

Radical Forgiveness;
Forgiveness from the field Beyond Right and Wrong

In the week before Rosh Hashanah, I received an email from a friend saying that I had "wronged her" and that she "forgives" me. I don't know about you, but when someone is holding a judgment of me that I did something wrong, it's really really hard for me to trust that forgiveness is there too.

I'm looking for the quality of forgiveness that arises when judgments about actions are transformed into understanding- even actions that I now understand triggered pain and hurt. I want to learn to embrace, soothe and care for the pain and the hurt- without letting the hurt spill over into judgments about others or myself.

The invitation of Yom Kippur is for us to release our self judgments and our judgments about others to God. To begin anew, free from judgments, in all our relationships.

This is truly possible when we understand what was so important to the life energy, the survival, the very being of the person (us or another) who did the act that we now regret. Forgiveness is born from this depth of Understanding.

Most likely, we first will need to give ourselves a ton of empathy- self empathy- so that we can get to a place where we even *care* what was so important to the other person.

This calls for a practice of deep reflective self connection – to look inside myself to find and understand the source of the hurt, to take responsibility for bringing healing energy to my own hurt- to empower myself to take care of myself in this way. I love to use the chant by Reb Shlomo Carlebach, Return Again ,to help me return to my own feelings and needs- to my own core hurt- to embrace my own core wounds – to rest my presence there until a natural curiosity arises in me to look again at the other person's act. From here, I can now stand on the holy ground of forgiveness.

In these days from Rosh Ha Shannah to Yom Kippur, I want to discover where I'm not curious about another person's needs, and then look at what is going on in me that is blocking me from that openness.

Probably I am judging them, as a way of addressing, soothing, healing my own pain about something. I am judging that they did something wrong, and I am telling myself I am the victim of that.

As long as I am judging the other person, as long as I stick to my view that they did something wrong, I won't be able to open fully to their humanness, to their pain. Instead of judging them (or myself if it is self forgiveness I am seeking), I want to embrace my pain with the qualities of presence and tenderness that we bring to a newborn baby. Out of this experience of presence and tenderness toward myself, my heart opens and I feel empowered and curious to bring this energy out to others, even those whom I had been thinking "wronged" me.

Now I am in the field beyond "right/wrong thinking", in the field of embracing the wounds and vulnerability that lead people to act or speak in ways that hurt.

In Elul, God came into our field. Now, in these ten days of Tishrei, we stand in Awe, releasing our judgments to the God-field, turning them into compassion and understanding.

L'shannah tovah.

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Return Again, Reb Shlomo Carlebach

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBZ9UYhKTcC>

<http://songsforthegreatturning.net/seeing-with-new-eyes/return-again/>