



“Letting Go of the Past”

By Michael J. Alicea, M.S., M.S.W.

Letting Go of Insecurities

When you consider the possibility of letting go of our past, you must also consider letting go of our insecurities that keep you from moving on effectively with your life. As I see them, these insecurities are often comparatively linked to feelings of guilt, anxiety, the need to seek and be perfect, and the desire and expectations to have life and people in general treat all of us in a fair manner. The question that comes to mind, if and when we ever do let go of these insecurities, is what will be left when you finally do let go?

Many of these insecurities usually indicate a general feeling of inadequacy of whom we are, with an overemphasis on expectations that we will obtain validation from external sources, preventing us in the long run with taking responsibility for changing ourselves. When we finally let go of these insecurities, we discover whom we really are, fragile human beings, with an ability despite all our insecurities to still see ourselves worthy of love, and with an ability to also endure the pain of life that is often so pervasive in living.

Honoring Our Past

Letting go is never easy, but when we finally do let go, we should let go lovingly. It's important to not hate or struggle against what we are trying to let go of. It's important to honor all of our experiences and recognize that all of these things, our past, our guilt, our defenses and insecurities, brought us to this place where we are right now. All of our experiences made us what we are today, and despite the struggles we survived.

Our past experiences can be viewed as our unique ways of dealing with life, albeit faulty means, but means nonetheless because we're here, stronger and still alive. What's needed now is to develop a new perspective for ourselves that will facilitate getting to where we need to be. Remember, before relinquishing our past, we must learn to value it for what it did to make us the strong loving person that we are, and then let go if it.

Lovingly Letting Go of Our Past

In retrospect, it's always easier to let go of something that we have outgrown than it is to let go of something we dislike or find hurtful to us. When we dislike something, and try to get rid of it, we often find that the insecurities tend to cling to us. When we allow ourselves to lovingly let go and step back to

appreciate the value of what we are letting go of, these insecurities tend to slip away more easily. An example that comes to mind is that of a relationship that has come to term, and that is no longer good for us. If we can focus ourselves on the merits of what was once, and consequently learn from it, the learning is easier and we are less inclined to feel guilty or find fault with ourselves. Focusing our energies on the negativity, allows the relationship to exert power over us, consequently not allowing us the freedom of feeling good about ourselves.

Letting Go of Life's Crutches

Learn to honor all of the things that you find you must let go of. Look on each experience and remember how they once worked for you. Appreciate them for getting you where you are today. Constantly tell yourself that you are stronger today, responsible for yourself, and that what was once needed, is no longer true today. Growing and becoming the person that we where meant to be means letting go and moving on. When we need a crutch, it's nice to have one handy. When we no longer need it, we can gently give ourselves permission to lovingly put it away. The more you put away, the more you let go of your insecurities and subsequently discover who you really are. The crutch only becomes an impediment when we no longer need it. Letting go is a process. It takes time. It's an easier process when it is done with love and respect for our past experiences.

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