

## Give Away Thanks

Start by thinking about the people presently in your life and significant ones in your past. Put their names on a sheet of paper. Then list what each of them contributed to you in their own special way. Even if they brought you pain and you dislike them intensely, list their contribution to your life. Despite what you feel about them, there was probably much that they provided you. Also, it's possible to make a gift even out of a negative.

I apologized to my son one day for the fact that at the time I got divorced I wasn't there for him emotionally when he might have needed me. I was too wrapped up in my own pain to help him with his. His answer was, "It's okay, Mom. That was the period of my life when I learned independence. That was a valuable lesson." He was able to thank me for my lack! In terms of mental health, he was far better off than if he had carried around resentment all those years. So, even if you perceive that someone has mistreated you, find the lesson you learned from them and put the contribution on your list.

Once you have listed all the gifts from various people in your life, systematically go about thanking them. If it is someone you haven't seen or heard from in a while, surprise them with a call or a letter simply acknowledging them for what they have contributed to your life. You will be amazed at the pleasure you will get – and give – from doing this.

With some in your life, such as an ex-spouse, ex-friends or bosses, alienated parents or children, this can be especially difficult. To help rid yourself of present feelings of resentment and anger, try an exercise I learned in a workshop many moons ago:

Find an empty room and turn off the telephone. Put on some soothing music. Sit down in a comfortable chair and close your eyes. Visualize someone who brings up a lot of anger or pain in you. Picture them in front of you. First, surround them with rays of healing white light and tell them that you wish them all good things – everything they could possibly want in their lifetime. Thanks them for whatever they have given you. Keep doing this until you feel your negative emotions leaving.

To say this is not easy is to utter the biggest understatement in the world. "Wish HER good things? Are you out of your mind? I want to see her suffer for what she's done to me!"

The first time I did this exercise, I picked someone who had previously worked for me, and who had caused me a great deal of upset and pain. I had trusted him, and, to my mind, he had betrayed me. Note the victim mentality in full bloom! Obviously I was not taking responsibility for my experience of life at the time. As I went through the exercise, I experienced an incredible series of emotions.

First, I was shocked at the anger and resentment I was holding. I found it almost impossible, even in my mind's eye, to wish him anything good. My initial anger toward him was monumental. As I slowly released the anger, I got in touch with the pain I felt. This turned to anger at myself for allowing what had happened and for holding all my anger for so long. This turned into forgiveness of myself and of him. I was able to see both of us simply as people who had done the best we could at the time. I could then surround us both with healing white light.

This process took about an hour. When I began, I thought nothing much would happen. Wrong! I screamed, I cried, I hurt, I hated, I opened up, I forgave, I loved, I felt peace. I

continued to do this exercise daily until I no longer felt anything negative about him and could freely wish him all good things.

I did this exercise for all the people in my life for whom I was holding any negativity, no matter how great or how slight. One of the people was my ex-husband. When I was able to reach the point in my visualization when I wished him only good, I phoned him and invited him to lunch. I simply said that there were some things I'd never told him and I wanted to do so now. He was pleased, and we met for lunch.

I told him all the things that I really did appreciate about him when we were married and the qualities in him that I admire. My openness invited openness on his part, and he shared things about me that were loving as well. When I left lunch that day, I felt I had completed something that heretofore had been incomplete - and it felt wonderful.

If you cannot actually meet people on your list, do it in your mind. Talk to them as if they were sitting in front of you and tell them what you want to say. Heal the relationship within yourself. In terms of your physical and mental health, it is just as good as if they were actually sitting before you.

We need to get rid of pain and anger before we can bring in love. When we hold negative feelings about people in our past, we carry those feelings to those in our present. Not only that, but we can make ourselves physically ill, as some of you may have already experienced. So many people don't say thank you because they don't realize how important their thanks may be. Remember, YOU COUNT and your thanks count. Don't let an opportunity go by to thank someone who has given you something - anything at all.

If this seems difficult for you right now, start with casual situations, such as saying to someone at work: "Thank you for that" or "I appreciate that" or "Thank you for being happy today; it's made me happy." THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU. Start getting those words in your consciousness about everyone around you. Start giving them away instead of waiting for them to come to you. It is tough in the beginning, but it gets easier. Giving away thanks is like a muscle to be used. As we flex it, it gets stronger. It just takes exercise.

"Feel The Fear And Do It Anyway" by Susan Jeffers