

15 TRANSITIONS

"I'm not sure what you mean when you say letting go of the parts of us that need to heal, it sounds like I might lose something in the process," Richard confided.

"It is frightening to most people. For some, at first, it appears to be the down side to doing this work. As you engage in this type of thinking and heal, you will lose a very dear friend!"

"How so?" He looked puzzled.

"When you engage in True Forgiveness—fear, manipulation, blame and guilt are going to evaporate from your life. You'll no longer be able to play the role of victim, which has been a part of your life for so long. That friend is going to have to go."

"That's true," he admitted. "I am just now realizing how much of my life and identity have been tied up with guilt and fear. It does feel like a big part of me is going to disappear," he lamented. "I won't know how to act anymore. Who will I be?"

"Sounds like a part of you is already feeling sadness about the loss of those old personality roles you loved to play. Giving up old identities and roles is important in this work. Sometimes, those old 'selves' don't go without a fight and a struggle. The feelings of loss can be so strong they might feel like death.

"In Aramaic it was said that in order to live you had to die. This may sound like a ridiculous statement, but when you see that the old self—the false, disempowering self—has to go, or die, for the true self to live, it makes perfect sense because it is a death of sorts.

"Richard, it might help to notice that blame and victimhood deliver no benefits. Aside from a perverse sense of righteousness, martyrdom, or negative attention, did they ever bring any actual Love, benefit or reward?"

"That's an interesting question," Richard replied pensively. "I didn't realize how I distorted myself nor how twisted it is to take pleasure in being a victim. It seemed like a good way to get attention and not have to accept blame for anything. No matter what went wrong, I convinced myself it was always someone else's fault."

As he continued, I was aware of his efforts to keep breathing and sent a silent acknowledgment. "Another thing that seemed like a benefit at the time was that I pulled in sympathizers to listen to my stories and agree with me. It was a way to feel powerful. By manipulating others into being on my side, I rallied support against a common enemy, convincing myself and almost everyone else that I was right. I had all those people in the palm of my hand, agreeing with me as I attacked someone who was innocent.

"You said earlier, michael, that we never do to someone else what we have not already done to ourselves. I'm also realizing that we first have to create abuse within ourselves in order to abuse another or have another abuse us. I was trying to ostracize the person I blamed, but I was the one who ended up alone. In the end, my behavior led to nothing but gossip and lost friendships. I didn't even see my part in it.

"All I received for my efforts was negative attention and the same painful experiences over and over. When I was in the blame and guilt mode, it seemed like I had the power . Now, it looks more like a false, useless kind of control.

"My whole life I've loved delivering the line, 'You'll be sorry when you see what you have done to me!' I remember my dad saying it to my mom and my mom saying it to my sister. It's strange, but as I think of that, I feel a lot of sadness . I can see that I've followed the family relationship pattern. I've wanted to appear to be right and stay in control. By doing this, I was able to avoid dealing with my sadness ."

I broke into his train of thought. "Richard, the need to control, as with violence and gossip, usually comes from insecurity. Guilt and blame are not really crutches that assist your life but rather a ball and chain that hold you back. They are energies that are 'off the mark.' Earlier, when we were talking about your mom, we established that people felt driven away by you. When those people left, you felt like the victim. You are only a victim of the results of your own behaviors."

The insights Richard gleaned from doing his work were the fruit of his willingness to look at his own painful realities and would change his life forever. He was experiencing, first hand, that it was safe and healing to face himself. The change in him was visible. His posture became straighter and his voice deepened. He was in transition from victimhood to empowerment.

KEY THOUGHT—Give yourself the opportunity to think new thoughts and test out the new behaviors that will come about as a result.