

June 23, 2020

Dear Friends,

In today's entry in *Grief One Day at a Time*, Dr. Wolfelt says, "'Clean pain' is the normal pain that follows difficult life experiences. 'Dirty pain' is the damaging, multiplied pain we create when we catastrophize, judge ourselves, or allow ourselves to be judged by others." The huge difference between these types of pain is that one is unavoidable and necessary and the other is unnecessary and quite avoidable. As I find myself in the gripping throes of grief once again, these words are a most helpful reminder of how one can 'get dirty' pretty fast if we start to go there. It's a lot like the kitchen sink, - where do all those damn dishes come from? How is it possible that it gets filled up so fast? Each and every day we find ourselves continually cleaning up the messes that are naturally made by simply living. Keeping up with it is the key.

I am trying to keep up with my own brain's capacity to go 'dirty'... with pain that is. It is a most liberating thing to be able to stop multiplying pain with more unnecessary pain. The pain of grief is enough, if we can keep it from multiplying, it can be a real gift. Try to take notice of when you may find yourself judging your own emotions and feelings, your grief, and your coping, and when you find yourself doing it, try to remind yourself that you love yourself and you want to be kind, gentle and compassionate to yourself because the person bearing your pain, the person experiencing your loss and grief deserves it. You are allowed to feel and you need to feel, try not to judge those feelings whatever they may be. Another thing that may be most helpful during this pandemic, and the new phases in which we find ourselves living, is to try not to 'catastrophize' that which we know little or maybe even nothing about. The news, the media, social media, etc. can serve in our capacity to jump to catastrophic conclusions when none may be needed or necessary. This too adds pain on top of pain.

These are painful times for certain. I am also certain that healing is simultaneously happening. I am saddened that we will not be able to physically meet this summer, as that would be a most healing thing, but just seeing everyone once a week is a gift that goes on the healing side of the scale rather than the painful side. I hope that the balance starts to move toward that healing side for each of you. Take good care of yourselves.

Peace & Serenity, Kevin