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**TEN THINGS YOU
CAN DO TO
FORGIVE
YOURSELF TO
FREEDOM.**

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“By forgiving others, I am given forgiveness. It does not matter that the other person may never accept my forgiveness, What does matter is that by my giving forgiveness, forgiveness returns to me and blesses me by its presence.” Charles Henry, MS, DD

1. **Don't take yourself so seriously!** No one else does. If they do, it is because they have their own personal agenda which has nothing to do with us. As individuals, we come from unique experiences and opinions. When someone takes something out of context, hears things according to *their* inner-recorder, it has nothing to do with us. We are not responsible for what others say or think.
2. **Practice in front of your mirror.** Allow yourself to mirror back how you deserve to be treated and forgive yourself for real or imagined threats or actions. *What loving thoughts can you honor yourself with?* Let it begin deep within because we are the ones affected.

ACTION: Some ideas for mirror work may be:

- I am doing the very best that I can--and so is everyone else.
- I deserve my own understanding, compassion and forgiveness.
- I love you (name) exactly as you are; and so on.

3. **Don't let others live rent free in your head.** To the degree we do not accept forgiveness, we allow others to torment us, any time at all. Know that forgiveness does not imply permission for us or others to continue the same behaviors. It means we turn them over to our Universal Creator, but we don't forget. We let their behaviors go.

4. **Write five things you want to forgive yourself for, and why.** Begin with something like this, (as an example only)

ACTION: “I forgive myself for saying something I shouldn’t have. Someone sent me an irate email and I re-acted in kind. I took it personally and see now it was nothing more than self-righteous fear. (“Who does he think he is?) I am ready to let this irrational belief go. My serenity and freedom from angst are the most important treasures to me.”

We are divinely created, and must not judge ourselves, unless we want others to judge us. We are not perfect and we make all kinds of mistakes. When we Live and Let Live we’re given the balance necessary **to keep the focus on ourselves**. Why is this important? Because we are a full-time job! Keep writing until you feel free, your breathing becomes calm and your thinking brings you *back to you, in gratitude*.

5. **Begin by Practicing Self-Compassion:** If we want to *be* esteem able, we have to *do* esteem able things for ourselves, first, before we can do for others. Our life cycle begins with us in all things, and then moves outward toward others. We start by letting ourselves off the hook from negativity, fear, and false-beliefs. When this happens, intuition expands universal forces of positivity. Beliefs that we deserve to be lovable, kind and giving to that child that lives in each of us, infiltrate our knowing and we feel loving compassion for ourselves. As we practice with honor, loving ourselves for all that we are, these new behaviors become comfortable. The power of acceptance allows us to embrace *all of us*, those parts we don’t like and those we do. *We begin to trust we are doing the best that we can, and so is everyone else.*

ACTION: Make a list of things we can do for ourselves to bring compassion into our lives.

6. **Make sure that what we think --is our reality.** Sounds ridiculous, I know. But I am guilty at times of imagining a situation unveiling before me that has *nothing* to do with truth. I project, suspect, rationalize and FEAR while setting myself up and others too, in a

play of my own creation. Then I become judge and jury. We don't need to scare ourselves.

We can never be sure about someone else's motive or actions.

We only *think* we know—but we do not.

We need, instead, to focus on what is true for us.

ACTION: Make a list of thoughts and two columns. On the left, write the situation (“My boss is out to get me”), and on the right ask are these thoughts our *truth* or self-sabotaging thoughts? Yes or no?

7. **Practice Love and Kindness – to Yourself.** Do you treat yourself as you would a precious loved one? If not, then this is where to begin. You are worthy of everything you so graciously give to others. What does that look like?

ACTION: Begin exploring the power of gratitude by writing how you exhibit self-love three a day and keep them personal.

8. **No Criticism Allowed.** We sabotage, demean and batter ourselves emotionally when we allow negative self-talk to describe who we are or what we've done. No one is perfect and in the eyes of our Universal Creator, we are all the same. No one is better than anyone else. *To protect ourselves from negativity* by reaffirming our own goodness is a sacred act. If we don't know what these attributes are, it is imperative that we find them. Did you know your attributes equal your shortcomings? Can you name them? Focus on your own goodness; it is where your strengths are. This is the beginning of retraining our brain to realize we are recreating ourselves in love and kindness. There is no room for self-criticism.

9. **Find Your Balance.** Oh how comfortable we are working and doing for others. Going out of our way, taking care of, responding to needs of others is automatic for many of us. Gifting ourselves with the same nurturing, time, focus and attention we give others seems foreign to many of us.

How is it we continue to put ourselves last, by neglecting to honor and support our own energy and goodness? We cannot afford to exhaust our precious selves. We deserve to put ourselves first.

ACTION: Make a list each day of things you can do for you (and you alone,) and list them in order of priority. Carry them over to the next day if needed. They can be something as small as fixing a pair of pants, calling a friend, putting our feet up or getting a much-needed manicure.

10. **Become willing to forgive.** Sometimes perceived or real, anguish, expectations and pain take a big space in our heart, and more work is necessary. Some hurts leave quickly; others have festered too long and require extra attention.

ACTION: Develop a prayer for willingness that sounds something like this,

“My creator, please help me to be free of uncomfortability, pain and guilt. Help me to become willing to forgive myself or (someone else) *for what I did* to cause harm. I don’t want to carry this any longer.”

Practice makes Progress.