

The Perfect Explanation of Letting Go.

By Elyane Youssef

Human beings hold on to almost everything.

It is in our intrinsic nature to grasp at people, emotions, beliefs and material things. Thus, it is quite hard to untie ourselves from what attaches us.

We may ponder the question, “why”?

Why do we hold on so tightly?

If we behold our true nature, we are empty beings. Everything that we are, we see and we perceive is nothing but a sheer illusion. If we put our thoughts and emotions outside ourselves, we are left solely with our flesh and a weird shaped organ that consistently beats—we are empty.

But, we fear emptiness. Hence, we rely on our thoughts and emotions to shape who we are.

That being said, people, convictions and material items stimulate our cognitive being, strengthening the identity we have given ourselves through our relationships with each of them.

We became our beliefs and convictions. We’ve grasped at them so tightly that we can kill and fight for their sake.

We became the people we fell in love with. We hold on to them even when they no longer want us.

We became the position we have at work. We became our car, cellphone and our bank account.

Unfortunately, that identity of ours has ruined who we truly are. It has demolished the emptiness that we were blessed with. We’ve grasped at it to an extent of jeopardizing our own happiness and peace of mind.

The only solution to this ordeal that we have come to, is to master the art of letting go.

Let go. These are the two words that we read everywhere and hear from almost everyone

Try to say them out loud to yourself, slowly, in a gentle voice.

“Let.”

“Go.”

How magical are they? We can feel the intensity, happiness and peace that lie behind those five letters. Although they are pure and promising, they baffle us.

Even if we get the slightest understanding of what letting go truly means, deep inside we refuse to put it into action.

Why do they baffle us and why do we refuse to let go?

Letting go is bewildering to us because it means detachment. To us, it represents a complete abandonment of the identities that we have tied ourselves unto.

We fear practicing it because we think that we will lose a lot through the process. If we do lose a lot, we will be faced with agony and suffering. Letting go is like a danger zone that is naught.

Empty, emotionless, thoughtless.

This is exactly where we go wrong. We have mistaken the art of letting go by becoming too empty and too careless. We think if we let go, we will be turning our backs on people and the important things in our lives.

But letting go goes far beyond the intensity of its words. Letting go means to stop resisting. It means to cut the chains of fear, upset and reactionary behavior.

Letting go is an inner change more than it is an outer action.

Letting go is more of a detachment from certainty and more of a friendship with faith. Unlike what we fear, letting go is not a disunion from our happiness or peace of mind. The art of letting go brings in a stronger relationship with peace and joy.

I recently read a book by Sogyal Rinpoche where I came across a wonderful explanation of how to let go yet still be happy.

Sogyal puts it this way:

“Let’s try an experiment. Pick up a coin. Imagine that it represents the object at which you are grasping. Hold it tightly clutched in your fist and extend your arm, with the palm of your hand facing the ground.

Now if you let go or relax your grip, you will lose what you are clinging onto. That’s why you hold on.

But there’s another possibility: You can let go and yet keep hold of it. With your arm still outstretched, turn your hand so that it faces the sky. Release your hand and the coin still rests on your open palm. You let go. And the coin is still yours, even with all this space around it.

So there is a way in which we can still relish life, at one and the same time, without grasping.”

How can we overcome attachment and truly let go?

Sogyal Rinpoche adds:

“Only by realizing its impermanent nature. It releases us from its grip. The true attitude toward change can be as if we were the sky looking at the clouds passing by, or as free as mercury. When mercury is dropped on the ground, its very nature is to remain intact. It never mixes with the dust.”

Opinions, beliefs, emotions, thoughts and events are temporary. To let go of the toxic identity they have given us, we must perceive them like clouds passing by in our expansive sky. We are the sky. The sky is not changeable. But the things in life we ache to hold on to come and go.

When we realize that all phenomena are impermanent, we overcome the attachment to almost everything. We still hold the coin in our hands, but it is not clutched so tightly in our fist. It has space around it, yet it is still resting there.

We still have our opinions but we don't fight for them to prove ourselves right.

We still love that person but we don't fight to keep him or her if they no longer wants us.

We let go.

On the outside, all looks the same. From the inside, however, there is an expansive field of peace and comfort.

If we try the experiment that Sogyal Rinpoche suggested, we can feel the numbness and pain of our fist when we hold on to the coin. But once we open our hand wide, we can sense the release of pain in the muscles.

Same goes for our inner state when we hold on to something. Turmoil is what we feel when we won't let go. But, once we do, we feel an incomparable sense of relief within us.

If we can accept the concept of letting go, we can open a brand new door that can bring about an ocean of happiness.

We should understand that letting go doesn't mean losing.

Remember, you still have that coin, but you're just not holding on to it.