

## A Prayer for Release

*Do not give dogs that which is sacred; and do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.*

Matthew 7:6

I release everyone and everything today.  
I let go of fear and it no longer exists in my life.  
I let go of doubt and it evaporates like the nothing that it is.  
I release the people that I might be holding onto.  
I release everyone and everything today.

I release the past.  
I release poverty and impoverished thoughts.  
I release illusions, disillusion, doubt, and fear.  
I release the pain of wanting.  
I release the image of hunger and the burden of needing, and let it fall away.  
I release the pain of being different,  
of not wanting to fit in,  
of not fitting in,  
of past inadequacies,  
of poor self-image,  
of criticism by others.

I release my parents.  
I release the illnesses and the challenges of family members.  
I release the burden of fighting and the fights themselves.

I release loneliness.  
I release struggle.

I release those who have harmed or hurt me in any way.  
I release unwanted touches and condemning words.  
I release every lie ever told.  
I release every secret ever held.  
I release the need to please others.  
I release loved ones to travel their own paths.

I release worry and fear.  
I release any feelings of inadequacy.  
I release the need to purchase.  
I release the fear of failure and success.  
I release clutter and lack of organization and lack of discipline.  
I release caring about what others think.  
I release needing what others can give me.

I let go of everyone and everything that is not for my highest good.  
I let them fall like weights off my body and soar forward like the eagle that I am.  
I release fear and trepidation.  
I release pettiness and resentment.  
I release people in past relationships to live their greatest good  
and I move forward unencumbered.  
I release wasting my time with foolishness.

I release yesterday's self-imposed limits.  
I release someone else's definition of what I can do.  
I release and let go.  
I release clutter, the excess in my life, my home, my space.  
I bless it and let it go.

I release the pain of transformation  
and let it be the happiness and joy that it is.

Sometimes the most difficult aspect of releasing is recognizing that we need to let something or someone go. Sometimes, even when we receive a message directly from Spirit through obvious signs and intuitions or through the quiet murmurings of our hearts or minds, many of us still fail to liberate ourselves because we choose to ignore the guidance we receive. For example, I spent years asking Spirit whether I should leave a bad relationship. Spirit kept telling me yes, but I kept ignoring the message. I was hoping and praying that I would hear something different. I never did. Despite Spirit's repeated message, I kept casting my pearls before swine.

When we ignore a clear directive from Spirit, we suffer the consequences. No matter how sacred our attachment appears to be, we will not be able to live our lives in integrity if we ignore Spirit's guidance. We will remain stuck in the same existence, repeating the same behavior until we learn the lesson that enables us to move forward. Some of us learn our lessons quickly. Others of us take years to learn that we need to stop repeating the same mistakes. Some of us take lifetimes. I believe that the soul has the opportunity to repeat its experience in an earthly human body by making the journey again and again until it experiences the full salvation of the Christ consciousness. I do not believe that the loving consciousness of God would send us to hell if we failed during our first attempt but that we choose different bodies and experiences and even families to provide us with the opportunity to raise our consciousness into a heavenly realm of Christ consciousness.

Many teach that until salvation is attained, each soul has the ability to generate a new body temple until it fully demonstrates the Christ life. It makes a lot of sense that we get more than a single life-span. Reincarnation is the only explanation that I have regarding why some people are "old souls." When my niece Christa was born, for example, I could tell that she had a much deeper understanding of people and situations than a being would have who had just arrived for the first time. I also believe that

the number of journeys taken and lessons learned through our many lifetimes are what makes some of us much more receptive to Spirit. Releasing and letting go is what the soul needs to do in order to raise its consciousness.

I knew from the start of my first marriage, which lasted for fifteen years, that something was wrong. On the outside, we appeared to be a vibrant, happy couple, enjoying the same profession and its abundance and prosperity. We became visible, vocal leaders in our community of lawyers. Beyond our professional discussions however, there was little communication, affection, or intimacy. We only appeared to be compatible, but in fact were extremely unhappy. By my eighth year of marriage, I began praying and meditating in order to bring harmony to an otherwise stagnant relationship. Nothing changed in the relationship with my ex-husband, but I began to change in my relationship with myself. I began to appreciate myself more and started to become more focused on what God called me to do. I used affirmations. I shouted affirmations. I did everything I could to center myself in Spirit. The more centered I became, the more I realized that I had to leave. Spirit told me there was someone better in store, but I kept looking at the appearances of things. I was terrified of leaving my life as I had known it.

I had read statistics about the unavailability of single African American men and the number of African American women without partners. I did not want to be a statistic. We had been a “power couple” on the surface, but behind closed doors, we were unhappy. As time passed and my unhappiness grew, I became determined to live with integrity. I began to re-examine my life and be honest about what I saw.

Our integrity is so important that nothing is too great to sacrifice for it. When we put Spirit, which is the foundation of integrity, first in our lives, we pay the price by giving up anyone, anything, or any situation that prevents us from being true to ourselves. The truth was that I wanted my marriage to succeed so badly that I turned a blind eye to obvious signs that it was not

working. I wanted to believe that we would be partners for life. We had helped each other create professional and social personas. We purchased material things together: cars, homes, expensive vacations, and dinners. It was those things that gave the illusion of my being comfortable. The comfort of dinners at the best restaurants, expensive clothes, a beautiful duplex apartment, a house in the Hamptons, a luxury sports car, furs, vacations abroad, all the trappings of a successful life could be so seductive; but they merely gave the appearance of happiness. Many of us feel safe in the acquisition of things and the facade of togetherness. But no matter how good the material things feel, you cannot ignore being unhappy. You cannot worry about what others will say and think of your divorce and lose sight of how you feel.

I was lonely, and I longed for a warmer, more fulfilling companionship, which seemed impossible. My desire for what seemed impossible slowly began to cloud my view of myself. Perhaps I was not good enough for a better relationship, I had thought. My self-esteem had suffered.

Spirit always reveals to us what we need to know if we listen. Sometimes the answers show up in strange and unpleasant ways: we get ill, we get fired, we lose a family member, we fall into debt. Any number of things can occur that make us feel so uncomfortable that we have no alternative but to propel ourselves forward.

The baggage I refused to release began to manifest through physical ailments. Between the long hours I spent at my office and the misery of my marriage, I ate to dull the pain and put on an incredible amount of weight. The physical and emotional pain I experienced forced me to deal with the source of my suffering.

During this time, I read spiritual books and attended classes at the Unity Center of New York. The more I centered in Spirit, the more I realized that I was not being true to myself and I was not listening to what Spirit was calling me to do.

Spirit sometimes takes the form of energy that moves us through our changes at a divinely ordered pace. Spiritual energy may catapult us into a space of transformation despite our reluc-

tance to be there. If we listen to Spirit, rather than ignore it, we can be more compassionate with ourselves on our unique spiritual journey and more patient with the process that has to take place.

In Genesis 19:19–26, the Biblical witness tells us that the angels led Lot, his wife, and his two daughters safely out of the city of Sodom, and as soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, “Flee for your lives! Don’t look back, and don’t stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!” ... By the time Lot reached [a place of safety] ... the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the Lord out of the heavens. Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, including those living in the cities ... But Lot’s wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.”

This story teaches that when we cannot release the past, when we cannot let go of it and look back, we stagnate ourselves. We cannot move forward when we are holding onto to what used to be; we cannot simultaneously move forward and remain in the past.

In this is a prayer that we stop looking back and that when our lives need to change, we release the people and situations that we need to release to move forward in growth. This is a prayer that we have the courage and energy and strength to let go of the past and begin with a clean slate. We can always move forward with the strength of the Divine, which is always present within us. We are always complete as individuals; true love comes through our unconditional love for community. When we realize our connection to community and our oneness through the Spirit, we will be blessed with the perfect, divine companion. Companionship is simply an opportunity to give the love that we are already expressing for ourselves. Our relationships can only be as fulfilling as we can perceive them to be and they can only offer us what we can give to ourselves. When I realized this, I was ready to release my ex-husband and free myself to live and move and have my being as the glorious woman that Spirit created.

The strength it takes to do the right thing ultimately strengthens us; the wisdom we draw on to make the right decisions contributes to our enlightenment. When we release those who do not support our spiritual growth, we ultimately free ourselves. We can let go only when we are willing to face whatever pain we may feel and make peace with the fact that it exists and it is there to teach us something important. When we harbor resentment or attempt to do harm to the person causing our pain, we hurt only ourselves because our misdeeds and negative thoughts block the flow of our own good. Trying to get revenge or refusing to forgive just dissipates our energy and causes us more suffering than the person we are attempting to harm. The true source of our pain is our failure to let go because release of the past is the lesson that life is trying to teach us.

I had begun to think that I didn't deserve a good marriage, which had created a lack of self-esteem until I managed to uplift my consciousness in the realization that I am God's beloved daughter, in whom God is well-pleased. Once I uplifted my consciousness, I no longer felt emotionally and physically abandoned because I realized the love of God. Thus, when I was finally divorced, I was able to remain centered in that love. I released my ex-husband for everything in my life that I had blamed on him, but release did not happen in an instant. One obstacle was the inability of my friends and family to release him. Eventually, however, my ability to release him freed them as well, and they began to follow my example.

After our divorce, I needed to be alone to purge the toxins and emotional scars that had accumulated. No matter how much support we receive, at some point we need to spend time alone, in stillness, in order to heal. No one can do it for us. After my marriage ended, I intentionally spent time in solitude before dating again to allow the healing to take place. I had not planned for any specific length of time to do this, but two years was how long I had ended up needing.

When you meet a prospective mate, recognize that what you see is what you get. Changing ourselves is difficult enough. Others change in their own time, and sometimes change can take lifetimes. Not everyone is in touch with his or her capacity to give love, intimacy, affection, and support, and that inability to give has nothing to do with us. Other people's issues are not our fault. We should not allow ourselves to be manipulated by them nor feel miserable because of them. We should not struggle to please anyone. If a relationship is not working, we have to be honest with ourselves and get out of it.

As I moved forward, I continued to release the past. I began to accept that through my marriage, I had developed discipline, stamina, persistence, and determination. Our marriage had ended, yet the marriage had been a success because we had grown as individuals during its time span. We had definitely grown far apart and even further apart through the years, but we were able to continue life's journey along separate paths as better people because of the time we spent together.

Only when we are able to release and let go, fully realizing that the love in which we live and move and have our being is not based on people but Spirit, are we able to connect with our true potential. When we surrender, we let go and we let God. We trust that God will take care of us; we have done the best that we can do, and we trust God to do the rest. When we trust in Spirit, we know that nothing in the past can harm us. The future beckons us to our greatness, but the present is the moment when Spirit manifests before our very eyes, calling us to move out of our own way and allow ourselves to be blessed.