

October 25, 2020- Getting Unstuck

Dear Friends,

I'd like to start today's reflection with the one that Dr. Alan Wolfelt wrote for today's date:

“Some people get congealed in grief. Someone who means the world to them dies...and they get stuck. They become mired in the mud of their loss, and they sit down and give up. Now don't get me wrong. It's normal and necessary for all of us to wallow in our grief for a while. The only way out is through. **We have to feel it to heal it.** But two things prevent us from congealing: actively expressing our grief and nurturing our hope. Mourning is grief in motion. It's the motion that prevents the wet concrete of our grief from hardening us into place. And nurturing our hope means trying our darndest to believe that good and loving things await us in our futures. Mourning and hoping- they keep us alive.” (*Grief One Day at a Time*)

In my own experience of grief and my observation in walking with so many who have suffered loss throughout the years, I couldn't agree more with what Dr. Wolfelt is saying. If we face loss squarely and respond to it thoughtfully, and perhaps are open to the Grace and the Love that continues, we may actually become healthier people as we come toward a healthier side of grief - as it morphs into mourning, and we are able to integrate it into our daily lives as something we can live with. This is a huge indication that we are forwardly moving more toward acceptance. But long before we get there, we have no choice but to ride the rollercoaster of grief through things like denial, depression,

and anger. Sometimes, as Alan pointed out, we can even get stuck on the tracks and stay in any one or more of these dark places for a long time. Sometimes we may even want to step out of the rollercoaster car and pitch a tent there. A voice in the back of our heads may be saying: *'I think I'd like to stay in my anger for a while,'* or we believe we need to stay depressed, or we are subconsciously punishing ourselves in some way, for whatever we may feel guilty about.... People can sometimes camp out for a while in denial, until that is broken to pieces by harsh reality... or we camp in depression, where some unfortunately may stay for the rest of their lives. I think sometimes people are afraid to let go of their anger or pain because it can become what they believe is the only thing they have left to feel, or they feel they may betray their loved one by no longer feeling pain or guilt or shame or anger or sadness or....

But let me ask you this: Do you believe that your loved ones would ever want you to camp out in these dark places? And that to do so is to honor them in some way? This can be the nature of grief for many of us. However, when we find ourselves caught up in any of these stages, - caught up in an unhealthy way, in a debilitating way, - we should never be ashamed or afraid to reach out. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, but we don't have to do it alone.

Please try to remember that **letting go of our grief does not mean that we are letting go of our loved ones.** When we let go of our painful grief it is simply being turned into mourning, we are not letting anyone

go, just some acute pain. They are forever a part of us. We don't move on, but we can move forward.

Peace and Serenity, Kevin