

“that is because you have not allowed yourself to forgive me.”

Words that stick. And nothing cues me to philosophize like words that stick. When do you know when you have forgiven someone? And for what exactly?

While giving it some thought, I remembered a quote I read once that said, in part, that forgiveness begins when you can think of that person and feel the power to wish them well. That made sense to me, and it’s proven true for me, but when I shared that with a friend, it was rebutted with a reminder that forgiving and forgetting are two different animals and that such quote is bogus and does not apply to every situation. So much for my philosophizing. Ugh. Okay then, what if being able to wish them well is not enough because even when you do, some memories still unsettle you? Maybe I’m missing something, I thought. Can that quote apply to any situation?

Take broken friendships for example. They usually feel far more painful than any other kind of relationship, because friends choose to be present. Nothing is keeping them around other than a decision that this relationship is worth their time because you are special, and together you have a bond that can only be likened to sisterhood. It’s considerably unconditional, so when it disappears, it can dig deeper into your heart than you might expect. I confess when I think about this subject I feel like a child who hasn’t gotten enough attention. Immature, I know, but just the same. When the drifting happens and you suddenly find yourself pretty much out of that person’s life completely, it makes you sad to see that you became just more of a sidelines kind of friend, and although you might have suspected that for some time, you really don’t want to accept it.

You wonder how you could have been so off the mark in thinking yours was a life-long friendship, when clearly, the feeling was not mutual.Since this particular friend walked out so easily from your life, you have had to remind yourself on a next to daily basis, that it’s okay, that it’s just life. Your heart, however, aches. It feels like someone stole a little chunk that you can’t get back. You know how it sounds to say these things, yet it seems to happen more

than you would like to admit.

In this case, are the well wishes enough to serve as forgiveness? Does this even call for forgiveness? After all, who are we to have to forgive someone for ultimately wanting to play a lesser role in our life? Maybe we’re afraid of what happens after there’s forgiveness. When that wall is finally down, we may be, once again, susceptible to pain.

But then I read something that shed new light:

Forgiveness is:

Not a warm fuzzy feeling.
Not the re-establishment of trust.
Not an agreement that everything returns to the way it was.
Not a fake smile.
Not an automatic requirement to risk your vulnerability with that person again.
Not pretending it never happened.
Forgiveness is a choice – I’m no longer holing them responsible to pay for my pain.
Even if the pain remains…at least for a while longer. And so in philosophizing about those words that stick, I realize that while forgiveness may not always be first on our list, acceptance must be. Because it allows us to start over and lessen the risk of ultimately losing big. As someone told me recently: “…faith helps for sure, but our weakness is in that we never really relinquish that which we cant control; if only we could, if only we would.” Maybe it *is* less about forgiveness and more about acceptance. If only I could, if only I would.

“God doesn’t give you the people you want; He gives you the people you need… to help you, to hurt you, to leave you, to love you and to make you into the person you were meant to be.”
[Dedicated to Lauren — In her own friendship lessons]

Share this:

- Share on Facebook (Opens in new window) Facebook
- Share on X (Opens in new window) X
- Share on Pinterest (Opens in new window) Pinterest
- Print (Opens in new window) Print