



You may be carrying something internally that is draining you of vital energy. It could be sucking the life out of you everyday, yet you are completely unaware. It is something that affects your health more than you could ever imagine, but is almost never addressed by health professionals. It is a poison that can compromise your immune system, put stress on your heart, cause depression, lead to skin irritations, warts and ulcers. It may even be the reason you are not growing emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually. Simply put, it is unhealthy all around.

This thing that I am talking about is a negative emotion called resentment. It has Latin origin. The “re” means "again" or "again and again" and “sentment” comes from “sentire” which means, "to feel." So in essence, resentment means to feel an emotionally disturbing event again, usually by repeatedly reliving it in your mind. People do not even realize that they are holding onto resentments. Others attempt to repress these emotions with medication, alcohol and other drugs.

Unfortunately, when someone, or some entity wrongs us, we feel justified in holding on to resentment, but this bitterness is only injuring us. When you hold on to resentment it's like drinking poison then hoping your enemy or offender dies. In his new book *Transformations*, Bill Phillips summarizes a study – that involved more than 2,755 people over 10 years - in the *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* by saying, "Those who repressed anger and held resentments were found to be twice as likely to die of a heart attack compared to people in the study who were able to process and let go of negative feelings."

Think of it this way: you are allowing a person or entity that offended you to rent valuable space in your head and drain you of precious energy when the person or entity is not worth the energy. The person probably offended you once and you're allowing it to happen again and again by holding on to resentment. Why give that power to your offender? Why give any more energy to him/her/it at all?

1) So how do you know if you are holding onto resentment? Any time a thought from the past pops into your head that makes you angry, sad, contemptuous, or any other negative emotion, then it is most likely resentment and you have not moved on from it or completely let it go.

2) If I hold resentments how do I move on? Well, Alexander Pope said it best, "To err is human; to forgive is divine." So you have to forgive the person or entity no matter how big the offense. You have to forgive, let go and move on. I have learned that writing down who has offended you, how it made you feel, and your part in the situation, then letting it go – or praying for it to be released from your thoughts – is a powerful way to let go.

It's important to know that depression, anxiety and many other negative feelings that consume internal energy are results of the past or the future. If you are unable to be present (meaning that you are constantly thinking about the past or worried about the future) you are burning up valuable energy that could be used for training, loved ones, a hobby etc. In this time of year when family and friends are especially important, we need all the positive energy we can get to make the season brighter.

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