



# An Extract of Wisdom

Recently, when my dentist extracted one of my wisdom teeth, he told me this interesting fact: “When a tooth is removed soon after it becomes troublesome, the bone it’s lodged in lets go of the tooth easily. But when you allow time to pass, the bone becomes less forgiving. Good bone and bad tooth become intertwined.”

“Less forgiving ...” my dentist said. These words made me see that my soul is much like that bone. When someone does me a wrong, I feel resentment. It’s natural. But as resentment takes root, it takes over, and my soul loses the strength to forgive.

Nowadays, when I’m done a wrong, I’m quick to uproot it, before my good soul becomes too intertwined with bad feelings.

—Jane Tilley

**H**olding on to hurt is like grabbing a rattlesnake by the tail: You are going to be bitten. As the poison of bitterness works its way through the many facets of your personality, death will occur—death that is more far-reaching than your physical death, for it has the potential to destroy those around you as well.

—Charles Stanley

**T**he Bible says, “Thou shalt not bear any grudge” (Leviticus 19:17-18).

When I forgive, I am not to carry any bullets forward on the journey. I am to empty out all my explosives, all my ammunition of anger and revenge. I am not to “bear any grudge.”

I cannot meet this demand. It is altogether beyond me. I might utter words of forgiveness, but I cannot reveal a clear, bright, blue sky without a touch of storm brewing anywhere.

But the Lord of grace can do it for me. He can change my weather. He can create a new climate. He can “renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10), and in that new atmosphere nothing shall live which seeks to poison and destroy. Grudges shall die and revenge shall give place to goodwill, the strong genial presence which makes its home in the new heart.

—J. H. Jowett

## Let It Go



Carrying a grudge is a loser’s game. It is the ultimate frustration, because it leaves you with more pain than you had in the first place. Recall the pain of being wronged, the hurt of being stung, cheated, demeaned. Doesn’t the memory of it fuel the fire of fury again? Do you feel that hurt each time your memory lights on the people who did you wrong?

Your own memory becomes a videotape within your soul that plays unending reruns of your old rendezvous with pain. Is this fair to yourself—this wretched justice of not forgiving?

The only way to heal the pain that will not heal itself is to forgive the person who hurt you. Forgiving heals your memory as you change your memory’s vision. When you release the wrongdoer from the wrong, you cut a malignant tumor out of your inner life. You set a prisoner free—yourself.

—Lewis B. Smedes

**To forgive is to set a prisoner free ... and discover the prisoner was you.**