



## *An Eye for an Eye and Tooth for a Tooth Can Leave You Blind and Toothless*

by Patti Hathaway, Business Advisor & Author

You know the sage advice, "Never do business with friends." Well, I've written two books on communication skills, if anyone could do business with friends - I decided it was my husband and I -- or at least that's what I thought. We decided to buy a cottage and ski boat and all the trappings that go with a vacation property with another couple that were our friends. We were living the American dream! And after three years, the American dream died. It just didn't work out. If you are married, you know how much work marriage is -- well worth the time and effort, but nonetheless, still work. In a partnership with another couple, it's basically like being married to two additional people. There was a lot of stress and tension and after three years, we decided to end the partnership.

My husband and I made our decision in February but didn't call Mark, our partner, until April 15. Mark is a Certified Public Accountant and we didn't want to stress him in the middle of "tax season". Mark didn't want to let us out of the agreement. We told him he could find another partner or buy us out of the partnership. Mark wavered and stalled and stalled some more. Meanwhile, we had the vacation property and other assets assessed. When we gave Mark the assessment, he told us that the property and assets had depreciated more than that and the property and assets weren't worth that much money. I felt he was cheating us out of our due money. My husband Jim wisely concluded that we would either fight for the money up-front and then spend it on psychological counseling or take the lower price and cut our losses. I was seething.

As more time passed, I got more angry and bitter towards Mark. I thought, "He's stalling this process on purpose just to spite us." Once the decision was made it still took Mark seven months before he bought us out. I was so angry and hateful towards them. Every time I saw Mark and his wife, which was several times a month, I'd think, "I want them to suffer as much as they made us suffer." I wanted revenge.

I hate to admit it but it took me six years to realize that I was the prisoner in this relationship. Not Mark nor his wife. Mark had no idea I felt this way. He probably felt the cold shoulder a little bit, but it wasn't like he was hurting emotionally like I was. In my bitterness, I avoided developing deep friendships with other couples for fear I would be hurt again. I would not allow this to happen to me again.

This same type of bitterness can seep into a person because of an organizational change. Before

we are to heal the pain of change, we may need to work through this issue of forgiveness. Some people don't move into the future because somebody in their organization wronged them in the past. Perhaps your manager or a co-worker did something to you and you have never moved past it.

The refusal to forgive others mires us in a painful past. You may be refusing to support an organizational change because the person who's implementing the change is somebody who wronged you. Keep in mind that bitterness is like a match -- it only burns the person holding on to it.

I truly believe that a personal key to healing and moving into the future is healing the past. When someone in an organization has hurt you, your anger over that situation or towards that person can dissolve into a kind of hatred. Why did that person do this to me? How could the company do this to me after all I've given to them? We feel the pain of organizational change. With these hurts and pain, we have two choices:

- (1) We can forgive those wrongs which will allow us to heal our past. As a result, we can move into the future. OR
- (2), we can seek revenge against those who wronged us and become bitter. This second choice keeps us stuck in the past.

Revenge keeps us reliving a painful and ugly past. We ought to move on into a new future that is comprised of fairer relationships, but the inner lust for revenge often pushes us deeper into the endless repetition of the old unfairness. Forgiving is the only open door to our future and possibility. Forgiving breaks the grip that past wrong and past pain has on us and frees us for our future.

Who do you need to forgive in your past so that you can move forward into a healthier future for yourself? Remember, forgiveness is much more about you than it is about the person or the organization who wronged you.

*Excerpted from **Untying the 'Nots' of Change Before You're Fit to be Tied**. Patti Hathaway, CSP, The CHANGE AGENT, is one of fewer than 7% women worldwide to have earned the Certified Speaking Professional designation from the National Speakers Association for her proven presentation skills. She is a Business Advisor and the author of 6 books that have been translated into 5 languages and have sold over 100,000 copies. Patti solves your people challenges by providing highly customized solutions to meet your needs. Contact Patti at 1-800-339-0973 or at her web site: [www.thechangeagent.com](http://www.thechangeagent.com) for information on her speaking and consulting services or to receive her free e-mail newsletter/blog.*