

# Letting Go of Letting Go

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This article is about letting go. The funny thing is that I have been writing this article for just about a year now. During this time I have been trying to figure out the best approach to this topic. About two months ago I found my approach, wrote an essay, but the article was lost about a month after.

I was heartbroken. I had to learn to get over the idea of what I thought was the best article I had ever written. Well, the article no longer exists, except in my memory, and I have to stop chasing it. I must *let go* of the old article I had written.

I used to think of letting go as forgiving and forgetting – forgive someone, forget about a memory or a feeling. Letting go seemed like something that could be done easily. However, letting go in this context is not physical, instead it is mental. Physical materials are easier to part with, thoughts and feelings are much harder to detach. Thus, the idea of letting go has lingered in my mind for almost a year. After all this time, I am still writing about letting go, and after a month I am still writing about an article of which I have no paper or electronic record. I am having trouble letting go and detaching myself from the sense of loss I feel over my old article.

Being detached is yet another idea that is easy to say, and difficult to practice. I used to perceive of detachment as being something that can only be accomplished in the absence of emotion. While this idea is actually pretty accurate, I interpreted this as being cold or emotionally numb. This

could not be further from how I see things now. Absence of emotion does not mean being emotionally numb; it is about looking at the facts “as is”, without assigning judgment or value.

Letting go is not about being callous or uncompassionate. I used to think that if I could not feel anything, then I would not be affected by events that happened in my life. Oh how I was mistaken!

The more I tried to hide from the reality of a situation such as losing my article, the more difficult it was to let go of the feelings associated with losing my article. I have to face the feelings of regret. In facing these feelings, I realized that the idea of the article still remained in me. The article was physically lost, but my ability to write another article is not.

What is the next step? I still have to hand in an article to the Huayen Journal. How do I do that? Keep looking for my lost article? *But that can take forever.* What else can I do? Write another article. *But it may not be as good as the last one.* Well, that is the chance that I have to take; besides no one knows if the next one is better than the last. No one remembers the article but me. The article I submitted would be the only article people will have read. No one can tell the difference except me.

Perception is a wonderful thing; and there I go assigning value to something. Eventually I will learn to be less judgmental. Until that time, I will continue to work on letting go. Perception and desire influences a person’s ability to let go and detach. I have discovered in my short time practicing Buddhism that as long as I persistently ask a question, over time I begin to scratch the surface of the answer. Article? What article?

