

TO YOUR HEALTH

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The Best Gift

By Susan Cusson, NP

Virtually everyone has been offended at some time in their life by the words or actions of others. When someone you care about hurts you, that can leave you with lasting feelings of anger and bitterness. Relationships break down, anxiety and stress build up. The longer it goes on, the harder it can be to remedy. Forgiveness, whether seeking it or giving it, can be a hard thing to come by. Why is it so hard for some of us to forgive? What is required? Who does it really benefit?

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, to forgive is to stop feeling anger toward someone (who has done something wrong) or to stop blaming someone. If someone hurt you, forgiving them doesn't mean that you have to negate your feelings, nor does it require that you forget what happened. Forgiveness simply requires us to let go of the negative feelings that we have towards that person or situation. It requires us to put the past behind us and make a commitment to moving towards a better future relationship. Forgiveness isn't about changing the past, it's about changing the future. The past is in the past. We can't change what someone did to us before, whether it was intentional or not. What we can control, however, is how we move forward. Forgiveness allows us to release our hurt or anger – something that has a far greater impact on ourselves than the person we are forgiving. You might be the one that pays most dearly if you're not able to practice forgiveness.

Forgiveness

"One kind word can warm three winter months"

Japanese Proverb



Research at the Mayo Clinic indicates forgiveness can lead to:

- Healthier relationships
- Greater psychological well-being
- Less anxiety, stress and hostility
- Lower blood pressure
- Fewer symptoms of depression
- Stronger immune system
- Improved heart health
- Higher self-esteem

Why are there so many benefits to forgiving someone? Because when we hold in grudges and anger, we are actually hurting ourselves more than the person we are angry with. So if forgiveness is so beneficial to our health and well-being, why do we have such a hard time giving it? Here's the thing, it requires vulnerability. We must first acknowledge the hurt we feel, even if just to ourselves, and this is not such an easy thing to do. To begin, you might consider the value of forgiveness and actively choose to forgive when you're ready. Forgiveness is a process, even small hurts may need to be revisited and forgiven over and over again. Journal writing, guided meditation, talking with a spiritual leader or mental health provider are just a few ways to begin the process. Even if it's a situation that cannot be reconciled, maybe because the person is no longer with us or not willing to communicate, forgiveness is still possible.

At the end of the day, we've all been on both sides. We've sought and given forgiveness. Indeed, it is harder to do the forgiving. Once we start to realize how much more forgiveness benefits our own lives, how much anxiety, stress and negativity we release when we forgive, we will begin to realize that it's not just a gift for others but perhaps the best gift we can give ourselves.



COMINGS & GOINGS

We are sorry to announce that Dr. Les Schwab will no longer be coming to the Clinic or the Nursing Center after the end of this year. He will continue to see people at his office in Concord. Dr. Schwab has provided primary care to many Residents for over 20 years.

A farewell reception will be held in the Red Room on Thursday, December 29 from 1:00—2:30pm. All are welcome.

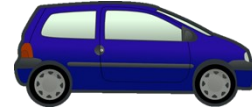


We are pleased to announce that Dr. Robert O'Connor will be joining our medical staff in January. He completed a fellowship in Geriatrics at Massachusetts General Hospital and is currently practicing at Mt. Auburn Hospital in Cambridge. He comes highly recommended by our Medical Director, Dr. Cherie Noe.

A welcome reception is planned for Dr. O'Connor on Wednesday, January 11 from 1:30-3pm in Auditorium Left. All are invited.

Health Insurance Reminder

Open enrollment for health insurance changes ends December 7. If you have changed your insurance or plan to change, be sure to come to the Clinic with your new insurance card so we can make a copy and update your Vial of Life.



Updated information about Transportation Resources (including a list of private drivers) is available in the Clinic. Stop by to pick up a copy.

Reminder: You can donate old eyeglasses in the Clinic. The box is located in the waiting room closet. Eyeglasses are collected by the Lions Club and are distributed by missionaries throughout the world.



The Village Clinic will be closed on Monday, December 26th. The Clinic will reopen on Tuesday, December 27th.



Wishing you a joyful Holiday Season and a New Year blessed with health, happiness and peace!

From the Clinic staff: Susan, Debbie, Judi, Andrea and Michelle