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Offered as part of a dharma talk given by Dr. Karen Oldham on March 23, 2016

The 12 Principles of Forgiveness

By: Jack Kornfield- The Heart of Forgiveness. YouTube

1. What is forgiveness? And what it is not... It is not for others. It is for you. It is not denial or a papering over of emotions or responsibility.
2. There is a sense of suffering that comes with a lack of forgiveness. There is a weight to the pattern of not forgiving and it does not feel compassionate.
3. Reflect on the benefits of a loving heart and then continue to recount the benefits.
4. In the sense of identity, it is not loyal to be stuck in our own suffering. Joy is a moral obligation. And to find joy we need gratitude.
5. Forgiveness is a process. It is training, and takes effort and time. It dissolves layer by layer.
6. We set an intention to forgive as a first step. And by doing so we set the compass of the heart in the direction of forgiveness.
7. Learn both the inner and outer forms of forgiveness. Inward forms are meditations and outer forms are ritual. We require both.
8. Start in the easiest way. Consider what opens your heart. Find ways to forgive the person you love most, or a pet that is easy to love. Then move to neutral and then to difficult persons.
9. Forgiveness requires a willingness to grieve. Let grief season you as few ingredients can. The difficult becomes transformed and we can then let go. Kubler-Ross stages of grief: Denial, Betrayal, Depression, and Acceptance.
10. Forgiveness is work of the body. Emotions are stored in the body. Trauma is held in the body and locked away. To release the trauma held in the body skillful abandonment and replacement of thoughts is required. As we do this our capacity for space and tolerance grows. There is a relational aspect to the body work. We heal in the presence of others. Lincoln: Mercy bares more trust than justice.
11. Forgiveness is the shift in identity from shame to love and freedom. We experience forgiveness as love, or our untouched and true nature to which we can come home.
12. Our perspective on the nature of pain and suffering shifts. It is not my pain, but the pain of humanity. Everyone who loves is hurt. Connecting to others is the shift in perspective.