

REGRETS AND BLESSING

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WHAT WE REGRET

1. We regret choices we made/choices we never had (job, marriage, family)
2. There are things we wish we had not said/had said
3. We wish we had spent more time on. (family, friend, laughter, roses)
4. We held grudges, built walls, set conditions, withheld forgiveness
5. We regret risks we did not take: challenges, relationships, etc.
6. We regret experiences that wounded us/changed us/robbed us/crippled us
7. We mourn dreams never fulfilled/journeys never taken
8. We regretted that we are not someone else

WHAT REGRET DOES

1. Regrets focus our attention on the past: what has been not what will be
2. The rehearsal of our regrets is both haunting and paralyzing
3. Regrets rob us of joy, and practice sadness and pain
4. Dwelling on what "has been" diverts energy from what "is" and "will be"
5. Dead Ends: Abusive Reactions, Depression, Drugs, Isolation Self-pity, Gradual Suicide, Workaholism

UNACKNOWLEDGED STRUGGLES

Abuse
Addictions
Abortion/Miscarriage
Compassion Fatigue/ Exhaustion with Chronic Illnesses (physical/mental)
Depression
Divorce/Separation
Dreams
Gender Issues (homosexuality)
Incarceration
Job Loss
Obsessions/Compulsions
Rape
Spiritual Acedia
Suicide

HOW TO HEAL

1. Acknowledging the memory: Are you denying the existence of certain hurts/wounds? (Coping)
2. A genuine desire to be freed (Some people choose to punish themselves)
3. Accepting your choices as yours, taking responsibility for your part, but NOT blaming yourself for what you are not responsible
4. Forgiving yourself for being fallible (accepting the fact that you are)
5. A season of sadness: letting go/a season of anger: it takes time....
6. A season of grace/ a season of hope: I am more than the sum of my regrets
7. Embracing the future: Released to celebrate my life as it is/not "should have been"

THE STRUGGLE WITH A BLESSING

1. We all seek to be affirmed and valued for who we are: without condition
2. The blessing in naming: our identity (what do you think of your name?)
3. We ascribe to certain people the power "to bless us" (Myron Madden)
4. A life's journey pursuing an elusive "blessing" (the unblessed)
5. When we've missed a blessing, or cannot receive it from certain people, we can receive it from others to whom we ascribe the power to bless

For Further Reading: Sidney B. and Suzanne Simon, Forgiveness: How to Make Peace with Your Past & Get On With Your Life (Warner); Lewis Smedes, Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve (Harper & Row); Myron C. Madden, Blessing: Giving the Gift of Power (Broadman).