

Part II: Emotional Cleansing

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In our last issue we discussed the importance of carrying out an emotional cleansing. An emotional cleansing can be best described as detoxifying the mind of negative feelings and emotions. These emotions and feelings usually affect the way we feel about ourselves and the way we feel about and interact with others. Experts believe that unexpressed and suppressed feelings and emotions can impact a person's emotional, physical and spiritual health. This does not mean that if we have these feelings we will not be able to function "normally". What it does mean is that we may spend a lifetime carrying excess emotional baggage that we should get rid of. Sometimes we even invest considerable energy trying to convince ourselves, and others that we are OK and that these experiences have had no impact on us whatsoever. A self-assessment of one's feelings and emotions is critical for determining the time for an emotional detox.

However, I must alert you with the following disclaimer: emotional cleansing can and will bring up uncomfortable feelings because it forces you to look back at life experiences that you would rather put behind you. If you feel depressed and this is accompanied by feelings of fear, deep sadness or extreme anxiety that you cannot deal with on your own, you might want to seek help. In other words, when you feel overwhelmed by emotional or psychological issues, it is in your best interest to seek the help of a competent mental health practitioner and or join a support group. Feeling incapable of handling thoughts or memories of past events could signal that you have experienced deep trauma as a consequence of those life experiences.

Trauma can be defined as a profound emotional upset that one cannot shake off. It impacts the way one behaves, resulting in severe mental or emotional stress. Traumas often stem from neglect, abandonment or abuse; sometimes suffered as far back as early childhood. In such cases, we cannot overemphasize the importance of securing professional help to assist you in overcoming the mental turmoil caused by these traumatic events.

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Nevertheless, emotional cleansing is not only for those who have suffered deep emotional trauma. Emotional cleansing is for anyone who feels that they are experiencing issues stemming from past experiences, encounters or relationships. If a memory or thought of a person or situation brings up feelings of resentment, anger, guilt or anxiety, you are stuck in the past; its time for an emotional cleansing.

In our last issue we offered the first two steps to begin cleansing. Step 1: Begin with self-analysis. How did you get to this place emotionally? What exactly about the experience makes you feel upset? Are your feelings justified? Step 2: Is it difficult since our first reaction is to blame the person who hurt us. But, we suggest that you stop blaming them. Is there a possibility that you may have contributed, in words or actions, to the misunderstanding or conflict? Then you should accept responsibility for your part. The next two steps to carry out your emotional cleansing are:

Step 3: **Reject the idea that you are a victim.** When you see yourself as a victim you render yourself powerless. You may find yourself in a situation where you are or were taken advantage of, once or twice, but you need to take the decision not to allow it to happen a third time to you. Take back the power and do what you need to do to protect yourself. It means that you can no longer expect your victimizer to change; the responsibility to be stronger and prevent any further recurrence now lies with you.

Step 4: **Purge your mind of resentment.** Whatever happened to you in the past should remain in the past. Deal with it, let it go and put it down. Don't just walk away and claim that you have moved on. We rarely do. Deal with it, let it go and put it down. Carrying pain from the past into your present is not healthy. Carrying resentment and un-forgiveness towards people who have hurt you only hurts you more.

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