

Setting Down the Heavy Load

By Amy G. Martin APRN, RhD

Imagine how it would feel if you had fifty pounds of weight strapped to your back right now. At first it might be uncomfortable, but bearable, then after some time, fatigue would set in and you might have to limit yourself in some areas. You would probably start having pain, and may even start whining, but the interesting thing is that you would eventually adapt. This is when the abnormal becomes normal and the unacceptable is accepted.

The same pattern emerges when it comes to emotional burdens. We don't like them, but we do become accustomed to their weight. Think of the yoke of drug and alcohol abuse, the oppression of an unhealthy relationship, the feeling of being overwhelmed by stress, the burden of guilt and shame in hiding secrets, and the most difficult, the weight of self doubt and insecurity.

When the unhealthy patterns become the norm, and you just accept the fact that this is just how it is, you enter into a slow downward spiral of chronic stress, fatigue and emotional difficulties. You feel you have no control or power over the situation and just choose to continue to carry the weight. Repression of our true feelings is what causes depression and anxiety. Pushing down the upset, denying the pain and ignoring our own inner voice are self defeating behaviors.

So when do you make the decision to finally set down the load? Does there have to be one triggering event that tells you it's time? How long do you have to suffer before you break out of the pattern that has caused you so much pain? How many years is enough and why do some people think their burden is theirs for life?

Here are some questions to ask yourself if you think it's time to be free:

1. What is the impact of this weight in your life?

The impact of guilt, negative self talk and insecurity is powerlessness. Burdens, though they may appear to make us stronger, really just wear us down.

2. Do you think it's possible to set it down?

It is not only possible but absolutely necessary to your well being and growth to let go of things that no longer serve you.

3. In any way, has this burden been defining you?

It may seem crazy, but many people do define themselves according to their challenges. Only in honestly acknowledging that this may be true, will you be able to let it go.

4. How would your life change if you set down this burden?

You just might be able to relax and be happy!

5. Can you even imagine how it would feel to be free?

Freedom isn't about walking away from responsibilities or commitments. It is about being honest enough with yourself that you are willing to take full responsibility for your part in your story. Only when that happens can you be free of the unhealthy patterns that led you to where you are.

So now think of carrying that fifty pound bag all the way to the finish line. OK, it's time; you can set it down now. Feel the lightness, so light you feel like you can fly.

Now choose one burden, one negative thought you've carried the longest and make a decision. Decide to let it go; plant that seed of healthy thought within your being, knowing the power of conscious intent, and when you finally release the load, the liberation you experience will help you know, that you are the one determining your own destiny.

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