

Why holding a grudge is bad for your health

March 27 2019, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—It's surprisingly easy to hold a grudge, but whether it involves a friend, a co-worker or a loved one, it can fill you with bitterness, keep you stuck in the past and even lead to anxiety or

depression.

That means you're the one suffering from the situation, and not necessarily the subject of your anger and irritation.

Besides the [emotional toll](#), researchers from Glasgow Caledonian University and Edinburgh Napier University, in Scotland, found that holding a grudge can also heighten feelings of physical pain, even if that pain has nothing to do with the incident in question. So, if your [lower back](#) is bothering you or you have the achiness of arthritis, your [pain](#) can feel worse if you're stewing over the grudge.

Letting go of a grudge starts with forgiveness. That doesn't mean you're excusing the [behavior](#) the other person exhibited, and you may never forget it, but if you can forgive the person for their mistake, you can break free of the hold he or she has had on your life.

The benefits are wide-ranging and immediate. Making a conscious decision to let go of the anger and resentment that keeps you rooted in the past will allow you to focus on your present and what's important to you today.

Letting go of grudges frees you to focus on the positive relationships in your life—the ones that bring you true happiness and contentment. It also lessens feelings of anxiety and hostility, while improving [self-esteem](#) and your health in general.

As you let go of grudges, they will no longer define you, and you'll feel like a burden has been lifted from your shoulders.

More information: Johns Hopkins Medicine has more about the [health benefits of forgiveness](#).

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