

FEMINA



ME-TIME

don't feed the grudge monster

A grudge is a pretty powerful thing. It's a monster that needs to be fed continuously—with time, anger and anxiety. So let go for your own physical and mental sanity. By Purabi Shridhar

No matter which way you look at it, holding on to a grudge is a sign of weakness. It reveals your insecurities and takes a lot out of you in terms of time lost stewing over it and anger and bitterness spent every time you think about that person. A grudge also comes with its own health problems, like anxiety, high blood pressure and depression. So let

go of that grudge and wrest emotional control back into your hands with these tips from experts.

"SHE'S NO SISTER OF MINE!"
 "There's just two years' difference between my older sister and me, but we haven't had a 'sisterly' relationship," says Rakhee S, 26, Bangalore. "She was always the talented one and I was

useless at everything. But the worst was when she caused a major row between my boyfriend and me, which led to us breaking up. Five years down the line, I still can't forget or forgive."

The grudge is feeding on your hurt
 "You were hurt and you have a right to be," says Dr Megha Hazuria Gore, clinical psychologist, Max Healthcare,

180 FEMINA | DECEMBER 17, 2008

FEMINA



"We share everything and by now she has a fair share of my hard-earned money! I want it back, but every time I raise the issue, she withdraws or conveniently has a major crisis."

The grudge is feeding on your anger

"If the amount is not so huge as to cause misery, it might be best to gracefully acknowledge that you did your best when she needed help and let it go at that," says Dr Jitendra Naggal, consultant psychiatrist, New Delhi. "You have to rise above the anger, hostility and defiance. Forgive, but do not forget. Take it as one of life's lessons and think twice before helping her or others financially. If the amount is big, you can try negotiating, get third party intervention or if all else fails, seek legal recourse. And be more careful in the future."

"YOU DIDN'T INVITE ME"

"Ritika and I have been working together for over three years," says Anuya Shah, 31, Mumbai. "We work at adjoining workstations and are more friends than colleagues. So when her brother got engaged, I was more than willing to help and often accompanied her while she ran her

“ You have to rise above the anger, hostility and defiance. Forgive, but do not forget. Take it as one of life's lessons and next time, be more careful”

New Delhi. "But at some point, you have to rise above it and ask yourself a few hard questions. You may not have had the perfect sisterly relationship, but at the end of the day, she was only a trigger and the other party also had a role to play—your ex-boyfriend was not worth the heartache if he broke off the relationship because of your sister.

It might not be possible to mend bridges completely, but letting the grudge go will make you stronger and you can have a relationship on your own terms with your self-esteem intact and without feeling subjugated."

"I WANT MY MONEY BACK"

"Prathna and I have been friends forever," says Tina Makhija, 29, Delhi.

errands. So I was shocked and deeply hurt that she didn't invite me to the function. I haven't spoken to her since then and I make it a point to avoid her at all costs!"

The grudge is feeding on your surprise

"Your first step would be to talk to Ritika," says Dr Arpita Anand, >

FEMINA

ME-TIME

consultant psychologist, New Delhi. "This doesn't mean you use the opportunity to attack her—she may have very good reasons for not inviting you. So start by asking her why you weren't invited, and irrespective of how hurt you are, do not personalise the issue and view it as an attack on your friendship. Allow Ritika her say, because often people are forced to make certain decisions. The non-invitation could have been her family's decision and not a personal choice. Hear her out and then take a call on whether you wish to continue the friendship."

"MY MOM-IN-LAW IS TWO-FACED"

"From day one my mother-in-law made it clear that I was not worthy of her son," says Anisha T, Chennai. "For two years, I did my best to build a cordial relationship, but failed. Now, since the birth of our daughter, she has been holding out the olive branch, but I hate the idea of letting my daughter spend any time with her."

The grudge is feeding on your pride

"Sometimes we hold grudges because we feel it gives us better control over a relationship," says Dr Prabha S Chandra, professor of psychiatry, NIMHANS, Bangalore. "Also, it is easier to hold grudges instead of rebuilding relationships. There are three aspects you need to consider here. Firstly, figure out why your mother-in-law behaved the way she did. Was she insecure? Secondly, it has been proved that forgiveness is good for one's physical and mental health; so why not let go? And lastly, consider that by holding on to the grudge you are not being a good role model for your child. Even if you don't talk about it, your body language speaks volumes, and your child might get confused, especially if grandma is good to her. It is essential for your child to know that all in her family are on good terms."

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES/VISAGE IMAGES

182 FEMINA | DECEMBER 17, 2008



What's five dishes in the sink compared to 30 minutes in the bedroom?

"I GET NO HELP, YOU GET NO SEX"

"I have a demanding job and my salary is what pays off the house loan," grumbles Meera S, 29, Pune. "I'm also responsible for running the house, while my husband laughs off all my pleas for help. At the end of the day, I'm so exhausted and angry, that I refuse to have sex with him!"

The grudge is feeding on your resentment

"There's no room for grudges, resentment and withholding of sex in a relationship," says Dr Usha Lulla Talvadkar, consultant psychiatrist, Jaslok and Breach Candy Hospitals, Mumbai. "So have an earnest discussion with your husband. Make it clear that if he helped out, you'd be less tired and more inclined to have sex. The bitterness will increase the more you cling to the grudge. So nip this in the bud."

YOUR FOUR-STEP LETTING-GO-OF-THE-GRUDGE PLAN

- 1. Find the source of the grudge.** See if you are allowing pride to hold sway and find out what's making it fester.
- 2. Assess the impact on your life.** More often than not, you will find that the grudge is having a negative impact. That alone should be motivation to let it go.
- 3. No more passive-aggressive behaviour and cold shouldering.** A relationship needs effort to survive. So decide if you wish to restore the relationship or cut that person out of your life. And if you've decided to forgive and forget, then that change should be reflected in your behaviour.
- 4. Leave it behind.** It will need willpower. But honour your decision—only then can you move ahead.

BLOG

Blog and share your relationship story on www.femina.in