

April 8, 2020

Dear Friends,

In his reflection for today in, "Grief One Day at a Time," Alan Wolfelt talks about "this crazy journey we call grief." It's very much a journey that we have no idea where we are going or where we will end up. Right now, in the thick of the Coronavirus crisis we are all pretty much in that same place of unknowing. The experts can't even tell us when this will end, but they are predicting a surge in the next few weeks. How very sad it is to know that what 'surge' means is that many more people will die from this horrible pathogen, and many, many more will be grieving those losses.

In reflection about her cancer, Gilda Radner once said, "I wanted a perfect ending. Now I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next." This is a wonderful manifesto for our current time!

I'm finding that my goal every day is "making the best of it." Right now if we allow ourselves to be ok with our feelings, whatever they may be, and then try to make the best of the situation in which we are ensconced, that is about the best we can do. Pardon the redundancy there. If we are hopefully at least trying out some of the 'tools' that are helpful, i.e., meditation, exercise, keeping in touch via social media or phone, walking, journaling, resting, practicing mindfulness, etc. then we are in fact making the best of it. The only way to make the best of grief is to somehow find ways to embrace it rather than fight it or deny it or try to run away from it. "It" isn't going anywhere. And because we are forced to live with the pain of grief, and now we are also being forced to live with this pathogen in our midst, I think it is a good goal to try in whatever ways possible to make the best of it.

I am finding that laughter is proving to be good medicine while on this journey. I am fortunate to be from a family that has deep rooted wit; humor has been a tool for us to deal with hardships for many generations. I think it may go back to the potato famine in Ireland, but don't quote me on that. It is a humor that does not think loss or tragedy is in any way funny, rather it is a response (often a knee jerk, almost involuntary response) regarding a situation over which we have little or no control, over the inevitable and almost surreal circumstances in which we find ourselves living. When I am in contact with family members or high school and college friends, I am noticing how prevalent and almost mandatory humor has become. I guess it has always been that way, but I am appreciating it now perhaps more than ever. Hey, we're all trying to make the best of it. I hope you do as well.

***God grant me the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen.***

Peace and Serenity, Kevin