

Nursing a Grudge



## Nursing a Grudge

Life's too short to hold grudges?

Not according to Harry Havens.

Van Morris of Kentucky

A collector of old newspapers

Found an article relating to him

In the Chicago Herald Examiner

November 17, 1930.

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Man Spites His Wife

By Staying Blindfolded in Bed Seven Years.

The strange story of Harry Havens of Indiana, who went to bed—and stayed there—for seven years with a blindfold over his eyes because he was peeved at his wife, was revealed here today when he decided to get out of bed. Havens was the kind of husband who liked to help around the house—hang pictures, wipe the dishes, and such. His wife scolded him for the way he was performing one of these tasks, and he resented it. He is reported to have said: ‘All right. If that's the way you feel, I'm going to bed. I'm going to stay there the rest of my life. And I don't want to see you or anyone else again.’ His last remark explains the blindfold. He got up, he explained, when the bed started to feel uncomfortable after seven years.”

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Now, here's someone who knows how to hold a grudge.

Hard to believe, isn't it,

That resentment could cause a person,

To waste 7 years of his life that way.

Well the greater question is,

How many of us waste so much energy

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Nursing the grudges in our own lives?

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Let's face it, we've all done it!

We may not all lay in bed, blindfolded for 7 years  
But in our own dysfunctional ways  
We know how to nurse a grudge.

An interesting phrase, isn't it, this nursing a grudge?

You think of nursing  
As a term relating to the healing of wounds.

So you would think, then, in a literal sense,  
Nursing a grudge should mean,  
Healing the wound of resentment.

But actually, the definition is exactly the opposite.

And, as evident in Harry Havens  
Some can nurse a grudge for a VERY long time.

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So let's talk about nursing a grudge.

There are proper ways to nurse a grudge.

First, we need to mull over the offense.

Relive the moment, over and over, and over again  
Until it becomes an obsession.

Next, consider the ways we wish we would had responded  
But didn't because we didn't think quick enough.

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Now, get preoccupied thinking about  
Those smart, cutting, sarcastic, on-point remarks  
That we should have said.

And finally, spend sleepless nights in morbid fascination  
On just how we're going to get even.

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Max Lucado defines resentment this way—"Resentment is when you let your hurt become hate. Resentment is when you allow what is eating you to eat you up. Resentment is when you poke, stoke, feed, and fan the fire, stirring the flames and reliving the pain."

"Resentment is the deliberate decision to nurse the offense until it becomes a black, furry, growling grudge."

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Physically speaking, over time  
Nursing a grudge becomes hazardous to our health.

Resentment creates symptoms of stress  
Hypertension and high blood pressure.

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Spiritually speaking, nursing a grudge  
Drives a wedge into our relationship with God.

Someone who nurses a grudge  
Is someone who struggles in their relationship with God!

There is a direct correlation  
In being a RECEIVER of forgiveness,  
And in being a BEARER of forgiveness.

This is what Jesus is saying in our Scripture passage today.

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We come back to the teachings of Jesus  
In his Sermon on the Mount.

As I said last week  
If you want to know the heart of Jesus  
Read Matthew 5-7.

There in the heart of Jesus  
We find his predominant message

**Matthew 6:14 (CEV)**

**<sup>14</sup> If you forgive others for the wrongs they do to you, your Father in heaven will forgive you.**

Let's be clear, this is not tit-for-tat.

Jesus is not saying that God withholds his forgiveness.

God's forgiveness is there . . . unconditionally  
Its fullest expression found on the cross of Mt Calvary.

What I think Jesus is saying is  
It's difficult to experience his grace  
When we harbor ill will towards others.

Donald Hagner from the Word Biblical Commentary  
On the Gospel of Matthew writes

“These verses are a forceful way of making a significant point that it is unthinkable—impossible—that we can enjoy God's forgiveness without in turn extending our forgiveness towards others.”

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In response to God's gift of grace  
We, in turn, become grateful AND gracious.

**Matthew 6:15 (CEV)**

**<sup>15</sup> But if you don't forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.**

If we can't let go of our resentment towards others  
We will fail to enjoy God's gracious acts of redemption.

God doesn't withhold his forgiving grace.

It's that we are unable to fully experience it  
When we devote so much spiritual energy  
Obsessing over emotional and spiritual wounds

Richard B. Gardner writes,  
In the Believers' Church Bible Commentary:

“God's forgiveness precedes and underlies our forgiveness of one another. The point here is that there has to be reciprocity between the way we respond to the misdeeds of others and the way God responds to our own. If we refuse to practice forgiveness in our relationship with others then we void God's forgiveness in our own lives as well.”

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Jesus teaches in the Lord's Prayer,  
That we are to forgive as we have been forgiven.

In fact, Jesus teaches that even BEFORE we pray,  
We should forgive.

**Mark 11:25-26 (CEV)**

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**<sup>25-26</sup> Whenever you stand up to pray, you must forgive what others have done to you. Then your Father in heaven will forgive your sins.**

The Apostle Paul, too,  
Writes instructions concerning the need to forgive:

**Colossians 3:13 (CEV)**

**<sup>13</sup> Put up with each other, and forgive anyone who does you wrong, just as Christ has forgiven you.**

These aren't isolated Scripture verses  
James, the brother to Jesus also writes:

**James 2:13 (CEV)**

**<sup>13</sup> Do this, because on the Day of Judgment there will be no pity for those who have not had pity on others. But even in judgment, God is merciful!**

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A former prisoner of a Nazi concentration camp  
Was visiting a friend  
Also a survivor of the Holocaust.

“Have you forgiven the Nazis?” he asked his friend.

“Yes,” his friend said.

“Well, I can't . . .

“I am still consumed with hatred for them.”

“In that case,” said his friend gently

“They still have you in prison.”

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An unforgiving heart becomes locked in its own prison

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Unable to forgive  
Unable to receive forgiveness.

The early Christian theologian St Augustine said,

“Resentment is like drinking poison  
And waiting for the other person to die.”

It ends up only really hurting you.

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On a lighter note  
There was this married couple  
Who had a quarrel.

As arguments go  
It really wasn't anything earth-shattering.

They reacted by giving each other the “silent treatment.”

This went on for a good solid week  
When the husband realized he needed his wife's help.  
In order to catch a flight to Chicago  
For a business meeting  
He had to be up by 5:00 AM.

Notorious for sleeping through the alarm clock  
He had always relied on his wife  
To help get him up.

Not wanting to be the first to break the silence  
He wrote on a piece of paper  
“Wake me up at 5:00 AM.”

He left it taped to the bathroom mirror

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Clearly in plain view  
And went soundly to sleep.

The next morning the man woke  
To discover his wife gone  
His clock showing it was 9:00 am  
And his flight long since departed.

He got up extremely upset  
Determined to find his wife  
And give her a piece of his mind.

When he saw on his wife's pillow  
A note with these words:  
"It's 5:00. Wake up!"

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To be truthful, nursing a grudge  
Is a form of spiritual bondage.

Your anger, resentment, and grudges hold you captive.

So do yourself a favor and learn to forgive.

Get help if necessary.

Because no matter how hard you nurse that grudge  
It isn't ever going to heal.

And as long as you withhold forgiveness  
You will never fully experience  
The healing balm of God's forgiveness.

Remember, the first to apologize is the bravest

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The first to forgive is the strongest  
The first to forget is the happiest.

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Finish with YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/svyZAJqWBw8>