

GUILT

By Gayle North

"It is easier for most people to forgive an enemy than it is to truly forgive themselves."

Guilt is a feeling associated with a belief that one has done something wrong. The synonyms for guilt are remorse, regret, shame, disgrace, etc. Guilt is a painful feeling of self-reproach for having done something that a person deems immoral or wrong.

The physical sensation associated with guilt is described by most people as a sick feeling or nauseated feeling in the pit of the stomach. In addition to the feeling in the stomach, some people feel pressure in the chest or a pounding feeling in the head.

Unlike anger or sadness, guilt does not have a positive side. It is poison to emotional, physical, and spiritual well being.

Millions of people in our culture suffer from guilt because of choices they made in the past, like abortions, divorces, affairs, cheating in business, betraying friendships, sexual offences, rape, and so many other major and minor "crimes".

Another type of guilt is caused by immature adults who blame others for their problems. This often happens in the case of a child who takes on inferred guilt because the parent refuses to take responsibility for their own feelings causing the child to pick up the idea that they are the cause of all of the parents' problems. When a child feels responsible for the misery of the parent, guilt can be carried by the child into adulthood. Parents are usually unaware of what they have done in these cases.

This time of the year seems to bring out guilt and shame that can create "seasonal depression" for many people. People sometimes blame their depression on the lack of sunshine but if they look a little deeper they may find that intrusive painful memories of the past are invading their mind and heart causing recurring emotional pain. Since most people don't have effective tools for dealing with guilt or shame, they often reach out for substances or behaviors that will distract them or soothe their pain. They eat more, smoke more, drink more, shop more, and gamble more.

Guilt leaves us feeling self-conscious and unworthy of love and approval from ourselves or from others. It often shows up in body language as heads hanging and stooped shoulders. Adults, who feel guilty about perceived "crimes" of the past, often end up in multiple affairs or marriages, divorces, repeated difficulties in intimate relationships, and sometimes an endless string of jobs.

These repeated failures compound upon each other to convince the guilty person that they really are worthless failures. This leads to feelings of hopelessness and depression. Guilt takes a person on a downward spiral that often leads to grief, drug abuse, alcoholism, eating disorders, out of control gambling, and other compulsive behaviors.

Because we can only feel one feeling at a time – we deprive ourselves of joy, love, and peace when we choose to hold on to guilt.

People often tell me that they know God has forgiven them and there is no one judging them but themselves for what they did that caused the guilt to take hold in them. The real problem is that they don't believe that they deserve God's forgiveness and they believe that they should feel guilty for the rest of their lives for what they did.

The position people often take and defend goes something like this:

"I don't deserve God's forgiveness. I deserve to suffer for what I did. I believe that I SHOULD feel guilty for what I did. It would probably actually be dangerous to let the guilt go because who knows what other bad things I might do. I have tried and convicted myself and I am determined to keep myself in this prison that I have built for myself. Even though I can't be happy in here, the world is safer with me locked away in my guilt prison."

Guilt is usually one of the things we clear first when people come to me for coaching. There is no goodpurpose served in carrying guilt along with you into your future. It is time to release the burden before it gets any heavier for you. Ignoring feelings like guilt eventually create physical symptoms of dis-ease in the body.

Take advantage of any opportunity this season to treat yourself as you would treat a good friend. Realize that you have always done the best you could with the information available to you and with the programming, perceptions and resources you had at that time.

Take yourself off the cross.

Find the help you need to let go of your guilt from the past. Contrary to what you may have thought in the past, you can release your guilt painlessly and easily with the new empowerment technologies available today. Practitioners of these methods can even help you over the phone.

Check out some of these methods at the following websites: www.emofree.com, www.unstressforsucces.com

Gayle North offers Personal Coaching for Positive Change using recently developed empowerment technologies to clear mental and emotional blocks that keep people stuck in unhealthy habits and prevent them from performing at their highest potential in school, sports, relationships, work and finance. Call 406-837-1214 to learn how you can STOP SMOKING IN ONE HOUR and for coaching in person or by phone.

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