



Essential Energy

Cyndi Dale

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The Self-Forgiving Practitioner

I have a fairly blunt friend with whom I was discussing my client work a while ago. I was not actually irritated with my clients. Instead, I was down on myself for a slew of professional imperfections.

The laundry list was long and started with forgetting to email a link to a querying client. Shortly after that anomaly, I blanked out a client's name at a store. A few days later, I received an angry call from a workshop attendee. I had been too exhausted to tend to her needs after leading a weekend workshop and she thought I should have stayed longer. On top of that, my mother fell ill. While bouncing from hospital to home and back again, I had to reschedule several clients. I do not like to do that. Even the dogs were looking at me sideways. You know that you are off your game when your position as the "dogs' best friend" is threatened.

In response to my self-critical litany, my friend said only this: *Sounds like you need to forgive yourself for not being a god.*

She was right.

Many of us were raised to not only "do it all," but to do so perfectly. In my family, there was not a lot of choice in the matter. My parents were inconsistent in their attention yet indubitably demanding. In terms of housekeeping alone, I had to literally pass a "white glove test" after the daily dusting duty

before I could go outside and play. Funny how my mom's gloves appeared snowflake-bright after checking my sisters' work and were iron-worker gray following my evaluation.

But the tasks did not end there. If every weed was not pulled out by the root, I would be assigned double-duty the next gardening day. My parents did not take kindly to my creative protestations, which included insisting that dandelions were really flowers. As for cooking? My approval rating was not even on the scale. I still remember getting grounded for the meatloaf composed of more ketchup than meat and the baked potatoes that were brick hard. Did I mention that I had actually forgotten to put them in the oven?

Needless to say, I have put all of that behind me as an adult. I own exactly one plant, which is grown in water near the sink, and I consider dust devils a mark of intelligence. After all, you have to be doing something important if your house is a little under the weather. As for the science of cooking? I once overheard my kids talking about which of their mother's speed-dial take-out restaurants were their favorites.

Okay, I get it. Avoidance of disliked activities does not exactly indicate that I have recovered from familial perfectionism, but it does show that I kept my wits about me by not turning into June Cleaver, the iconic mother from the "Leave it to Beaver" show, who managed to run a household in heels and pearls. I am sure that you have your own family perfectionism to battle. These days, the true battleground of self-critical perfectionism applies to my healing business, not my housekeeping.

The healing profession is naturally replete with "hyper-expectations." Most people believe that the doctor knows and cures all. Although those of us in the energetic modalities are not usually full-on physicians, the same hopes are frequently projected onto us. Quite simply, our clients want us to make them well, and not just a little better, but "all the way" well. Because we have big hearts, clients might believe that we can also take away all their pain. And those of us who employ our intuition or spiritual principles in our work are often burdened with an additional idealism. Our clients often assume, or at least wish, that we have access to all the answers. These types of hyper-standards can easily conjoin with any predisposition toward perfectionism to formulate an overwhelming set of unrealistic professional expectations.

I am a true advocate of professional excellence. However, my friend's statement pointed out that I do not need to forget that I am a normal human being just because I want



to provide quality client service. I might be a divine spark, but I am also a standard human being, not a “special issue” action figure. I am not Superman or Superwoman, or even a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle. It is as important to embrace my humanity as it is to express my divinity.

Because of my friend’s statement, I decided that I needed to forgive myself. I am not saying that I had to forgive myself because I was a “bad care provider” when too tired to help a client when off-duty. What I needed to do was to forgive myself literally.

The word “forgiveness” can be broken into two root words: “for” and “give.” We could also spell the first word in this way: “fore.” The term “fore” means “previous.” “Give” means what it sounds like—to release, give back or give away. What if forgiveness might sometimes involve the need to “give away that which came before?”

When we are able to “give away” or release ourselves from previously-imprinted perfectionistic programs, such as those generated by our family, religion, culture or another group, we create the space needed to arrive at our own essential value system. In my case, this activity has allowed me to better value myself, not only others. By releasing

ourselves from the long-time perfectionism applied to the healing profession, we can ironically, shine even more brightly. We can spend our energy where it counts, using our gifts in the ways that they excel. We can inform clients about what is realistic rather than unrealistic, and through our honesty, invite their own acceptance of human imperfection and the adventure that comes along with it. And we can roll better with the punches, for life certainly comes with those.

This definition of forgiveness is not the only one, but I have found that it is invaluable when used to transform self-criticism into self-acceptance. And who knows, I might find even more household duties I can give up, guilt-free! €



Cyndi Dale is the author of *The Subtle Body: An Encyclopedia of Your Energetic Anatomy*, and eight other bestselling books on energy healing. She has worked with over 30,000 clients in the past 20 years. To learn more about Cyndi, her work, books and products please visit: www.cyndidale.com.