

Servant Leadership Today

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In this Issue

[Forgive and Be Thankful](#)

[On Sale Now! - "Stand Tall"](#)

Quick Links

[More About Us](#)
[Servant Leadership Blog](#)

[PI Event Calendar](#)

[The Bridge Newsletter](#)

[Journey Newsletter](#)



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→ Forgive and Be Thankful

Human beings are not perfect-not your employees, your co-workers, your supervisor, your significant other, nor your kids. People will let you down and sometimes in the worst way. That is why the act of forgiveness, just like love, is essential to being a leader. If you don't think of yourself as a leader, you are. The definition of leadership is the skill of influence and everyone has influence with at least one person.

I know what it's like to have an unforgiving heart. Years ago, I felt wronged by another individual, and it hurt me immensely. I held a grudge against this person for a long time. That is until I learned better.

For starters, I realized having an unforgiving heart really does hurt you more than the other person. I know it's a cliché to say but it's true. Think about it. While you go about the business of sulking and having pity parties with anyone who will listen (which is probably very few), the other person, more than likely, continues to live his life as if everything is A-OK. That's what happened to me. I remember vividly telling anyone who would listen how bad the other person was and how he did me wrong. As a result, I found myself being just as mean and evil-spirited as the person I was accusing.

That is just one of the reasons why having an unforgiving heart is a waste of time. Why obsess over the matter and give it so much energy? Think of all the things you could be doing instead of worrying or wishing ill will on another person. Why not count your blessings and be thankful for the opportunities just around the corner that are awaiting you?

I also know while you are choosing not to forgive there is the possibility that he may not even know how you feel

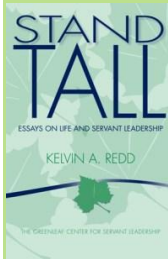


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about him and he may not care. On the other hand, maybe he does, but at this moment, we're not talking about him, we're talking about you.

In conclusion, I'd like to leave you with "A Pastoral Prayer" given by the Reverend, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1956 when he spoke these words, "We thank thee, O God, for the spiritual nature of man. We are in nature but we live above nature. Help us never to let anybody or any condition pull us so low as to cause us to hate. Give us strength to love our enemies and to do good to those who spitefully use us and persecute us."

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Stand Tall: Essays on Life and Servant Leadership

by Kelvin A. Redd

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