Le**t it Go**From Oprah Magazine, June 2013

*Regret is poisonous. Here’s how to ditch it!*

If you’re still beating yourself up about letting go of an ex, a bad grade, or other things in life that are frankly out of your control, you might want to cut yourself some slack. A recent study reveals one secret to staying cheerful well into old age; leaving regret in the past. Researchers found that subjects over 65 who were happiest in their lives didn’t let missed opportunities get the best of them, while those who were depressed did.

Psychiatrist James S. Gordon, MD, author of Unstuck has some advice to share about getting rid of the “shoulda, coulda, wouldas”, as well as the benefits to expressing emotions rather than internalizing them.

**Q-** Regret is such a tough emotion to deal with. Where do we start?
**A-** Admit what you didn’t do, what you lost, what you got that you no longer want. If you pretend you’re not truly upset, you’ll never get past it.

**Q-** But doesn’t indulging our sadness just make us feel worse about our choices?
**A-** Not at all. A decision may seem awful five years down the road, but it’s likely you made it for reasons that were logical at the time. Tell yourself that your choice made sense to who you were then, and remind yourself how different and stronger you are now.

**Q-** Then what?
**A-** Even though we know better, we often think we’re the only ones who’ve done something regrettable. So find a good friend and tell him or her how bad you feel about what happened. You don’t need your friend to fix you-you don’t even need him or her to say what you did was okay. But you have to recognize that other people have made similar decisions and carried on. Ask your friend if he or she has a comparable experience; 99 tunes out of 100, you’ll find that your friend has. Your feelings of regret may not go away completely, but sharing them could bring some relief.

**Q-** How can we feel less regret in the future?
**A-** The next time you have to make a major decision, breathe slowly and deeply before asking yourself, “Does this feel right to me?” Pay attention to your body’s response and what you hear in your mind. If you don’t immediately feel a strong yes or no, just wait a moment. It’s the relaxed, aware mind that is least likely to have regrets and-when they do occur-to let them go most easily.