



Two Buddhist monks return to their monastery after the rains. They reach a swollen river and in front of them is an extremely beautiful lady in a delicate silk kimono, distressed because she is unable to cross the river by herself. So, the older monk scoops her up, carries her safely to the other side and the two monks continue on their way in silence. Five hours later, as the two monks reach their destination, the younger monk, literally fuming, bursts out, "How could you do it? You touched a woman; you know we're not allowed to do that!" The older monk replies, "I put her down 5 hours ago, but you are still carrying her with you."

- The things we hold onto, bear grudges or perhaps feel angry and hurt about cloud our mind and prevent us from being the best we can be.
- Letting go usually involves some form of forgiveness or acceptance – whether it's yourself, someone else, a situation or even an unknown third party. The irony is that whatever you're holding onto, it's probably hurting or bothering you much more than it does anyone else.
- Letting go doesn't mean we condone a situation or behaviour; it's about lightening OUR load. Because when we let go of whatever is bothering us we set ourselves free and get to reclaim that energy for ourselves.
- You don't need to know HOW to let go, you just need to be WILLING. You can't change the past, but you can learn from it and change how you feel going forwards.
- And remember - whatever you find it hardest to let go of is probably what you need to let go of the most...

INSTRUCTIONS: While you may not wish to do anything about these right now, just listing what you need to let go of here will raise your level of awareness and you'll naturally begin to loosen your grip. So, simply list below what you're holding onto, what slows you down, what riles you up and anything that gets in the way of you being the best you can be...

What do I need to let go of?

How I benefit by 'holding on' *

1. ....	.....
2. ....	.....
3. ....	.....
4. ....	.....
5. ....	.....
6. ....	.....
7. ....	.....
8. ....	.....
9. ....	.....
10. ....	.....

Just for a second, imagine letting go of everything on this list. How does it feel?

What have I learned about myself from doing this exercise?

* If you're struggling with identifying a benefit (there must be *something* or you wouldn't be holding on to it) ask yourself, "What do I gain by keeping hold of this?" Perhaps by holding on to resentments, anger, hurt you don't need to accept your part in the situation, or perhaps it stops you from feeling how hurt you really were, maybe you get to stay in 'the right' or avoid dealing with someone.

TIP: If you need to let go of something YOU'VE done, simply ask, "What do I need to do that will allow me to let this go?" Perhaps you need to make notes in your journal of what you've learned, perhaps you need to make some kind of amends, apologise or find a meaningful way to make it up to yourself or someone else. While we can't change the past, we can make amends and learn from it.