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The Science of Forgiveness

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY PEOPLE in your experience whom you did not want to forgive. They were nasty people. They were mean people. But, you realized that the lack of forgiveness on your part did them no harm at all, and you also realized that it did hurt you — so you forgave them — not because you were holy — not even because the Bible told you to do so. You forgave them because your own sense of personal security, and your desire to live effectively, told you that you should do it if you were to be successful. Forgiveness is spiritual life insurance.

We cannot afford to live with a hate. We are living in a world which has more hate in it today than it has ever had before, because there is more conscious intelligence. Each time we expand education we do not develop greater peace or greater love. Every

report of increased millions of educated people in the world is accompanied by newspaper headlines of ever-increasing difficulties. We value education, but we realize that education is not the panacea of the world. With an ever-increasing educational program in every country, we have at the same time an ever-increasing group dislike.

Perhaps, we are more impressed by our difficulties than were our great-grandfathers, as they did not have accurate information available in their newspapers, or at the turn of the dial on a radio. Their worlds consisted mainly of the county in which they lived, and the immediate area surrounding it. Today, we need to watch our thought more carefully than they did, because we are being bombarded on every side with negatives. I doubt if an atomic war could do as much damage physically as the perpetual bombardment of negatives is already doing, spiritually and mentally.

We should be alert to the fact that ideas are the most potent force in the world, and that states of mind change history — not people, and not situations.

Jesus did not change history. Jesus engendered an idea in the race mind which changed history. Charles Fillmore once remarked that Jesus' teaching was a blood transfusion for the entire race. It put new life into a worn-out system. It brought something fresh, pure and clean into a world that sorely needed it. We are in such a world today. We are being bombarded by racial, political, national, and even hemispheric hatreds. Enter any gathering of people, and within ten minutes you will discover whom they do not like; but it may take two hours to discover whom they do like.

If you are surrounded by an atmosphere that is distinctly negative, what can you do about it? Any situation of which you are aware, you can handle. If a fire starts in a

partition of a building, and it smoulders for hours, no one can do anything about it until either the smoke or the flames make themselves obvious. When you are aware of evil, you can correct it.

We know everything we need to know at this instant, to live life wisely. Yet, the world opinion comes in and sways us. We are swept into generalities without thinking them through. We tend to accept these generalities because we are used to them, because they are traditional, or because they are seemingly respectable. We do not realize that we are adding fire to the problem, by our passive acceptance of it.

What has this to do with the subject of forgiveness? All forgiveness is self-forgiveness. Your world is the result of your combined state of thought and feeling — your area of consciousness. If your world is the result of your state of consciousness, then if you hate anyone, you are disliking a part of yourself.

You always see your consciousness in your world. Let your fellowman do what he wants to do. Let him say what he wants to say. Let him be as unpleasant as he wants to be; it is none of your business. Even when his reactions affect you, it is still none of your business. You look out at your world through the atmosphere of your thought. "The thing you are looking for is the thing you are looking with, and the thing you are looking at." (Ernest Holmes) If there are people in your world whom you dislike, they are in your world because they are a part of your consciousness. Within your consciousness you are carrying these people, and your own wrong thought is to blame.

The premise for healing a situation through metaphysics is: first, logic and reason; and second, treatment. Your logic and reason tell you that these people are not now present. Your logic and reason tell you that there is no reason why you should

be upset and conditioned by something which happened in the past. Jesus said, "Let the dead bury the dead," meaning, let old situations go — they are not important. Your grudges, your dislikes and your animosities do nothing for the other person, but they wreck you.

It is good spiritual life insurance to not carry grudges. We do not believe we should be sweet to everyone who is unpleasant. We do not teach people to "grin and bear it." We teach people to face facts.

The reason that the ideas of Jesus can change your world is because he met situations the way you would like to meet them. He was able to do things that you wish you could do. You, also, would like to quietly say to your problems, "To this end was I born. For this cause came I into the world." Pilate did not bother Jesus, for Jesus knew that he could not afford to let Pilate confuse him. Jesus knew that the moment he hated Pilate, the High Priest, or Judas, he would

never leave the cross, nor come out of the tomb. These men arrayed themselves against him the way the world sometimes seems to array itself against us. Yet he was silent, and free of all resentment. He did not ignore evil; he handled evil. He did not say everything was good; he met an issue. Earlier he had said to Peter that he knew that Peter would deny him. He did not forbid Peter to do it. Jesus saw the problem, and left the individual free.

There will always be people to hate, and there will always be enough fools to hate them, until we awaken the world to a spiritual consciousness. The people you do not like are a challenge to you. What another person thinks about you is none of your business. Your entire business is the operation of your state of consciousness. People may dislike you; they can do anything to you they want to. It is not very important. Within you, there is an integrity of the Spirit. Within you there is the capacity to

look out at your world through your own state of consciousness and see it as good. You need to live in peace with yourself. That is why Jesus, in the 18th Chapter of Matthew, said to Peter that he should forgive others, not seven times, but seventy times seven. For the other person's sake? No; for Peter's sake.

Jesus lived in a world which did not like him, but he prayed and liked the world. He lived among groups of people who said he was vile; and he calmly loved them enough to heal them. You can do this. You can go into your office tomorrow, and you can think, "No matter what anyone says unkindly to me, I am going to say in my own mind that there is not one word of Truth in it. I do not care. I believe that within these people is a spiritual possibility. I behold the Good in them. I behold the good in them." That is practical metaphysics. That is true forgiveness.

