KESTON SCHOOL

RELATIONSHIPS · FREE SAMPLE

Release Old Grudges

Let go of old resentment, speak up when it matters and feel lighter

CHAPTER 1 + WORKBOOK SECTION

BEFORE YOU START

How to use this book

By the last page you will be able to name an old grudge clearly, decide whether to talk, release it or set a limit, and keep new resentments from building up, without pretending the hurt never happened.

1. Read one chapter at a time. Each one gives you a single idea and a single action.
2. Open the Release Old Grudges Workbook and complete the matching section while the chapter is fresh.
3. Do the “Try this” action within seven days. Reading changes what you know; the action changes what you do.
4. Finish with the checklist in chapter 12 and come back to it whenever you slip.

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CHAPTER 1

The Weight You Keep Carrying

Recognize the grudges you carry, how they show up in daily life, and why the usual ways of dealing with them rarely work.

Your phone lights up with a name, and your shoulders rise before you have read a word. It is your sister, or an old friend, or the colleague who took credit for your project two years ago. The message is ordinary. Can you bring the salad on Sunday? Are you free for coffee? Did you see the email from finance? But your reply comes out short and cool, and for the next hour your mind is back in that old scene, rehearsing what you should have said.

Nothing new has happened. The hurt is old. Yet it still decides how you feel, what you say and sometimes where you go. That is a grudge.

What a grudge looks like

Most people do not think of themselves as someone who holds grudges. The word sounds petty, like refusing to speak to a neighbor over a parking spot. In real life, grudges are usually quieter and more reasonable-looking than that. Something genuinely hurtful happened, and the hurt never found a place to settle.

Here are some common signs:

- **The replay.** The same scene runs through your head, often at night or in the shower, sometimes with new lines you wish you had said.
- **The coldness.** You are polite with the person, but there is a wall. You keep conversations short and safe.
- **The score.** You keep a mental list of what they did, and every new small thing gets added to it as more proof.
- **The detour.** You skip events, take longer routes or change plans so you do not have to see them.
- **The flare.** Something small they do now produces a reaction far bigger than the moment deserves.
- **The retelling.** You find yourself telling the story to new people, and it still makes your voice tight.

You might recognize one of these or all of them. You might carry one large grudge toward a parent or former partner, or several small ones toward friends and coworkers. None of this means you are a bad or bitter person. It means you were hurt and you are still carrying the weight.

Three fixes that usually fail

When people notice a grudge, they tend to reach for one of three solutions. Each one makes sense, and each one tends to keep the grudge alive.

1. Forgive and forget. You tell yourself to just get over it. You push the memory away whenever it comes up. The trouble is that a pushed-away hurt does not disappear. It waits. The next time the person is careless, the whole old story comes back with interest, and now you also feel annoyed at yourself for not being over it.

2. Wait for the apology. You decide you will let go once they admit what they did. This feels fair, and sometimes an apology does come. But it puts the key to your own peace in the other person's pocket. They may not remember the event the way you do. They may not think they did anything wrong. They may never bring it up. You can wait for years.

3. Have it out. You finally say everything, usually at the worst possible moment, after the third glass of wine or in the middle of an unrelated argument. Years of stored-up anger come out at once. The other person gets defensive, the conversation explodes, and now there is a new hurt on top of the old one.

What these three have in common is that none of them deals with the grudge itself. Forgetting avoids it. Waiting hands it to someone else. Exploding dumps it without sorting it. A grudge needs something more deliberate: a clear look at what happened, a decision about what to do, and a practice for loosening its grip.

> **Key idea:** A grudge is not a character flaw. It is an old hurt that never found a place to settle, and you can learn to settle it.

What this book will help you do

This book gives you a small set of tools that work for most everyday grudges, the kind you carry toward family, friends, partners, former partners and colleagues. You will learn to:

- see how a grudge holds on and what keeps it running;
- understand what letting go means and, just as important, what it does not mean;
- map a grudge in four lines so it becomes clear enough to act on;
- decide whether to talk about it, release it privately or adjust the relationship;
- loosen the replay with a few minutes of practice a day;
- stop new grudges from forming in the first place.

Letting go in this book never means pretending something was fine when it was not. It does not mean you have to stay close to someone, trust them again or let them treat you the same way. You can let go of a grudge and still keep a firm limit. Chapter 4 explains why those are separate decisions.

What this book is not

This is a practical guide for everyday resentment. It is not therapy, and it is not meant for situations of abuse, violence, threats or ongoing harm. If you are dealing with any of those, your first priority is your safety, not letting go, and the right support comes from people trained to help, such as a licensed counselor, a domestic violence service or, in an emergency, local emergency services.

If an old hurt is affecting your sleep, your work or your health for weeks at a time, or if it is tied to something traumatic, please consider talking to a doctor or a licensed mental health professional. Chapter 9 says more about when to reach out. The tools here can sit alongside that kind of support, never in place of it.

Try this

Within the next seven days, set a timer for ten minutes and make a quiet inventory. On a page or in the workbook, write:

1. The names of up to three people you still feel a tight, cold or angry reaction toward.
2. For each one, a single line on what happened, in plain words.
3. Which of the signs above you notice: replay, coldness, score, detour, flare or retelling.
4. A number from 1 to 10 for how much space each grudge takes up in an ordinary week.

Do not try to fix anything yet. Just look. Most people find that one grudge stands out as the heaviest, and that is the one to keep in mind as you read. Next, you will see what keeps a grudge running long after the event itself is over.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A grudge is an old hurt that keeps getting replayed in the present.
- Forgetting, waiting for an apology and exploding usually keep it alive.
- Letting go is a skill you can practice, step by step.

→ Workbook, section 1

01 The Weight You Keep Carrying

Take a quiet inventory of the grudges you carry.

FILL IN

My grudge inventory

Person	What happened, one line	Space per week 1-10

CHECKLIST

Signs I notice

- [ ] The replay
- [ ] The coldness
- [ ] The score
- [ ] The detour
- [ ] The flare
- [ ] The retelling

CHECKLIST

Fixes I have tried

- [ ] Forgive and forget
- [ ] Wait for the apology
- [ ] Have it out

The heaviest grudge, and why it stands out:

YOUR NEXT STEP

Want the whole book?

You just read chapter 1 of Release Old Grudges and tried the first workbook section. The full e-book has 12 chapters, a complete workbook and a final checklist. Here is everything inside:

01 The Weight You Keep Carrying

02 How a Grudge Holds On

03 What Resentment Costs You

04 Letting Go Is Not Letting Off

05 Map the Grudge

06 Talk, Release or Limit

07 Release It a Little Daily

08 Four Grudges, Four Paths

09 When the Anger Comes Back

10 Stop New Grudges Early

11 Lighter Over the Years

12 Mistakes & Checklist

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