Forgiveness by Sue Craanen

Forgiveness can be one of the most difficult challenges we face throughout our lives. By practicing forgiveness, we not only maintain our own mental and physical health but create healthier relationships with those around us.

It is hard for us to grasp, but one can forgive without excusing the act that hurt us. When we let go of the bitterness and ugliness, we open our hearts to feelings of understanding and compassion for those who may have caused us the harm.

Forgiveness brings peace, a peace that allows you to continue living your life. It reduces the anger, hurt, depression and stress that may have been allowed into your life. Thus, allowing one to embrace optimism, hope, compassion and self-confidence in oneself.

In addition, forgiveness can lead to:

- Healthier relationships
- Greater spiritual and psychological well-being
- Less stress, anxiety and hostility
- Lower blood pressure
- Fewer symptoms of depression
- Stronger immune system
- Improved heart health
- Higher self-esteem

As spring approaches and life seems anew, let us renew a heart filled with kindness and compassion. Let go of grudges that hold you back. Live and enjoy the present. Embrace forgiveness and you embrace peace, hope, gratitude and joy.