

Sue's updated web site!

I'm very excited to introduce my updated web site designed by the wonderful-to-work-with Christy Brennand of Studio Misto.

Visit Sue's website
www.suepattonthoele.com

Haiku by Sue

With windy relief
Autumn sheds her jeweled cloak
And prepares to rest

Haiku by You!

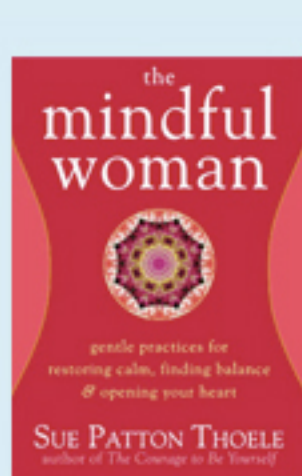
Holding on so tight
I long for the simple life
Found in letting go
--Christy Brennand

I would love to feature haiku poems by readers in this column! Send your original haiku poems to my web site, and I will share as many as I can.

Why Haiku?

Because of its structure--three lines of 5, 7, & 5 syllables, respectively--Japanese haiku poetry is good practice for capturing essential feelings and ideas by letting go of "too much."

Please share your creativity!



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Dear Friends,

Bursting from summer in a riotous blaze of color, Autumn is a great teacher. Why? Because, when the time is ripe or the winds ferocious enough, Autumn always releases her beautiful accessories and accepts the inevitability of bare-boned winter. Autumn is the Empress of Letting Go. I'm not. Or, wasn't...

While I've gotten pretty good at letting go in the last few years, it took a long time—and a lot of learnin—to relinquish the title of She Who Resists. When I *am* able to accept and let go of experiences, circumstances, expectations, regrets, and realities that are wounding or worrisome, life runs much more smoothly and I am a lot happier.

So, let's muse about Letting Go and her troublesome twin, Resistance.

Letting Go Is Loving

Learning to let go is one of the most loving gifts you can give to both yourself and others. Ironically, it's also one of the most difficult. Recent research shows that Mother Nature has wired our brains to register negative, fearful, and unpleasant experiences more deeply and vividly than it does positive, neutral, or pleasant ones. Why is that? Mother Nature wants grandchildren. As a result, we—her children—are programmed to survive above all else. Holding negative experiences, and the feelings they evoke, in the forefront of their minds helped our ancient ancestors survive in harsh environments. Today, however, doing so actually dampens our ability to thrive. Not letting go is like trying to water a garden with your foot planted firmly on the hose.

Bad News

- The brain is superglue for negative experiences and a slippery slide for positive ones.
- Not letting go binds us to the original wound, regret, or circumstance. Holding on holds *us* prisoner.

Good News

- Realizing that letting go is difficult *physiologically*, as well as emotionally, helps alleviate feelings of guilt. Being aware of our brain's tendency to heighten and hang onto the negative, allows us to let go of self-blame and/or shame.
- *Brains are re-trainable.* Consciously paying attention to positive experiences helps your brain learn to register them more completely. As you commit to mindfully noting and reveling in positive energy and attitudes, your brain becomes more adept at replacing negative thought patterns and feelings with positive ones. Practice makes progress!
- Learning to let go is a matter of liberating *ourselves* and has very little to do with the persons, situations, or circumstances we are holding on to so tightly. Liberation is an act of love!

Resistance is Paralyzing

When we're having difficulty letting go of upsetting feelings or negative attitudes, chances are it is in response to *actual* woundings, or unfair treatment of some kind. Or, possibly, we're resisting a frustrating or infuriating reality such as the current political atmosphere. Of course, it's natural to feel hurt when treated badly and there are many things happening in the world that are frightening, regrettable, and sad. But, does hanging out in resistance help us heal or situations change? Not often. Instead, resistance tethers us to the original experience, or troublesome circumstance while paralyzing us emotionally and spiritually.

Yes, it is natural and normal to feel hurt, frustrated, or righteously indignant at times, and we *do* need to process feelings in order to transform them. Although it's essential to acknowledge what *is*, there comes a time when we need to gently and honestly distinguish between "working through" and "wallowing."

Recently, when feeling wounded and very *right* about how wrong the other person was, a saying from The Course of Miracles popped into my mind. It was, "Would you rather be right, or would you rather be happy?" Ahhh, I may have been right—as you probably are also—but certainly was not happy. My pain and righteous anger about the past was blinding me to the wonderfulness happening *right now*. Resistance was contaminating happiness. Becoming aware of the self-sabotage, I set a firm intention to accept and learn from the situation—even the pain it caused—in order to expand my heart rather than constrict it. Only an expansive heart can be aware of and receive good.

Resistance:

- is constricting
- is a form of control
- imprisons us in pain
- tries to rewrite what was/is
- cramps both soul and psyche

"Yes, *but...*" are Lady Resistalot's favorite words.

Letting Go:

- is expansive
- is an expression of acceptance
- illuminates the path to healing
- helps us relax into what was/is
- is freeing

"Ah, so, I accept that..." is a good letting go mantra for we Healing Humans.

Letting Go Honors Your Experience

In lieu of discounting feelings, I believe the practice of letting go and moving on honors the strength, resilience, wisdom, and compassion gleaned from searing experiences. Letting go allows us to return to the here and now where *real* life and abundant joy reside.

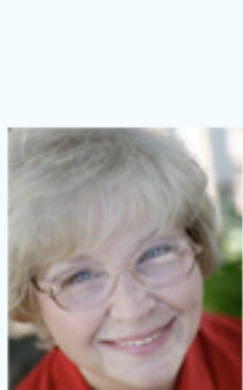
Give Yourself the Gift of Letting Go during the Holidays

If it feels right, let go of

- should's and have to's
- spending too much money
- unrealistic expectations
- doing too much
- sleeping too little
- over imbibing
- the need to be a Martha Stewart clone
- _____ (your favorites)

and enjoy a beautiful, gratitude-laced Thanksgiving and truly blessed Holy-days!

With much love and many hugs,



Sue