

How You Can Learn to Let Go of Your Painful Past

Some months ago, a friend came to pick me up. I opened the front door; she came in and paused. "What's with the high heels?" she asked

"Why not?"

"Because we'll be doing a lot of walking in those airports. You need comfortable shoes." She stomped her feet. "Like these tennis shoes."

I chuckled. Few friends understand the Latina thinking—that heels make us, well ... more feminine. Silly, isn't it? That desire to wear high heels is one of many quirks to which we cling. Actually, we hang on to many more that might seem a tad trivial.

Yet, no matter what nationality, we all tend to hang on to other stuff that's not trivial, but traumatic—past hurts, relationships now gone, resentment for what we lost, anger for what went wrong and even bitterness for broken dreams.

When Dreams Become Nightmares

Trying to figure it out, we gaze at the rearview mirror of the past, analyzing its painful details. And in doing so, we risk running into a wall of deep depression. We relive what happened back then over and over again.

And when we do, so pitifully, we miss the wide gate God holds open, ushering us to a new chapter, a new beginning, vibrant possibilities, treasures to be found and opportunities to savor. We miss it all because we're still staring at the past. What we had. How it was. What we enjoyed and how we felt.

Time to Let Go

Broken dreams don't have to shatter our hope. Plans unfulfilled don't have to constantly fill our mind. And unforeseen obstacles don't have to forecast our future.

If we let it, all of this can hold us captive to the world's deceptive lies that say it's OK to sink in unforgiveness, grudges or resentment. They keep us from breaking free from yesterday's pain. They bind us to our negative emotions rather than empowering our thoughts. But even more devastating, they blind us from seeing Christ's cure for the torment.

How about if we leave all that where it belongs—in the past? Today is here. Today is when God is whispering a new beginning, a new path and new horizons.

Welcome in Contagious Joy

And it's in that view that we realize that contentment for what we have now ushers contagious joy that becomes the strength for tomorrow. That's when we can expect better turns. Ones that we never dreamed and didn't think we could have. But definitely, we can have them because "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future" (Jer. 29:11. NIV).

If He has that future prepared, and if He is almighty and He's true to His Word, why linger in the past? If His plans are to prosper us, why not expect the best for tomorrow? If Christ lives in us and we in Him, our destiny shines, our future is secure.

"Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away. Look, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17, MEV).

Let's Pray

Father, how often do I have to repeat your promises in my head

before I believe them in my heart? I ask for wisdom and commitment to believe in what you say and not in what I see. Show me how to praise you today, in the moment and while I relish in a vibrant hope for tomorrow. In Jesus' name, amen.

What is yesterday's sadness you need to leave behind in order to enjoy today's happiness? {eoa}

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