Perspectives on Forgiving

PERSPECTIVES ON FORGIVING

by Guy Harris

Many people view forgiving as something that they do for the *other* person. I hold a different perspective.

Forgiving is something you do for you.

Yes, an apology can be a powerful tool for easing another person's anger and for deescalating a conflict, and this value is second to its value to the person who offers forgiveness.

Harboring negative feelings towards another person does nothing to fix the situation and does much to damage the relationship. Actually, the negative feelings give the other person power over the person who is unwilling to forgive. If you want to be a victor and claim control of your thoughts, feelings and actions, then legitimately forgive the other person to let go of the negative feelings and the harm they do to you and your psyche.

One misconception about forgiving comes from a tendency of some people to confuse forgiving and forgetting. You can forgive a person and still remember the impact the actions had on you. You can let go of the negative emotional response and choose not to interact with or trust that person in the future. You can distance yourself from a harmful person without continuing to harbor emotional poison towards them. And, most of the time, you can forgive and move on without worrying about the forgetting part.

Another common challenge with forgiving is that doing so is a sign of weakness. On the contrary, the power to forgive lies totally within you. To use it is to exercise your power. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

Forgiving is a decision to release negative emotions so you can let go of the past and focus on the future.

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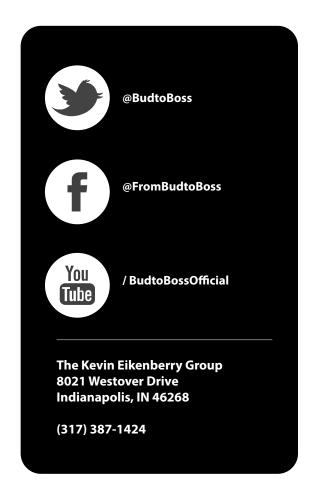
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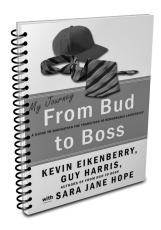
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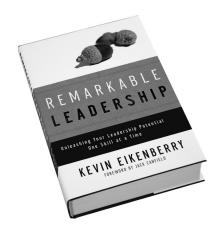


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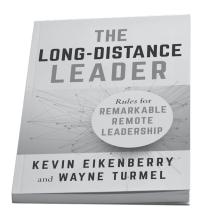
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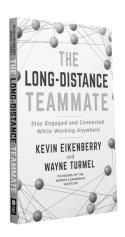
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