

May 18, 2020

Dear Friends,

Our Director, Sheila, and I are currently co-facilitating a new Zoom group for people who have lost loved ones to COVID19 as well as other losses during this time of Corona. It is heart-wrenching to hear the stories of separation while loved ones passed as well as the unusual and difficult impediments placed before families and friends after their passing. I have been conducting many burial services these past few weeks with only a few family members permitted into cemeteries and funeral homes. None of it seems at all fair in any way. And yet, they are in fact dealing with it, as all of us have, as best as they can. Grief is a difficult journey with or without the rituals and traditions that have proven to help us to navigate through it. One thing that Sheila reminded us during our group was that funeral rituals give us permission to begin the grieving process, and the lack of such may delay or impair the grieving process in some way. We encouraged those who have not had such opportunities to find some way of memorializing or ritualizing their loss. I was deeply impressed by the fact that some folks had already come up with some creative ways to do so and they shared their ideas and experiences with one another. This is what a support group is all about, I thought, this is the best we can do for these lovely people right now, and it is good. Once again, I was reminded of the resilience of humanity. I saw it upfront and close after 9-11 and I am seeing it again now, and it is a most invigorating and much needed spiritual reminder.

“Dark days do not last forever. The clouds are always moving, though very slowly. The person in the midst of depression is certain, of course, that the clouds are not moving. They are convinced that this is a state in which they will remain for the rest of their lives. Any attempt to try to convince them otherwise is useless. However, the experience of people through the centuries has been that the dark clouds of depression are moving; they do pass.” Granger E. Westburg, *Good Grief*.

Please continue to take good care of yourselves,

Kevin