

## The Most Common Reasons We Struggle to LET GO

Deciding to LET GO of the past is easy. Committing oneself to move on from our painful memories and negative emotions is simple.

But actually **doing** it is the difficult part.

If a past incident, failed relationship, regrettable decision, or personal grudge bothers us to the point that we obsess over it, our fixation means we consider it important. It doesn't matter whether it IS truly important to us. We BELIEVE it to be so. This conviction makes it difficult to LET GO, no matter how emotionally taxing it is to cling to it.

There are numerous reasons why we resist LETTING GO of the thoughts, emotions, and memories that cause us emotional stress. In this short section we'll explore those that have the strongest influence over us. You'll recognize some of them immediately. They may even be the cause of your current struggle to LET GO of a particular issue or grievance. Other reasons may be unfamiliar to you, or even seem peculiar to you. But you might discover after learning more about them that they, too, are contributing to your struggle.

Once we recognize WHY our mind resists LETTING GO, we can start the hard (but ultimately rewarding) work of breaking down the resistance. And that's the point at which we can truly begin to abandon our emotional fixation to the past, along with all the pain, stress, and anguish that accompanies it.

## WE FEAR THE PROSPECT OF CHANGE

*"If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we aren't really living."*

ANATOLE FRANCE

CHANGE is scary. When confronted with it, we fear the uncertainty that accompanies it. Our mind immediately begins to ask questions from a place of concern and anxiety. . . .

- What will this change mean to my life?
- What do I stand to lose as a result?
- Will I be able to adjust to the new circumstances?
- Will I lose control of any aspect of my life?
- Will I be forced to take on more responsibilities?
- Will this change increase the likelihood of my failure?
- Will the new circumstances highlight my shortcomings and deficiencies?

And so our mind begins to **RESIST**. Rather than embrace change, we try to repel it. We prefer the status quo, even if the status quo is a state of misery for us. We are familiar with this state. Although

we are unhappy, we fool ourselves into believing we can continue to tolerate it.

When we let go of something, we open ourselves to the possibility of living without it. While this change is liberating, we still fear the uncertainty that accompanies it. After all, we've held on to the PAIN for a long time. We identify with it. It makes us unhappy, but it's familiar to us. Abandoning it is new and scary.

Relinquishing the PAST encourages us to face this FEAR. Although doing so makes us feel vulnerable, it's a crucial step toward detaching ourselves from the upsetting memories and distressing emotions that burden us.

When we're able to embrace the prospect of CHANGE, we can start whittling away at our natural resistance to it. That's when we know that we are finally ready to surrender the thing that's been holding us back.

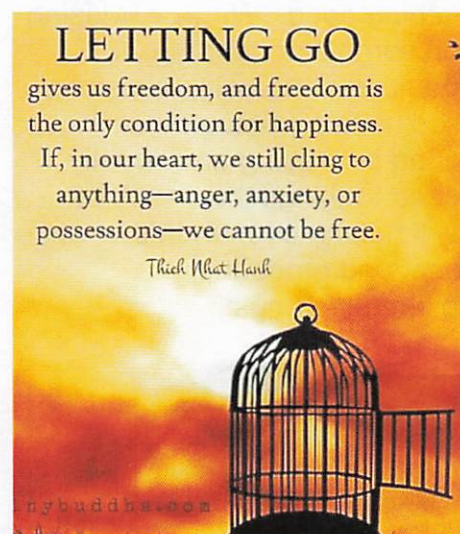
Furthermore, something amazing happens as we continue to embrace the CHANGE: our confidence grows. Rather than dreading the uncertainty that accompanies CHANGE, we start to believe that we CAN adapt to it. As a result, LETTING GO becomes progressively easier.

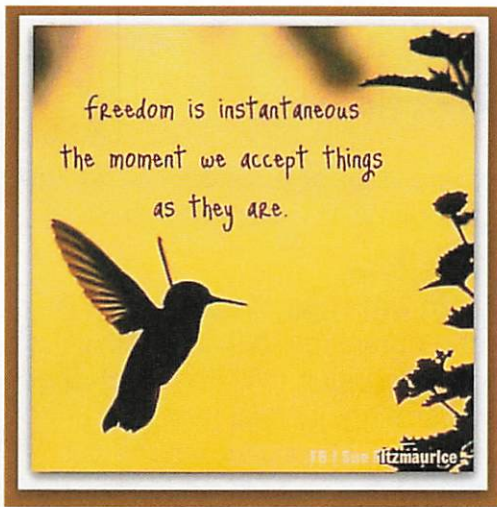
## WE FEAR THE LOSS OF OPPORTUNITY

*"Fear of missing out is the enemy of valuing your own time."*

ANDREW YANG

We often hold onto negative emotions and unpleasant memories because we dread the possibility that we'll miss out on





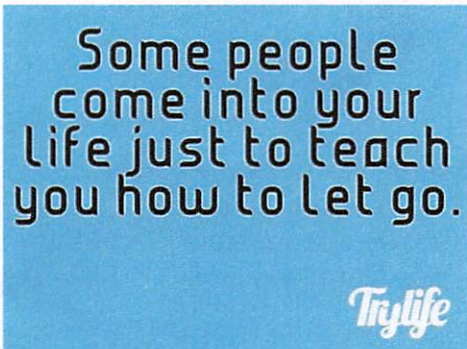
potential positive experiences associated with them.

For example, we cling emotionally to a failed relationship, refusing to let it go because we hope to somehow salvage it. Or we remain fixed on our decision to abandon a college degree because we hope to one day go back to school to acquire it. Or we dwell on a failed business venture, convinced it failed due to poor timing, and dream of restraining it when the time is right.

This is known as the fear of missing out, or FOMO.

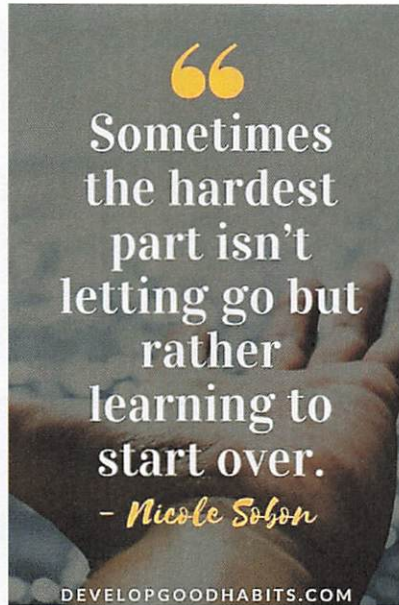
FOMO affects us in many ways. Sometimes, it prevents us from making commitments since doing so limits our options. Other times, it spurs us to constantly check our phones and instinctively say "Yes" to others' offers and invitations. Or we spend money we can't afford because we don't want to miss out on experiences that others are enjoying.

In the context of LETTING GO of the past, FOMO encourages us to



remain emotionally attached. If there's even the slightest chance that we can reverse or rectify a regrettable decision or situation, we hold on to the modicum of hope.

We tell ourselves that we're simply keeping our options open. But in truth, we're despicably clinging to a desire to "make things right." In doing so, we rob ourself of the opportunity to LET GO and more on with our life. We prevent ourself from enjoying the personal gratification that accompanies other experiences, relationships, and success.



The main stumbling block associated with the fear of missing out is found in its name: FEAR. We FEAR moving on. We FEAR missing a chance to experience something good. We FEAR losing out on something that *might* happen. Unfortunately, this anxiety causes us to perpetuate our suffering by staying emotionally attached to things that make us *ILL* will help to counter this mindset and erode the corresponding angst.



Today, I will let myself enjoy life as I go through my day.

- MELODY BEATTIE

