

THE TED* LETTER

By David Emerald



December 2008

The Gift of Forgiveness

It's the season of giving in many parts of the world. Multiple religious and spiritual traditions celebrate the season as a holy time. In the Northern Hemisphere, we also acknowledge the longest night and the beginning return of light and warmth (at least eventually), while our friends in the Southern Hemisphere celebrate the fullest of days.

One of the greatest gifts we can give is that of forgiveness to the past and present Persecutors and uninvited Challengers in our lives.

We may accomplish this directly and explicitly or, as is often the case, in a more private and reflective way. One of the practices that I have used during this time of year is to write a letter to the person or situation I choose to forgive (remember a Persecutor/Challenger may be a person, condition or circumstance) and to then burn the letter in a fireplace. Watching it catch fire and turn to ashes is a way of turning the darkness of the experience being forgiven into a burst of light – and then disappearing with the smoke.

This letting go can be liberating and renewing. It is not about condoning or denying that we have experienced being victimized. It is, however, an opportunity to grow by looking for lessons learned that we can apply to life as we move forward. Doing so then “converts the curse into a blessing” (as Henri Nouwen once observed).

Professionally, I experienced this in my relationship with a particularly challenging boss (to see the complete story, see the [April, 2008 “Seeds of Compassion” TED* Letter](#)). After much soul searching and reflection, I was able to forgive my manager (in a private and reflective way) and came to really see the gift in the difficult experience, which was to clarify my professional passion and what I wanted to create in my work experience.



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Forgiving need not be outwardly focused. We may also need to give ourselves this precious gift. There are times when we are our own worst Persecutors!

Putting TED* into Practice

- Take a few minutes to allow yourself to become calm and centered. Take a couple of deep full breaths and, as you exhale, allow yourself to relax.
- Call to mind those people, conditions and/or circumstances to which you are ready, willing and able offer the gift of forgiveness.
- What are the lessons you have learned from the experience(s) you have had with them?
- Write a note or a letter to the person, condition or circumstance acknowledging the lessons learned.
- Finally, if it is a person, consider either giving or mailing them the note/letter. Alternatively, burn the note/letter in a fireplace, fire pit or some other safe place.
- And in the act of giving, mailing or burning, let go and let the past be the past.

The Spread of TED*

WATCH FOR EXCITING NEW DEVELOPMENTS FOR IN 2009! Next month's "TED* Letter" will launch the New Year with fresh offerings and new possibilities for experiencing *The Power of TED!**

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David@powerofTED.com.



TED* Quote of the Month:

"You cannot make the shift... without some measure of forgiveness, of both yourself and others. Someone once said that forgiveness is giving up all hope of having a better past. There's nothing you can do to change the past, but you can choose how you think about what has already happened in your life. You can then apply the learning from that experience to the process of creating what you care about."

(From Chapter 9: "Shift Happens")

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