

Letting Go of What No Longer Serves You!

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We all have thoughts and beliefs that no longer serve us, prevent us from realizing our full potential, and impede our happiness and success. Let's look at how to let go of the thoughts and beliefs that no longer serve us!

Our thoughts are quite powerful. They shape our lives. We're like trees, and deep in our roots, we hold core beliefs, thoughts about how the world works, how to behave and navigate its complexities. These deeply seated thoughts about ourselves and the world stay with us. As we expand out into the world, eyes wide open, we absorb and accumulate even more thoughts and perceptions. We accumulate beliefs and thoughts about how the world works from our life experiences, and societal influences; our culture, the economy, our parents, our grandparents, our peer groups, and other sources, like mass media and social media.

As adults out in the world, these accumulated thoughts and beliefs are often still in play, influencing our lives on a daily basis. But the truth about our accumulated thoughts and beliefs is that they are not necessarily true and they may no longer serve us.

As a young child

Here's an example from my own life. As a young child, when I wanted to run and play rather than do my homework and family household chores or responsibilities, I was told and motivated by my parents to do it all with repeated sayings like, 'Hard work never kills you, it only betters you.' While this message for the most part, positively influenced my behavior as a child and my work ethics to work hard, as I transitioned into adulthood, at a near-crisis point, I was compelled to examine the truth of that long-held thought. I began to realize that this core belief — even though it had served me at various stages in my life — was, in my present life, no longer serving me. In fact,

while working too hard hadn't killed me, it had led to me overworking. And overextending my work commitments left me feeling depleted and unwell, and negatively impacted my wellbeing on many levels.

Looking at what no longer serves us

It's important to look at and challenge thoughts and beliefs that no longer serve us. For example, many people believe that we should never say no when someone asks for our help. This belief is kind and altruistic in theory, but in reality, when dealing with the demands of work and family leaves us little time for self-care and rest, taking on more responsibilities and tasks is not always wise or even possible.

Further, the potentially problematic quality of being 'nice, kind, selfless, and considerate of others' which is often programmed into the behavior of young girls, can lead to confusion in adulthood about standing up for one's self in the face of being overlooked, underappreciated, or treated unfairly. Such treatment, left unchecked, can lead to a lifetime of diminished self-worth, settling for less, and limiting potential. It can also create confusion and conflict around factoring our own interests, needs, and dreams into the equation of our lives.

Identifying thoughts and beliefs that no longer serve us

Not all long-held thoughts and beliefs are problematic, of course. What distinguishes problematic thoughts and beliefs from healthy, supportive ones is that the problematic ones cause us problems! They can diminish our sense of self, enable others

and leave us depleted and confused. They can leave us feeling trapped in low self-esteem. They can prevent us from establishing healthy boundaries, and hold us back from living our best and fullest life.

How to let go

It is important to stay connected to our feelings in the moment and to examine our entrenched thoughts and beliefs about how the world works, how relationships work, and what life is all about when we are feeling conflicted about what we think we should do, versus what we really want to do, say or choose.

If the message 'eat everything on your plate' is derailing your healthy eating regime, consider the ways in which this message has negatively impacted you in the past, and consider letting it go. If the message 'be nice and polite' is holding you back from standing up for yourself in situations where you are being mistreated or taken advantage of, consider rethinking whether this thought and belief has a place in your life.

If the thought that the world is a dog-eat-dog place leaves you distrustful of everyone in your life — including the many people who support and appreciate you — that thought may need to be revisited and reframed. If the belief that your choice of career should be based on what a parent, grandparent, or partner wants for you, rather than what interests or inspires you, the sooner that belief is challenged and revised, the better!

Staying connected to ourselves

It is important to stay connected to your own feelings and thoughts in the moment and to examine what's really happening in your present life. It is essential to examine the choices that you make that do not align with who you want to be. Remember, you can reject, replace or rewrite the thoughts and beliefs that no longer serve us.

We are born to live a life in full. Letting go of thoughts and beliefs that no longer serves us, frees us to live life at our highest and best.

Five steps to letting go of thoughts and beliefs that no longer serve you


- **Think** about a belief or thought that may be driving you to make choices that do not feel right or self-supporting
- **Reflect** on how a long-held belief has negatively impeded or influenced your choices, and trust your own thoughts, observations and feelings as they come up
- **Give** yourself permission to discard what is no longer working for you, even if this thought or belief came from someone you love, admire, and respect
- **Rewrite or replace** problematic thoughts and beliefs with ones that support and serve you, and raise your self-confidence and sense of wellbeing in the world
- **Pay attention** to the benefits of the changes that take place as a result of your new, more authentic thoughts and beliefs

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About the author

Dr. Monica Vermani is a Clinical Psychologist specializing in treating trauma, stress and mood & anxiety disorders, and the founder of Start Living Corporate Wellness. She is a well-known speaker, columnist and advocate in the field of mental health and wellness.

*Her upcoming book, **A Deeper Wellness**, will be available for pre-sales in January 2022, and her in-depth online self-help program, **A Deeper Wellness**, offers powerful mental health guidance, life skills, knowledge and healing, anywhere, anytime. <https://www.adeeperwellness.com/> <https://www.drmonicavermani.com/>*

