

May 5, 2020

Dear Friends,

Well it's Cinco de Mayo, a day that many non-Mexicans unknowingly refer to as Mexican Independence Day. But it's not. It's timely though, as we all are longing for a new independence from this seemingly eternal lockdown. It has become evident that people are getting antsy and fed up with quarantining (I know I am) but this could prove to be the most dangerous time of this pandemic. With the false hope that it will magically disappear, people are clamoring to get out. However, impatience and ignorance are our biggest foes right now; we must not relent in our social distancing, it really is a matter of life and death for more than just a few people. What Cinco de Mayo actually celebrates is a victory of the Mexican army over the French Empire in 1862. The victory was certainly a boost for morale among the Mexican people, but it was not long lasting. A year after the battle, a larger French force defeated the Mexican army as the City of Puebla soon fell to the invaders. I very much hope this is not a foreshadowing of what the entire world faces with our World War against the invader known as COVID19. Although we may be winning some smaller battles in this fight, we cannot place false hope in temporary victories; the war is far from over. It is a very volatile time indeed. This war is testing our patience, our resilience, our discipline, and our resolve; but we must not surrender and give in, there is too much at stake.

Journeying through grief has many parallels to what almost everyone is experiencing right now as they are trapped at home and experiencing isolation, loneliness and depression. Nobody wants to grieve. Nobody wants this pain. Nobody wants this loss and heartache. We would do anything to circumvent it, to push it aside, to obliterate it. But we know, all too well, that there is no going above, below, or around grief; we have no choice but to push through it. The only thing that heals grief is to grieve. Of course we want anything else, but there is nothing else. And to put it professionally, it sucks. This whole pandemic sucks. We just need to remember that although our grief and this pandemic may drag on for a long time, they will not last forever, they will change. In the meantime, we need to not give up or give in, and like all warriors we need to arm ourselves for battle. Our armor is not only facemasks and gloves but self-care, exercise, staying in touch with others, mustering gratitude, reaching out for help if we need it (please see yesterday's email from Stephy's Place regarding resources) holding onto hope, and finding solace in faith, meditation and prayer. As Dr. Wolfelt said in yesterday's reflection in *Grief One Day at a Time*, "May invites us to understand that things can and will get better. Everything is possible. Hope springs eternal. It comes frocked in flowers and sunshine."

Peace and Serenity, Kevin