

August 8, 2020

Dear Friends,

I have to admit that I don't like August very much and I never look forward to it. My sister, nephew, godfather and a very dear friend all died in August. Unfortunately, the rest of the calendar is getting pretty filled with similar such dates, - dates I'd rather forget than remember. On the bright side, however, my memory is getting worse, so quite often as time moves forward beyond the years of all these losses, the dates will sometimes sneak up on me or even come and go before I realized they happened. This never happened early on, but it feels like a gift now. I no longer allow my losses to ruin the entire summer for me, and now I try not to let them ruin an entire month or even a week. I have found, and finally have learned, that the anticipation of these dates is always worse than the day itself, and so I strive to live in mindfulness, one day at a time, and allow each day to be what it is rather than allowing my brain to dwell in the painful past or the unknown future. When the day finally comes, I lean in and let myself feel, cry, and mourn. It always helps, and now I even find that the pain doesn't always take up an entire day anymore. This is how grief softens. It never disappears, but it does change and evolve for certain. The timeline for 'softening' is different for everybody, and for many it feels like it will never happen. But I want to reassure you that it does.

One of the most looming and difficult challenges that many of us face is that we need to find ways to help us to succumb the isolation and loneliness that has been enhanced by the quarantine and social distancing. It is a huge challenge for sure. In his entry for today in *Grief One Day at a Time*, Dr. Wolfelt says, "When we are in grief, every day is a challenge... We must summon the fortitude to do what needs to be done even though we are so heartbroken inside. And through it all we must muster the courage to encounter and embrace our pain." We all know how difficult this can be, however having support as we go through it will make all the difference. More often than not, we may not feel up to the challenge, which is understandable and okay. Sometimes simply getting out of bed is meeting the challenge as best we can. No longer do I try to meet the challenge of getting through an entire summer or an entire month, a

day is sufficient enough, and I find I can usually meet the challenge of one day at a time. I hope you can as well. Do it for you.

Peace and Serenity, Kevin