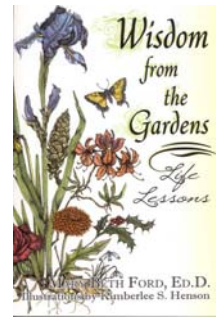




Dr. Mary Beth Ford's



Garden Wisdom Secrets

Forgiveness and Holistic Healing: Nature Wisdom on Letting Go

We hold on to memories about ways that someone has hurt us or hurt someone we love. Or perhaps we are the one who did the hurting. We struggle to forgive others and ourselves. Forgiveness takes an act of the will that sometimes does not come easily. Nature wisdom can help us see forgiveness as a way of letting go.

Holistic healing through forgiveness is both a paradox and a gift.

Forgiveness is a gift that brings healing to the giver and to the world. We see an external world of pain and suffering and forgive the thought that our Creator wills this pain for others. We feel an internal world of pain and suffering and forgive the thought that our Creator wills this pain for us. We think about how to see a hurtful act or situation from another perspective. We release our expectations for an apology or changed behavior. It is a paradox that forgiveness heals your own mind, as well as the minds of those you forgive. Forgiveness brings the gift of healing to body, mind and spirit. *Forgiveness is a way of letting go.*

Nature wisdom shows us the link between letting go and growth.

Bulbs planted deep in the soil of an earthly womb remind us that letting go is about darkness and mystery. Only through this dark process can bulbs grow and emerge as the springtime harbingers of new life. Rose bushes require pruning. Pruning is also a way of letting go. Pruning creates strength and new growth, but only if done wisely. Nature shows us the link between letting go and growth. But often we refuse to let go. We lack trust and fear uncertainty. Sometimes the events in our lives help us with letting go. They force us to face darkness and mystery. But they also build courage and strength for the journey ahead. *Letting go is part of spiritual growth.*

Science and nature wisdom reveal the benefits of letting go.

Doctors now recognize negative emotions as risk factors for illness, such as heart attack and stroke. According to a recent study, about 30% of 200 stroke patients experienced strong negative emotions, such as fear or anger, in the two hours preceding the onset of symptoms. *Nature images show us the need to let go for growth.* They can help us change our response to stressful people and situations. And science shows us the need to do so.

Letting go is at the heart of any spiritual journey. Yet we cling with such tenacity to our petty wills and our need for control. We wrestle in vain with the question, "Why?" We forget that change and mystery are present in nature and present in our lives. They are an integral part of all growth, along with timing and resilience. *Letting go is an act of faith.*