Regrets, I’ve had a few…..

Regret is a terrible feeling. We make a mistake and, if we have a conscience, we feel regret. Whether a small or large regret that has hurt someone you love, or a major one that has major effects on lives, all mistakes have consequences and these consequences may be something we have to live with forever. So, how can we live with regret? One of the ways is to acknowledge the universality of it. We will all experience some for of regret in our lives. Even good people make bad choices. Because it is universal, it may, in fact, be a necessary part of our development. In life, regret may be the best way to “check” ourselves; to consider what is important to us; to reflect on our values; to look at where we may be headed and to change direction if necessary. It is our brain’s signal that we need to stop and reflect. Also, understanding the universality of regret may help us to forgive ourselves. Remember, whether we know about them or not, everyone has regrets and most of us have several. If we are lucky, these regrets we have will not leave too much damage in its wake. We can make amends where possible and be forgiven by the hurt party. We can be compassionate to ourselves (as we might be to others) and forgive ourselves. But forgiving does not mean to move on from regret too quickly. Unfortunately, many of us will do just that. Because we don’t like uncomfortable feelings, we may be quick to brush away the difficult feeling of regret. We may want to just “move on” and forget. But this would be a disservice to our development and likely lead to more mistakes and future regrets. We can, however, choose to make the most of our regret. We can see regret as the opportunity to strive for something better in ourselves. It can, if you let it, reset the “bar” for you and move you toward an even better version of yourself.

“Make the most of your regrets; never smother your sorrow, but tend and cherish it till it comes to have a separate and integral interest. To regret deeply is to live afresh.” Henry David Thoreau