

November 22, 2020

Somewhere to go

Dear Friends,

I read an article from *People Magazine* yesterday about a grandmother, who in 2016 thought she was texting her grandson to invite him to Thanksgiving dinner, but it went to another phone of a 17 year old boy who, as it turned out, had no family or no place to go to celebrate the holiday. He wound up accepting the invitation, and this year they had their fourth gathering together, but it was radically different. Not only did they have to meet earlier this year because of the pandemic, but Lonnie, the grandfather, had just passed away in April from the Covid-19 virus. I was touched how they honored Lonnie during their meal together, putting out a plate setting and a framed photo of him with a candle next to it on the table.

For all of us who have suffered loss, this Thanksgiving will be radically different, it will of course be different for everyone this particular year, due to the pandemic, but for those who are grieving, there is a particular pain that nobody can truly understand. Try to remember that there is no right or wrong way to ‘celebrate’ these holidays, we just need to get through them with as much self-care as possible. Whether we put a place setting out or not, they will very much be with us wherever we are, they will be with us.

I was touched by the love that surrounded the table of the family from the magazine article, and as I read on, I felt a deep confidence that because of the love they shared, they would heal from their grief in time and find future blessings. Quite often healing can happen in the most unexpected ways. In their case it was a mixed-up text that brought a new member into their circle of familial love.

I’ve heard it said that grief is love that has nowhere to go. Love certainly is the cause and source of our grief. It seems grief is the price we pay for loving. Does that mean that because of our pain we should stop loving? Some people do. The pain can be so severe that we can build huge walls and never let love in again. It’s understandable. For a time. But we need to keep in mind that love is also what will bring us out of this painful place of darkness. It is Love that ultimately heals. So, if you have built a wall, that’s ok. But perhaps it may be time to consider

taking out a brick or two in order to let some love flow back into your broken heart; to let some light into your darkness. Grief is painful, but it is nothing to be afraid of, precisely because it is love. The fear of the pain can keep us from loving and keep us from healing. Gradually, perhaps you can give yourself permission to let go of the fear and remove a brick from the wall, one baby step, one brick at a time. Do not be afraid.

I don't agree with the statement that grief is love that has nowhere to go. It certainly has a place to go. Just because we can't see them or touch them or feel them, doesn't mean they are not here. Love is forever, and it connects us forever. Love will always have somewhere to go.

“The way I will truly honor my loved one’s memory is not with a big act, but through my daily choices; to be compassionate with myself...to give myself freely to those I love...and to live fully and completely while I have the chance.” Camille Pagan

As part of self-care this Thanksgiving, I would like to encourage you, if you would like, to revisit the article I sent out last week on gratitude as well as the one from two weeks ago on surviving the holidays. We also will be having the Thanksgiving Day of Companionship with a Zoom group from Stephy's Place being available from 10am until 8pm. The email with the information about this was sent out this week. If you find yourself feeling a bit lonely or just wanting to chat with someone, please don't hesitate to click on the link. There will be someone there who is in the same boat as yourself, someone who 'gets it.'

Have a blessed Thanksgiving, Kevin