

For Rosh Hashanah, September 2009
By Carmen Emerson

For so long now I have held tight to my anger, my disappointment, my rage, my pain.
But *my* pain is a righteous pain, because *I know* that things should have been different:
As your daughter, your son...I know that you should have been a different kind of parent.
As your sister, your brother...I know that you should have been a different
kind of sister or brother to me.

As your parent...I know that you should have been a different kind of child.

I am your friend...and I am your beloved.

I trusted you...I loved you...and you hurt me.

You hurt me through your denial.

You hurt me through your abuse.

You hurt me through your neglect.

By your indifference you hurt me,

And by your betrayal you hurt me.

You made me ashamed.

How could you? *How could you?*

And now, how can I?

How can I possibly forgive you?

My anger, my disappointment, my defensiveness, my rage, my righteous pain –
they have been my constant companions.

They are the raging sentinels of my breaking heart

who warn me again and again that forgiving is just too hard.

These sentinels...they protect me. They protect my tender heart.

And, my sentinels tell me, forgiving you would mean that I

endorse your terrible treatment of me,

Or that I somehow condone your bad behavior and your hateful choices.

Why, then, should I send them away, and forgive you?

Maybe...maybe I am willing.

I am willing because I know that It could be different.

Maybe I am willing to silence my raging sentinels.

In this holy moment my heart sends forth another message:

It is the message of hope,

and with joy I discover that hope is even more powerful than my righteous anger.

I can be willing to let this go.

On this morning, in this sacred space, in this shared time,

I choose to listen to my heart's steadfast message:

love myself enough to forgive those who have hurt me;

love my own "wild and precious life" enough

to let go of the angers that burden me;

claim my strength;

forgive and trust myself to love and to hope.

Endorse my *own* life, and my full and joyful living of it.

Condone my *own* choices for renewal of body, of mind and of spirit.

I am willing to forgive.