

WHITE

HOT

truth

Clarity for keeping it real
on your spiritual path—
from one seeker to another.

Danielle
DANIELLE LAPORTE
xo

"All is
forgiven"
includes
you.

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READY TO FORGIVE

The complicated, gritty path to grace

If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete.
– Jack Kornfield, *Buddha's Little Instruction Book*

IT'S COMPLEX. It's confusing. It's deeply particular. It's the through-line of most mystical teachings:

Forgiveness.

I'm a "Forgiveness Aspirant." I'm just as good at holding a grudge as I am at letting it go, but for the most part, I want to be as gracious as possible, and I really do believe that forgiveness is the primary Light source of an illumined existence.

That said, choosing—at a critical moment—*not to forgive* was one of the most spiritual, Soul-affirming acts of my life.

For me, divorce was like having my bones broken very, very slowly, one limb after the next, and then each rib—which made it difficult to breathe for a long time. It was brutal. It didn't matter that I was the one walking away. I had to crawl my way back into the Light. The dismantling of the

marriage agreement itself was very civilized and straightforward. But I had no idea that the real work had just begun. You can't move on to a new life until you unpack the old one—or burn it down to the ground.

So, I unpacked. I also torched, and past-life-regressed, and journaled, and therapized, and danced, and raged, and grieved, and owned my way through every inch of the journey. I had to go back and do some of it over again, just to make sure it was out of my system. I was not going to take the past into my future. I held up each memory and emotion to surmise: is this a Truth or is this a lie? I was extremely thorough. And when my work was done, which took way longer than I would have preferred, I had become one of those rebirthed, empowered woman clichés. All I could say when asked was, “I'm better than ever. Like, *better than ever.*”

Toward the end of that long trip, I was working with an exquisite healer—she's a total energy ninja. We were working on getting my adrenals back in shape. Cutting some energy cords, putting some astral protection into place...you know, the usual. I'd had a series of disturbing dreams that week, indicators of “intrusions,” you could say. I was ready to analyze them, up my frankincense oil intake, chant some Durga mantras, and keep on keeping on.

At the end of a text exchange we were having about the effects of Light meditation on the nervous system, this Lady Ninja of the Light wrote, “D, you have to forgive him.” My face flushed with heat and my stomach sank. It wasn't what I was expecting to hear. I'd come so far. My life was beginning to shimmer. My money was mine, I was back in my body, my heart was lush with Love and gratitude. So much of my reinvention had been about reckoning and validating my sanity for all the times that I'd thought I was crazy. I was finally seeing clearly. I had boundaries in place. I was over it.

I read that sentence over three times. “D, you have to forgive him.” Then I burst into hot, panicked tears. I'd been calm just moments before. Now I was frantic. Because here's what I heard echoing inside of the words “forgive him”:

“Dismantle your boundaries, make yourself wrong, admit to things you never did so everyone thinks you’re nicer and saner than you may appear, let him back into your heart, and effectively dissolve your last few years of intense self-scrutiny and resurrection. And while you’re at it, let him into your house, be friendly, be a progressive family unit, and for God’s sake, smile more—because that is what it means to be a truly spiritual person, Danielle.”

At least that’s how I interpreted it.

My phone rang. (Lady Ninja of the Light is so tuned in that she could feel my panic across the country.) I didn’t bother to compose myself before I answered. I just received the call and wept into the phone.

Let me pause here and say that this ninja healer is one of the most cherished beings in my life. When I figure out one of the esoteric riddles she gives me, I feel accomplished. I want to continue learning from her as long as I can. Her respect matters to me—a lot.

She listened gently on the other end of the line as I cried and cried.

After a minute or so, she said, “D?”

I felt like I was in a movie version of an ancient Greek myth. I was the sweaty protagonist, sword in hand, tired as hell, trying to stay alive in a succession of tests. Do I go left down the maze, or right? Do I scale the wall, or do I accept defeat?

I took a stuttered but full inhale because in that moment, I knew which way I was going to go. I also knew that my beloved mentor would see me as an unfit spiritual student, and our time together would come to an end.

“I’m sorry,” I broke the silence. “But I just can’t do it.” Long pause. “I can’t forgive if it means letting him back into my heart. I’ve come too far.” Silence. What I was thinking was, *I know you think I’m a loser, but I really have no choice. Thank you for working with me; you can break up with me now.*

I wanted to be spiritually respectable, but I just couldn't care about "evolving" anymore. For once, I was only exactly where I was. No aspiration, all acceptance. My knowing was coursing through my body; it felt impossibly wrong to abandon it. So there I stood, with my inconvenient Truth. I don't think I've ever been as human as I was in that moment.

And then Lady Light burst out laughing her *oh, honey-child* kind of laugh. "Oh, God no! You do not have to give him the time of day. Ever again. Noooo. Just forgive his SOUL!" She laughed some more. "It's actually the hardest work to do—because that's what's real."

"So don't let down my guard?" I said, all snuffly and hopeful.

"Nope. Please don't."

"Forgive his Soul?" I confirmed.

"Yep. The biggest thing there is."

"Oh! Well I can do THAT! I'm halfway there!"

"You're *way more* than halfway there. This is the finish line," she affirmed.

"Well, that's all you needed to say!" Then we laughed that awesome post-sobbing, post-skill-testing-question, full-bodied woman laugh. Sweet relief! I was going to stay the course:

**Keep it real, aim high,
do the divine work.**

Of course, it wasn't quite that easy—the actual forgiveness practice of my Soul addressing his was profoundly painful at times. But it didn't last long. At that stage, it was like removing slivers instead of cracking bones.

I sat in meditation, and over the course of many months, I streamed Light and Love to his Higher Self. I pictured him standing directly in front of me and I gazed at him with total kindness. If that felt too close for comfort on that day, then I'd just imagine him as a Light form of pure energy. I allowed his Soul to come near to mine again. I let myself adore who he *truly* is. And I thanked him, over and over again, for participating in our agreement to play out what we did in this lifetime. I took it a step further and extended the same gratitude to all of the people in his life. I prayed for their well-being. I cherished his very Soul. Completely.

By honouring my humanity, I got fuller access to my divine power. On Earth, in the day-to-day, my boundaries stayed very much intact. And I moved forward much more freely, navigating with a lighter heart.

Not the goal

Although we know that forgiveness is an experience *of the spirit*, we might be tempted to yank it down from the ethers and hammer it into a goal with a due date—make it an achievable task, get it over and done with. But forgiveness is usually an organic and utterly inefficient process. You can't leap from hurt to clarity, or from anger to absolution. You have to walk there, one revelatory, resentful, intentional step at a time.

Forced or feigned forgiveness can derail the healing process. When we fake-forgive someone, the camouflaged hurt will unearth itself eventually. And by then, it's been festering and there's an even bigger mess to clean up. Seething resentment, dragging up the past, blowing a fuse because your partner said that precise thing that clearly indicates that they haven't changed in the least since you last reamed them out for not changing.

Instead of spouting New Age jargon about how *everything happens for a reason* or that *karma had a hand in things*, it might be more reasonable (a.k.a. human) to just straight-up admit it: "I'm not ready to forgive yet."

This may not go over so well in your Power of Positive Thinking Mastermind Group who take issue with your personal stand on “forgiving when I am damn well ready to forgive.” They’ll sweetly tell you, “Darling, you need to forgive them,” but what they might really mean is, “It’s time for you to act differently, because this is un-spiritual and it’s bringing us down.” Just look them in the eyes with a soft gaze and say, “I’m not ready. Please forgive me.”

The preachy types might dispense forgiveness to other people as a superiority trip. The ego loves to bestow forgiveness on lesser fools. This is when beneath “I forgive you” lurks a little voice saying, “Gotcha! You were a loser and I forgive you, which makes me a winner.” That’s just a righteousness card trick—insecurity disguised as arrogance, disguised as spirituality.

The heart runs on its own clock, untethered from calendar days or years. A photographer friend was in major conflict with his daughter for about seven years. They rarely spoke. He showed up at our photoshoot with his gear and carrying the light stands behind him...was his daughter. Everybody on set who knew them was surprised; the crew just looked at each other like, *Ohhhkay. Act normal.* On a break, I said to her, “Um, so... you and your dad... THAT hatchet got buried, eh? What happened?” She smiled and nodded. “You know, we just decided to drop it. Just because. I said to him, ‘You wanna drop it?’ And he said, ‘Ya, let’s just drop it!’ and we decided to...”—and then I said it with her—“Just drop it!”

Forgiveness can be a swift recovery, or not arrive until a generation later.

You will forgive when you are ready to forgive.

You can ply your Spirit with beautiful theologies. You can take solace from firsthand accounts of incredible, everyday people who forgave exceptionally horrible things. You can pray for the strength to turn the other cheek. And, I do hope for your sake and everyone else’s that it’s sooner rather than later, but...

You will forgive when you are ready to forgive.

How to begin the process of forgiveness

The first step: Forgive yourself for not wanting to forgive.

Who wants to forgive? Anger is so...so...right! Being right can feel so empowering! Empowerment feels like justice. Justice returns things to balance. Balance feels comforting. Comfort is so *mmmmm*—especially after pain.

Start there if you have to. *I don't want to forgive that S.O.B.* And because you're a Light worker, you will feel the weight of that resistance. You will naturally want relief—for both of you. So try this:

I forgive myself for not wanting to forgive.

The second step: Have the desire to forgive.

That's it. You don't need a plan. You don't have to estimate when you'll be ready to have lunch with them again, or if they're invited to your wedding. You don't have to think about what you'll say when you run into each other, or if you'll ever even speak again.

Just *want* to forgive and you'll be moving in the right direction.

Forgiving yourself

Self-forgiveness is a phenomenal freedom and all Love flows from there. I think self-forgiveness is our ultimate responsibility to others. Because when you forgive yourself, everyone implicated in the painful situation is liberated in some way.

We often worsen the bruises we receive from the outside world by delivering a second blow ourselves—self-judgment for putting ourselves in harm's way. *I shouldn't have been there. I should have been smarter, stronger, wiser, faster. Should have known better, been less sensitive, been more sensitive.*

And sometimes those should-haves are true. Even so, we have to forgive ourselves. *I forgive myself for being there. I forgive myself for not being smarter or stronger or wiser or faster.* Forgive yourself for quitting, for asking someone to do something that you knew was impossible for them to do, for taking more than your share. You're learning. You learned.

Forgiving others and forgiving ourselves is particularly tricky when the issue is one of betrayal—and so much human pain is the result of some form of betrayal.

Betrayal is such a defining experience—it lays your heart bare. In one fell swoop, betrayal highlights your beautiful loyalty and the lies you've been telling yourself. Being betrayed by another person is often (but not always) a reflection of how you were betraying yourself. It's a lie looking back at you.

It might be this simple: you were a fool because you were scared. You played dumb to get what you thought you needed. You kept one eye closed so you wouldn't have to face the pain of the situation.

So maybe you got blindsided. Now you see that perhaps you had a part to play in the betrayal (which in no way whatsoever lets the betrayer off the hook for being, say, connivingly parasitic, deceptive over a very long time, or a manipulative ass-face). And then, beneath the surface...you see that you were afraid of something.

Afraid of what? The answer to that is always personal. And that's where you change your story of betrayal into a story of forgiveness.

You're not discounting of the Truth of what happened or the realness of the pain. You're not erasing all the justifiable anger you felt in response to what happened—to do so would be to invalidate your heart's intelligence.

As Lady Ninja of the Light put it to me, "I see forgiveness as releasing congested energy that's not needed by the energy body. No stories, no players, simply time to release and move on to brighter ways."

You stop letting past hurt affect you in the present. You rinse down the story, you take what you want, and let the rest go up to the Light so it can be put to better use. *You give yourself forward.*

"All is forgiven" includes you.

When you're ready.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Photo: Catherine Just

Danielle LaPorte is a member of Oprah's *SuperSoul 100*, a group who, in Oprah Winfrey's words, "is uniquely connecting the world together with a spiritual energy that matters."

She is author of ***White Hot Truth: Clarity for keeping it real on your spiritual path—from one seeker to another***, and ***The Desire Map: A guide to creating goals with soul***—the book that has been translated

into 9 languages, evolved into a yearly day planner and journal system, a Top 10 iTunes app, and an international workshop program with licensed facilitators in 15+ countries. She is also the author of ***The Fire Starter Sessions: A guide to creating success on your own terms***, which also spun off into a workshop and coaching curriculum.

Named one of the "Top 100 Websites for Women" by *Forbes*, millions of visitors go to **DanielleLaPorte.com** every month for her daily #Truthbombs and what's been called "the best place online for kickass spirituality."

A former think-tank exec, now a speaker and poet, Danielle's charities of choice are VDay: a global movement to end violence against women and girls, and charity: water, setting out to bring safe drinking water to everyone in the world.

She lives in Vancouver, BC with her favourite philosopher, her son. You can find her **@daniellelaporte** and just about everywhere on social media.

 facebook.com/daniellelaporte

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WHITE HOT TRUTH

Clarity for keeping it real on your spiritual path—
from one seeker to another.



Has your self-help become self-criticism?

White Hot Truth is a wise and often (hilariously) relatable exploration of the conflicts between spiritual aspiration and our compulsion to improve, from Oprah Super Soul 100 member, Danielle LaPorte.

Danielle cheerleads seekers to fully own their wisdom by having a good laugh (and maybe a good cry) at all the ways we've been trying to improve on our self-improvement.

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