



THE FREEDOM OF LETTING GO

By: Ajay Sheth



Ajay Sheth is a Trustee of the Quest Foundation and publisher/editor of the Ma Swami Prerna magazine. He has dedicated his life to serving others and making a positive impact in the world. But what truly sets Ajay apart is his commitment to being a practitioner of Effortless Awareness. He has mastered the art of living in the present moment, letting go of ego and conditioning, and embracing life with an open heart and mind. Through his Effortless Awareness practice, Ajay has cultivated a profound sense of inner peace, compassion, and wisdom. He radiates a warm and loving energy, touching the lives of all those around him.

At the age of fifty-two, when I met my Guru, MaSwami, for the first time, she noticed how easily I became irritated over small matters. Calmly, she would advise me: "Learn to let go and you will be a winner. If you know how to live, you can live even with your enemy. If you do not know how to live, you cannot live peacefully even with your own family." Her message was clear: move beyond the hurt, find emotional freedom, and restore inner peace by remaining calm and balanced in any situation.

Slowly, I began to understand something important: it was not the situation itself that made me unhappy, but my reaction to it. We often say, "What a terrible day," blaming the rain, the cold, or the wind. But these conditions simply exist as they are; we label them as 'terrible'. What causes suffering is our resistance to them and the resulting emotions. True freedom comes from learning to manage our reactions and break the chains of negativity.

Spiritual teacher Adyashanti explains this beautifully: the moment the mind says something should not have happened, we begin arguing with reality. But reality simply is what it is. When we judge or resist it, we create division within ourselves and that inner conflict becomes the source of our suffering. We have to learn to let go. However, "letting go" is one of the most misunderstood acts of courage. It is often mistaken for weakness, indifference, or defeat. In truth, letting go requires strength. It is a conscious decision to release what no longer serves our growth, peace, or purpose.

In a world that celebrates holding on - to ambitions, relationships, identities, and possessions - we are rarely taught the art of release. Yet life itself constantly reminds us of impermanence. Seasons change. Roles evolve. People drift apart. We need to realize that sometimes the most powerful step forward begins by loosening our grip.

Much of our resistance to letting go comes from our desire to control life. We replay old conversations, cling to past stories, and hold tightly to outcomes we once imagined. We believe that if we try harder or wait longer, things will return to how they once were. But control is often an illusion. We cannot control other people's choices, the passage of time, or the unfolding of circumstances. What we can control is our response, whether we choose resentment or acceptance, fear or trust.

When we look closely at life, we realize how little truly belongs to us. Our birth is arranged by others. Our name is given by others. Much of our income and recognition depends on others. Even our first and last bath in life is given by others. After death, our possessions, clothes, property, and valuables are all handled and distributed by others. Our funeral will be arranged by others, our final prayers said by others, and our resting place prepared by others.

Yet despite this truth, we spend much of our lives arguing, competing, and carrying unnecessary ego, pride, and resentment. We exhaust ourselves trying to prove we are better, richer, or more powerful than someone else, forgetting that life itself is temporary. Letting go is not giving up; it is choosing peace.

Instead, we must learn to live humbly, love deeply, and forgive freely. Life is too short to carry anger, jealousy, or ego. What ultimately remains after we are gone is not our wealth or status, but the kindness we leave behind. Letting go is the surest path to moving forward.

The art of letting go is about organizing the mess in our minds. For that, it is important not to dwell on the past or obsess over a future that may never occur, though this is easier said than done. We need to practice non-judgment and observe our emotions. We must untangle the toxic beliefs of urgency and danger that our brain creates. Techniques such as



“brain dumping” can help calm the mind, while learning to let go of perfectionism allows us to pursue excellence instead. Letting go does not mean we stop caring. It simply means we stop trying to control what lies beyond our influence.

Many of us carry heavy emotional burdens. Regret anchors us to the past. Anxiety pulls us toward an uncertain future. Grudges reopen old wounds again and again. These unresolved emotions drain our energy and cloud our peace of mind. It is important to move beyond the hurt and heal the past.

Letting go does not mean denying pain. It means acknowledging it fully and then refusing to let it define our future. Forgiveness, for example, is not about excusing someone else’s actions. It is about freeing ourselves from repeatedly reliving the hurt. When we release emotional baggage, we create space for joy, creativity, and new beginnings.

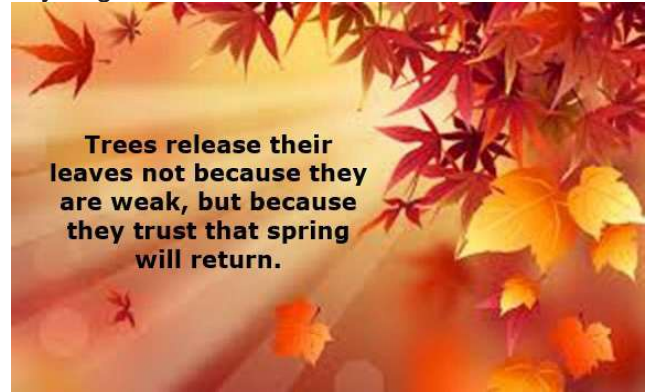
One of the most difficult forms of letting go involves relationships. Friendships fade, romantic partnerships change, and sometimes people grow in different directions. Holding on can feel safer than releasing; but relationships, like people, evolve. Letting go of someone does not erase their importance in our lives. The memories and lessons remain, even if the attachment softens.

Growth also requires letting go of former versions of ourselves. The identity we held at twenty may not fit at forty. Dreams change. Priorities shift. Clinging to outdated self-images prevents transformation. By letting go of who we once were, we allow ourselves to become who we are meant to be. Embrace change, but cultivate non-attachment.

Letting go is rarely a single decision; it is a process. Some days bring clarity and relief, while others bring nostalgia and doubt. Over time, however, what once felt unbearable becomes manageable. What once dominated our thoughts slowly fades into the background.

There is a beautiful paradox in letting go: surrender creates freedom. When we release the need to control outcomes, we begin to move with life rather than against it. We conserve emotional energy and respond thoughtfully instead of reacting impulsively. We become open to unexpected opportunities.

At its core, letting go is an act of trust: trust in life, trust in our resilience, and trust that endings are not failures but transitions. Trees release their leaves not because they are weak, but because they trust that spring will return. In the same way, we let go not because we have lost or failed, but because we are ready to grow.



Ultimately, the only lasting control we truly have in life is our attitude. Good and bad experiences happen to everyone. Our response to them determines our level of peace and happiness. When we cultivate a positive and compassionate outlook, life becomes lighter. Our relationships become healthier, and our minds become calmer. Every day presents a choice: we can live in frustration and resistance, or we can live with awareness and acceptance. When our natural response becomes loving and positive, optimism no longer feels forced, it becomes part of who we are.

Life on this planet is brief. None of us will remain here forever. When we truly understand this, many of the things we fight over - ego, pride, status, and old grievances - begin to lose their importance.

Letting go does not erase the past, nor does it mean we stop caring. It simply means we stop carrying unnecessary weight. It is like walking for years with a heavy bag on our shoulders and finally placing it on the ground. The road ahead remains the same, but suddenly the journey feels lighter.

In the end, the real freedom in life does not come from control, wealth, or recognition. It comes from learning when to release what no longer serves us. And when we finally learn that quiet art, we discover something extraordinary: We are free to move forward with a lighter heart and allow life to unfold as it was always meant to.