

Ho'oponopono is a simple practice of forgiving anyone, anytime, anywhere

Please forgive me

■ By Seema Khaneja

SINCE MY SENIOR YEAR in high school, I have explored many different spiritual practices. I recall reading my first book on affirmations by Louise Hay, which kindled a fire in my belly to learn all I could about the connection between my mind, my body and my spirit. This led to many spiritual teachers and books that taught me about meditation, sacred scriptures, devotion, silence, mindfulness, chanting and yoga. Yet over the past year it has become clear to me that all of these practices serve one goal—to be able to experience a radical forgiveness—of myself and everyone in my life. It is so clear to me now that peace of mind is the most natural outcome of forgiveness. And it is impossible to be at peace without forgiveness.





Overlooking the faults of others is a good place to start but often we can forgive yet not forget. The memory of a hurt lives on in our psyche, and a past unforgiven relationship may cast shadows that penetrate into our present and extend far into our future.

Tapping into the inner healer

Ho'oponopono [*ho-o-pono-pono*] is an ancient Hawaiian practice of reconciliation and forgiveness that requires our willingness to question our perceptions about everything and everyone and allow the Truth to be remembered. What is this Truth? It is what all the great spiritual traditions have taught and all the mystics have sung. That beneath all the appearance of guilt, shame, blame, sickness,

this ancient Hawaiian healing practice involving reconciliation and forgiveness.

When Dr. Hew Len arrived at the hospital, it was a dangerous place to work. All of the seclusion rooms were occupied with violent patients. The attendants and doctors working in the ward would walk with their backs against the wall, afraid of being attacked by patients. Psychologists quit on a monthly basis. Among the staff, there was a high absenteeism rate.

During this time, Dr. Len didn't do any therapy on the patients. He would walk through the ward, and review the patient's files, not for the purpose of therapy but to see what was there for him to clean up inside himself. He noticed that as he worked on himself,

consciousness as one whole, so any error that we clear in our own consciousness we clear for everyone around us."

The process of Ho'oponopono

Below is the prayer that Dr. Len repeated as he worked in the hospital ward:

I am sorry: I am sorry that I do not see your Divine Self—the place of purity and innocence. I accept responsibility for the error that lies in my perception. And I am now open to seeing you differently. I am willing to change my mind so that the Truth of who you really are may be revealed to me.

Please forgive me: I seek forgiveness for the mistakes in my perception whereby I see lack,

way to stop the monkey-mind and ask for forgiveness and correction of our thoughts in that moment. It is a sort of mental cleansing so we can find our own inner balance again. From that place, the right action and the right words seem to flow naturally. It is an easy practice we can do anywhere and anytime. The other person need not be involved. All it needs is our willingness to change our minds and a sincere desire for peace.

People have used this practice in different settings and have experienced wonderful results. One woman who was having difficulty in relating to her husband found that practising this prayer helped her feel more peaceful about him

To change our reality, we have to change something within ourselves, so the errors we clear in our own consciousness, we clear for others as well

It is an easy practice we can do anywhere and anytime. The other person need not be involved. All it needs is our willingness to change our minds

and suffering is a wholeness, purity and innocence that can never be destroyed. This is not something that we can grasp with the intellectual, thinking mind that compares, catalogues and concludes—often sorting the world into those who hurt and those who are hurt.

Forgiveness is a washing away of all of our judgements by the Inner Healer that resides within each of us. We may call this the Buddha nature, or the Christ consciousness. We may know it as God or Krishna or Shiva or the Goddess—that part within us that is already whole, perfect and beautiful.

How it was discovered

In my study of forgiveness I came across a story which demonstrates how powerful Ho'oponopono can be. Dr. Hew Len is a psychologist who worked at the Hawaii State hospital in the high security ward for the criminally insane from 1983 to 1987. As per the evidence from the research, he cured an entire ward of mentally ill criminals using

patients began to heal. While looking at the files of these patients all he did was, keep saying repeatedly, "I am sorry" and "I love you".

Within a year and a half, all of the seclusion rooms had been shut down. After a few months, those patients who were shackled were allowed to walk freely while others who required heavy medication were able to taper off and some patients were even released. The staff absenteeism reduced as staff began to enjoy coming to work. Soon there were more staff members than needed because patients were released and eventually the ward closed.

The philosophy

"If we take complete responsibility for our life, everything we experience in any way would be our responsibility. The problem would not be with our external reality, it would be within us. To change our reality, we would have to change something within ourselves. It doesn't deny the reality of the consciousness of others. Instead it views all

guilt, powerlessness, pain, fear, or unworthiness in myself or others. This is not the Truth. Divine self, please allow Your Light to shine brightly inside me and clear away all darkness and ignorance inside my mind.

I love you: Only love is real and all else is false. I ask for a healing of my mind so that I may see you through the eyes of love and behold the radiance of the Divine Self within you, within me and within us all.

Thank you: Thank you for the opportunity to become aware of the errors in my perception. Thank you for being the catalyst for my reaching more deeply into my mind beneath the surface fear and lack to the place of healing and wholeness. As I allow my mind to be restored to the full awareness of Truth, I am healed. When I am healed, I am not healed alone for you are healed along with me.

Play with the practice

The Ho'oponopono prayer is a wonderful

and their relationship. She feels less judgmental towards him and can practice her spiritual path without needing to 'convert' him. Another client who is a university professor of neuroscience used this as a mantra while jogging and noted over time a long-standing calf injury healed. He then used this prayer to diffuse the stress he would experience at university faculty meetings where he would feel scrutinised for his ability to procure grants.

A single father who was struggling with depression found the prayer helpful to form a more solid connection with his teenage son. Others have also reported how saying this prayer before communication or after a discordant exchange is soothing and helps restore them to peace.

Play with this practice yourself. And don't be surprised if your world starts to change—for the better.



Seema Khaneja
MD is a physician with an integrative medical practice in Rochester, NY with a focus on homeopathy, yoga and mind-body medicine. She works with children and adults and also facilitates workshops in forgiveness. To learn more about her practice, visit www.drseemakhaneja.com She is currently working on a book on forgiveness based on A Course in Miracles.