

5 WAYS
TO LOSE
YOUR MIND
without going crazy

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Losing My Mind, Finding My Voice

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Without Going Crazy
by Tracy R. Jolly

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the bearer. When you refuse to forgive, you are fighting against the forward movement of life, stuck in an experience that will never change.

MY BREAKDOWN

*"How will I know when I've forgiven?
My guess is when I'm able to see, hear, or speak
her name and not lose my voice to the pain."*

~Forgiveness
Losing My Mind, Finding My Voice

I was scrolling through my newsfeed on Facebook when a comment made by a woman from my past caught my eye. It wasn't so much the comment that upset me, but the pain it represented. My emotions skyrocketed to the surface and caught me off guard. I'd thought I put that part of my life to rest, forgiven and moved on, but apparently I still had a lot of work to do.

The comment wasn't malicious and wasn't even intended for me, but still, it set off a wave of emotions. For years, this woman had declared war against me, and had seemingly won every battle. These emotional wars altered some of my life

experiences in irreversible ways. The only way I knew to reclaim my power was to walk away and give up the fight. But walking away cost more than I had anticipated. I didn't leave with the peace I sought. Instead, my spirit was even more disturbed.

WHAT IS YOUR INTENTION?

Letting go was my way of forgiving and moving on without having to actually deal with the pain. I suspected I needed divine intervention in order to fully release it and for years I prayed for God to heal and blanket the situation in forgiveness. My Facebook reaction helped me realize I could no longer claim forgiveness without actually forgiving. I had to make and keep making the decision to forgive. I had to believe it when I didn't feel it. I had to mean it when I didn't feel it. I had to feel it when I didn't feel it.

Many of us bury our pain instead of facing it. We develop vices and navigate through delicate memories and fragile egos without actually attending to our wounds. The pain, however, never

goes away on its own. Instead it quietly simmers, making its way to the surface, waiting for a trigger. Forgiveness does not just happen. It must be your intention.

5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT FORGIVENESS

1. **IT WAS NOT ABOUT YOU.** It was *never* about you. When people act out, it is a reflection of how they are feeling inside, whether characteristic or circumstantial. Forgiveness has the ability to change your self-perception from victim to someone God chose to use as the conduit for somebody else's healing and growth. Just like that, your pain has become your purpose.
2. **EVERYONE DOES THE BEST THEY CAN.** Every person involved in my situation, including myself, did the best we could with what we knew at the time. This woman's knowledge, self-esteem (or lack thereof) and life experiences led her to believe she had to hurt

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others to get what she wanted. She literally did not know any better and was therefore incapable of behaving any differently. We cannot behave beyond our level of self-perception, understanding and esteem. We must be patient and sympathetic with others – and ourselves – who mask deficiencies through negativity.

3. FORGIVENESS IS A CHOICE, NOT A FEELING.

For years, I waited to feel differently as an indication that I had forgiven. I expected to feel euphoric, but at the very least, *different*. All I could feel was the pain. But as my spiritual counselor, friend and mentor, Pastor Kathy, advised me, “Just because it still hurts doesn’t mean you haven’t forgiven.” Afterwards I realized that forgiveness is nothing more than a choice, one that we have to constantly and consistently choose. And even after we make the choice to forgive, we still have to do the work to heal.

4. **FORGIVENESS IS POWER.** Forgiveness is a super-power to which you have unlimited access. Each time forgiveness is activated, it is strengthened and you are made even more powerful. Powerful people are free. They don't let bitterness keep them bound, living small, and arrested in their own minds. The energy and life you regain when you forgive, ultimately dwarfs the offense and leads you toward higher living. Don't give your power away by refusing to forgive.

5. **FORGIVENESS CHANGES YOU.** Forgiveness allows you to move forward. It changes your perception. I don't want to be cliché and say that forgiveness is for you (and not the other person) but really, that is the truth. Re-read this chapter and look at what awaits the person that can forgive: clarity, peace, healing, choice, power and a fabulous future. Don't let someone else steal even more of your life.

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