart.

The Healing Power of Forgiveness

We know this truth in our hearts but it's good to know that research backs it up: over 400 researchers are active in forgiveness research (Templeton Foundation's A Campaign for Forgiveness Research). The truth is that forgiveness is preferable to hate, because it sets our spirit free, heals our emotional wounds and enables us to regain control of our future. Forgiveness decreases anger, anxiety, depression, and grief while increasing hope, self-esteem and mental and physical health. Go figure!

It's the holidays and a time when families reunite. Do family reunions bring up painful unresolved issues? Is it difficult to embrace family members without anger or fear? Forgiveness takes practice and courage. Start small and give yourself acknowledgment for going against your instincts of resentment and revenge. It takes guts to go up against the odds of getting hurt again. But, remember, what's the alternative? When we forgive, we truly rise above our human condition. It is more than human; it is the very best in us that comes to the surface and connects us with our noble spirit.

Experience the healing power of forgiveness. Forgive yourself, those you hate, and those you love.

3. HUMBLY SUGGESTING DEVASTATINGLY BRILLIANT LIFE-ALTERING CHANGES

You must get this DVD, "The Secret," said my good friend, months ago -- "It's exactly what you want to hear, and it will change your life." A few months later, she asked, "well, what did you think?" Okay, now I had to get this DVD and listen to it. I have to admit, it astounded me. I saw in it all the journeys I have taken so far, to be where I am now -- a most perfect place, yet always growing and changing. I was more excited than ever about possibilities becoming realities. There is a core truth that resonates within us when we allow ourselves to see with our mind's eye: what if we really knew that we have the knack to make devastatingly brilliant life-altering changes.

Recently a colleague and I were talking about shifting habituated behavior patterns and she came up with this great visual I share with you: when you walk into the forest for the first time, there is no path. To clear a path you push back the low-growing foliage and branches. You step over twigs and rocks. You may even stumble but still, you forge ahead, clearing the path. It is a slow and demanding trek, yet you are determined to make your way. You know the next time through, will be easier and the third time around, the path will be smoother still.

A new habit of thinking (clearing a new path) is what's called for to embrace colossal life-altering thoughts. What do you dare imagine for yourself? Are you limited by your thoughts of what is possible? Is it a particular house with an indoor lap pool, walk-in cedar closets, Japanese landscaping and an English garden overlooking a breathtaking view? Think it. Describe it in detail. Write it down with extreme clarity.

"The Secret" DVD is very much in alignment with my own point of view, values and beliefs. Here are some of my takeaways:

Create a new habit (every day when you awake, focus on the exact thing you want):

- Dwell on the end result
- What you visualize, you can materialize for yourself. Focus.
- Make the feeling so real that it feels like you already have it!
- Put yourself in that feeling place of really having.....(be very specific)
- Paint a picture of what that looks like! Feel it now!
- The power of attraction is created by that feeling
- The more you feel it, the more clearly you will see it and that's when the power of the universe begins to express
- Turn it over, believe in the power of the universe
- Do it daily and feel good, happy, and exhilarated by the process
- Trust in the process, ask, believe and receive
- Habituate this process and allow the magic of life to happen

4. COACH'S TIP # 12 - NINE STEPS TOWARD FORGIVENESS

This model of forgiveness was originally provided by Robert Enright.

It's essential to start with our awareness and acknowledge the emotions we are feeling, whether anger, hurt, shame, embarrassment.

- 1. Acknowledge the emotional reaction to the wrongdoing.**
- 2. Go beyond identifying the person who hurt you and articulate the specific behaviors that upset or hurt you.**
- 3. Make the choice to forgive.**
- 4. Explain to yourself why you made the decision to forgive. Your reasons can be as practical as wanting to be free of the anger so that you can concentrate better at work.**
- 5. Attempt to "walk in the shoes" of the other person. Consider that person's vulnerabilities.**
- 6. Make a commitment to not pass along the pain you have endured—even to the person who hurt you in the first place.**
- 7. Decide instead to offer the world mercy and goodwill. At this stage, you may wish to reconcile with the other person (but that's not necessary).**

8. Reflect on how it feels to let go of a grudge. Find meaning in the suffering you experienced and overcame.
9. Discover the paradox of forgiveness: As you give the gift of forgiveness to others, you receive the gift of peace.

"Sincere forgiveness isn't colored with expectations that the other person apologizes or change. Don't worry whether or not they finally understand you. Love them and release them. Life feeds back truth to people in its own way and time."

- Sara Paddison"

References

Enright, R.D. (2001), *Forgiveness is a Choice: A step-by-step process for resolving anger and restoring hope*. Washington D.C: American Psychological Association.

Have a Joyful Month, the Happiest of Holidays and a New Year of Fulfillment



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Request Flo for your next event. In addition to being the founder of Thinking Well Consulting, Ms. Mauri is an Executive Coach and Educator at NYU, teaching Organizational Behavior, Emotionally Intelligent Leadership and Management Styles. She is certified in Conflict Resolution and Organization Development. Ms. Mauri specializes in assessment tools and self-awareness techniques for maximizing human potential. Are you getting in your own way toward advancing your true aspirations and talents? Are you experiencing challenges in your business relationships and want to breakthrough repetitive no-win cycles? Are you ready to define and lead with your strengths? A coach can help you take action to achieve your goals. Contact Flo today for a conversation.

Chart Your Change is your select source for inspiration, coaching tips and personal development. We share the very best of essays, research studies and success tools for taking your human potential to the top of Maslow's pyramid: self-actualization and transformation.

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