

# Learning To Let Go



Letting go of anything is an art form. Toddlers have the advantage over adults; they can scream or throw a temper tantrum, and their outburst although loud or obnoxious is understood and often excused. If an adult behaves with such an eruption of emotion, eyebrows will raise, and whispers may begin. What causes such intense disappointment? Not getting what you want.

How many situations have you rolled the dice, and things unfolded well? I'll bet more often than not; you don't get what you want. Not to say you don't get what you need or receive something equally as enjoyable. In some cases, I bet you got something BETTER than you imagined! There's a trick to getting over the initial disappointment or shock of an unpredictable aftermath.

The secret is developing a practice I call detachment from any particular outcome. Not a quick fix but a life-long practice. With time you will master feeling confident whatever occurs. Believing the experience you endure will provide you with resources to be used in the future will ultimately reduce your stress levels. "Let go and let God" is an expression you may have heard before.

Whether you are religious or not, the concept is a good one. Letting go of what you have no control of, is one of the emotionally healthiest things you can do.

Every situation has a variety of potential outcomes, every result gets dictated by circumstances both in and out of your control. All you can do is focus on what is in your immediate care. I invite you to look at the following statements and consider how you act when faced with each of circumstance. Things such as:

- How you mentally, emotionally, or physically show up.
- How you let disappointment roll off your back.
- How annoyances get under your skin.
- How you well perform.
- How you ask for help.
- How you receive help.
- How you treat people.
- How you express gratitude.
- How you convey appreciation.
- How you show respect.
- How you show compassion.
- How you express your opinions.

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You may not have paid much attention in the past to how you behave or react to each of these; you probably had no reason to. Reflecting on the statements mentioned above is a great awareness exercise to do every six months or year to measure your transformation.

For those of you feeling brave, consider asking a couple of people close to you how they see you approach each of the topics. It can be an incredible learning experience if you can receive the feedback from a place of appreciation and non-judgment.

If the person you're asking this of feels safe, they will answer you openly and honestly. Let them know how important their responses are. This simple action will invite them to feel valued as a person and as a friend. Consider how you will reward them for their sincerity and keep it as a surprise.

Before going deeper into letting go, it's important to examine what people clasp onto so tightly. The thing no one pays much attention to about holding on is the power of ownership.

People have been taking things from you all your life. Siblings were grabbing your toys, parents who took freedom, lovers who broke your heart and took your innocence, employers that took your joy, the government taking your money and, responsibilities taking your time. In spite of all the objects and emotions your surrender or lose, the one thing you cannot give away is your emotional response mechanism. No one can take your anger or your resentment from you unless you willing let it go. Unhealthy as these emotions can be when over accentuated, you own them and won't easily let them go without a damn good reason.

It's the attachment to your pain, and your stories will keep you believing you can or cannot do something. As Henry Ford said, "If you believe you can or you cannot, you are right."

Start letting the little things go to build the muscle. For example, the person driving slow in front of you, the cranky person at the drive thru, or an off shot remark. If you fall off the wagon, no big deal. Begin again. In time your blood pressure will come down, and people who haven't seen you in a while will wonder your secret because you look so terrific!

Time tempers most people, but you can get a jump on wisdom by letting go with increased frequency. When you let go, consider adding a little forgiveness too.

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