



### ADVANCED LEVEL RITUAL: RESENTMENT-TO-ACCEPTANCE

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Name an authority figure (mom, dad, surrogate parent, teacher) from childhood whom you resent most.

This will be the person you will refer to for this next exercise (if you are unable to identify anyone from your childhood but you have someone in mind from your adult life, you can do this exercise using them).

Now, sometimes resentment stems from unforgivable acts, such as abuse, neglect or when a whole group of people have been systematically marginalized and abused. If that applies in your case, ask yourself if you’re giving your abuser more energy than they deserve. Is the resentment you feel sucking your life force from you? If you can lift the resentment, it may free you to channel some of that energy in more productive ways—perhaps even change systems that perpetuate dysfunctional behavior like racism, sexism, antisemitism, and homophobia. Instead of attempting compassion or forgiveness (some things just simply aren’t forgivable), *acceptance* may allow you to release the stuck energy that could be put to better use in your life. It’s a tall order but perhaps, over time, we can lift each other up if we keep pressing forward.

Abuse and biases aside, if you resent someone from your adult life, such as an ex-wife or ex-husband, and you spend a tremendous amount of your precious time resenting them, you might as well have stayed with him or her because he or she is continuing to suck the joy from your life.

Apply the following exercise with a person you're feeling resentment toward:

Reflect on the person you resent most. Go back as far as you can to recall the earliest memory when you felt resentment or anger toward them. Complete the exercise by writing as many examples of why you resent them.

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
<i>I resent (X) for...</i>	<i>Instead (X) should have...</i>	<i>How am I different than (X)...</i>	<i>How am I similar to (X) (radical honesty here!)</i>

## Let's get deeply curious:

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Close your eyes and imagine this person when he/she was a young child. Now imagine yourself at that same age, sitting there right next to him/her. Take your time imagining the two of you there, together as young children. Ask him/her: *Tell me how life is for you?* Listen closely to their answer. Does it give you a window into the forces that shaped his/her external and emotional life?

Write down what insights you received from this exercise. Take your time. Answer the following question:

What might've been in the way of them meeting my needs—the needs you listed in column two?

Reflecting on your experience in this ritual, are you feeling? Is it anger? Compassion? Understanding? Can you see any similarities between the two of you? Write them down here:

Is your resentment or envy holding you back today? If so, how is it impacting your relationships, including with this person? What's one thing you have the power to change that would liberate you from resentment or envy in this and other relationships?