

resentments. If our expectations aren't met, we can try this: whatever we want from others—respect, appreciation, etc.—we give to ourselves first, then to another person, and it will come back to us.

Resentment prevention: In forming agreements, we don't assume or expect anyone to read our mind. We think

Rewards of Recovery

Flexibility: Resentment saps our creativity because we react mechanically. For example, it might be impossible or unwise to confront those who hurt us. We no longer need to fight back to prove that we can. Other wounds demand resolution, sometimes immediately, sometimes after calm reflection, prayer, and consulting a wise person. In a third situation, part of the issue might be confronted and the rest overlooked. Grudge-collecting is too rigid to permit such variety.

More space and time: Relinquishing resentments detaches us from clutter—the embodiment of our stuck hurts, fears, and hopes. Doing the Steps, making peace with the problem, makes it easier to release obsolete items. They belong to our inflexible past self, not us.

Freedom: Decluttering resentments is putting down heavy burdens; it brings a wonderful feeling of lightness and allows useful ideas to enter our life.

win-win and make sure that each party understands what is expected.

Envy as teacher awareness: Envy is desire plus resentment. Those we envy have what we want. Instead of begrudging them their blessings, we transform envy by recognizing them as possible role models. We give thanks that they're part of our life, and we learn from them.

Healthy relationships: When we release resentments, our need to cling to hurt is gone. We have no need to "fix" anyone or prove them wrong. They're attracted to us because we seem more empathetic and forgiving, and we are! They sense that we'll accept them as they are because we accept ourselves.

Better sense of humor: Self-righteousness keeps us from developing our sense of humor. As we let go of righteous indignation, we laugh at our foibles and missteps lovingly. Life is more enjoyable once we see things in perspective.

Increased optimism: We no longer approach situations defensively, fearful of appearing vulnerable, expecting to be hurt. We don't have to armor ourselves against the future either. Instead, we look forward to joyful surprises. We trust our Higher Power to supply us and our own ability to improvise. There's no greater treasure we can give ourselves than healing our need to resent. May you enjoy the blessing of recovery from resentment.

Responsibility Pledge

I pledge to stretch out my hand and heart to those seeking help from our compulsion. Together we will ensure that CLA is here for us and all those who follow in our footsteps. And for this I am responsible.

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Decluttering Resentment: Steps 4-10



Clutterers Anonymous

Just as clutter consumes our physical space, resentment consumes our minds. Just as we can't relinquish unneeded items, we're unable to forgive injustices.

A grudge is frozen hurt and disappointment, a festering emotional injury that never heals. It keeps us stuck in the past, repeating the same angry thoughts. Resentment is collecting and storing

injustices, making us unable to get outside ourselves and be compassionate. *Whoever or whatever we resent controls us by limiting our ability to love, including loving ourselves.* Even if we don't believe the person is worthy of our loving thoughts, we are. Once we understand the high price of nursing grudges, we become eager to transcend them, no matter how difficult the healing process.

Working the Steps

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

◆ Did we enjoy resentment because it made us feel righteous?

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

◆ Did we transfer our resentment to innocent people?

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Resentment may also stem from denying our own needs:

7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

◆ Do we believe we're entitled to the best?

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

◆ Are we our own best friend?

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

◆ Do we acknowledge what we do right?

10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

◆ Do we give ourselves what we need?

◆ Do we allow ourselves time to rest, relax, and play?

◆ Are we gentle with ourselves while learning a skill?

◆ Do we surround ourselves with loving people?

◆ Do we give ourselves the joy of a nurturing home?

After working Steps 1-3, we start by writing a Step 4 inventory, listing whom we resent, what we dislike about their behavior, and how their actions have caused us pain and loss. Writing sheds light on these ancient grievances. We own up to our part in dysfunctional relationships:

- ◆ How much did we contribute to misunderstandings?
- ◆ Did we have unrealistic expectations?
- ◆ Did we fail to assert boundaries?

Once we give our inventory to God and another person, we're ready for Step 6—to have our shortcomings removed. We then follow Step 7, asking our Higher Power to do so. Next, we list everyone we harmed—including ourselves—and make amends to them where appropriate—Steps 8 and 9.

Some people we have wronged may be unwilling to forgive. They may refuse our amends. We simply wish them well. After Steps 4-9, we repeat this cleansing process as in Step 10. We review our day to see if we need to heal any situation.

Healing Grudges

The clarity we gain from owning our behavior heals some hurt, yet we may still resent the harm done us by others. Here's how we deal with old resentments and prevent new ones:

Forgiveness formula: Resentment hurts us—not those we resent. Those who harmed us may show no remorse; thus we might think that they don't deserve forgiveness. Yet forgiveness doesn't mean excusing wrongs; rather, it's perceiving in a way that heals the pain.

Try saying, *"God, please help me love this person as you do, and, (their name), I accept whatever love you have to give me."* Each time we repeat this formula, our grudge can soften. Time doesn't heal resentment; spiritual growth does.

Praying for those we resent: With repeated prayers, we see situations from their eyes, and we wish them well. It's easy to pray for loved ones, but painful to send good wishes to those who have abused us. *Yet to heal ourselves we must do this.*

Spiritual sight: To expand perception, visit a public place. As each person passes by, think, "I salute the divinity within you." Eventually, we ignore superficial differences and connect with people as spiritual beings.

Rebounding: It's not the falling down that counts, it's how quickly we get up. When we slip, we can say, "History!," forget the error, remember the lesson, and grow on. By quickly forgiving ourselves, we treat others the same way.

Reparenting: If we didn't receive healthy parenting, we can give ourselves the acceptance and encouragement we never got. The more we nurture ourselves, the less need we have to resent.

Resentment abstinence: Reliving feelings of hurt destroys health. It's emotional toxic waste that we can't afford. Each time we think or say "I resent" or want to assign blame, we can ask our Higher Power, "How can I change myself in this situation? What must I do to accept things as they are?"

Gratitude cultivation: It's impossible to be grateful and resentful simultaneously. We can count our blessings, take nothing for granted, and find good in seeming setbacks.

Expectation circulation: Expectations have been called prepackaged