

Meditative Practice of Forgiveness, by Jack Kornfield

Sit comfortably, close your eyes and allow your breath to be natural and easy. Let your body and mind relax. Breathe gently into the area of your heart, let yourself feel all the barriers you have erected and the emotions that you have carried because you have not forgiven— not forgiven yourself, not forgiven others... Let yourself feel the pain of keeping your heart closed. Then, breathing softly, begin reciting the following words, letting the images and feelings that come up grow deeper as you repeat them.

Asking Forgiveness of Others

Recite: "There are many ways that I have hurt and harmed others, have betrayed or abandoned them, caused them suffering, knowingly or unknowingly, out of my pain, fear, anger, and confusion." Let yourself remember and visualize the ways you have hurt others. See and feel the pain you have caused out of your own fear and confusion. Feel your own sorrow and regret. Sense that finally you can release this burden and ask for forgiveness. Picture each memory that still burdens your heart. And then to each person in your mind repeat: "I ask for your forgiveness, I ask for your forgiveness."

Offering Forgiveness to Yourself

Recite: "There are many ways that I have hurt and harmed myself. I have betrayed or abandoned myself many times through thought, word, or deed, knowingly and unknowingly." Feel your own precious body and life. Let yourself see the ways you have hurt or harmed yourself. Picture them, remember them. Feel the sorrow you have carried from this and sense that you can release these burdens. Extend forgiveness for each of them, one by one. Repeat to yourself: "For the ways I have hurt myself through action or inaction, out of fear, pain, and confusion, I now extend a full and heartfelt forgiveness. I forgive myself, I forgive myself."

Offering Forgiveness to Those Who Have Hurt or Harmed You

Recite: "There are many ways that I have been harmed by others, abused or abandoned, knowingly or unknowingly, in thought, word, or deed." Let yourself picture and remember these many ways. Feel the sorrow you have carried from this past and sense that you can release this burden of pain by extending forgiveness whenever your heart is ready. Now say to yourself: "I now remember the many ways others have hurt or harmed me, wounded me, out of fear, pain, confusion, and anger. I have carried this pain in my heart too long. To the extent that I am ready, I offer them forgiveness. To those who have caused me harm, I offer my forgiveness, I forgive you." Let yourself gently repeat these three directions for forgiveness until you feel a release in your heart. For some great pains you may not feel a release but only the burden and the anguish or anger you have held. Touch this softly. Be forgiving of yourself for not being ready to let go and move on. Forgiveness cannot be forced; it cannot be artificial. Simply continue the practice and let the words and images work gradually in their own way. In time you can make the forgiveness meditation a regular part of your life, letting go of the past and opening your heart to each new moment with a wise loving-kindness.

Source: Center for Action and Contemplation

Developed by Julie Stegelmann, Pathways Retreat

Adapted from: Macrina Wiederkehr, *Seven Sacred Pauses: Living Mindfully Through the Hours of the Day*

Wisdom Hour, None, prayed Mid-afternoon

themes: steadfastness, surrender, forgiveness, wisdom, impermanence, aging, maturing, death and transition

The wisdom hour comes mid-afternoon.

In this hour we remember that all things are passing, impermanent. This day as beautiful, frustrating, or productive as it has been, will not last forever. It will fade into night and into a new day.

Day's end is symbolic of life's end. This is not intended in a dismal sense. It is a loving reminder of the beautiful fragility

in the lives of human beings on earth. An honest remembrance that all things are passing can help us grow in gratitude for all of creation.

We pause in this hour to:

- Remember the impermanence of all things.
- Put things in order as day begins to fade.
- Ask what needs to be kept from the day and released.
- Practice forgiving ourselves and other for the weaknesses or mistakes of the day.
- Embrace the art of holy surrender and letting go.

With evening approaching, it is time for giving and forgiving. Giving and forgiving are kindred spirits. When we forgive we give back life to the other. We lift a burden from ourselves and the other. As we look to the dying day, it is fitting to reflect on the ancient proverb, "Let not the sun go down upon your anger." We want to close the day as we began, with the chalice of our lives raised high.

**Love is all we can take with us when we go
and it makes the end so easy.**

-Louisa May Alcott



Prayer Guide

Teach me wisdom in my inward being. Ps. 51:6

Opening

We seek to live a more contemplative life,
so that we will not have to wait until we are dying to learn to live.

-James Finley

Psalm 71, 90, 138

Prayer

O Ancient Wisdom,
so deeply rooted in the ground of my being,
anoint me with wise knowing.
As I look toward day's end,
let me draw energy from your insight
and good judgment. Open my eyes to the
riches you have gifted me with this day.
Help me gather it all in as a bountiful harvest.
Let me sit at your feet and learn from you,
how to live and die, how to give and forgive.
O teach me wisdom. May it come to pass.



Song Put Everything In Order

Holding On and Letting Go

Two of the most powerful and foundational movements of the
spiritual life are holding on and letting go.

Pick up a stone(s) and hold them while you reflect over your day.
Bring to mind the beautiful, frustrating, joyful, sorrowful, productive,
unproductive, life-giving, life-taking moments of the day.

What needs to be kept and treasured from the day?
What needs to be released, let go of, forgiven from the day?

Hold the stone(s) near, "I hold onto..."
Drop the stone(s), "I release..." *Continue for as long as you need.*

Prayer

Into your heart, O God, my holding on,
Into your heart, O God, my letting go,
Into your heart, O God, my living,
Into your heart, O God, my dying,
Into your heart, O God, what is left,
what is left of me.

More Wisdom Practices & Prayers

Holy Surrender

Surrender is not giving up, which is the way we usually understand
the term. *Surrender is entering the present moment, and what is right
in front of you, fully and without resistance or attempts at control.* In
that sense, surrender is almost the exact opposite of giving up. In fact,
it is a being given to!

-Richard Rohr

Four Simple Phrases

Four simple phrases carry enormous power to mend and nurture our
relationships and inner lives. Practice them everyday.

"Please forgive me,"

"I forgive you,"

"Thank you,"

"I love you."

-Dr. Ira Byock

**Sweet abiding, deep listening,
holy surrender, forgiving heart,
tender love, quiet joy,
gentle spirit, sacred presence.**

This is the gift to those whom we share our lives.

A great healing draws us into deeper life.

-Macrina Wiederkehr