

November 8, 2020

Dear Friends,

Just about every evening for the last ,, , too many years to count, like so very many of you, I have sat down to watch Jeopardy at 7pm, - a time around mealtime when we share life together, a time for talking, laughing, quiet banter or friendly, fun competition with our partner or other family members,- a time to enjoy one another and bask in evening relaxation. And of course this was always hosted loyally and consistently, night after night by the beloved Alex Trebek, someone most of us have never met, but feel we know in some way. Someone we will miss.

In almost every group that I have ever had, Jeopardy comes up as an enormous trigger. Because of grief, many people have already stopped watching Jeopardy; - it can be a much too painful moment of sadness, reminding us of the absence, of the missing. Whether it was our husband, wife, child, mom, dad, sister or brother, if they were the person or persons with whom we enjoyed watching Jeopardy, then quite often it can become necessary to take a break or stop watching it altogether. And now, as Alex Trebek has succumbed to his heroic battle with Pancreatic Cancer, it feels like another loss; like we have lost a distant friend.

In interviews over the past year or so of Alex's life, he talked about how he received hundreds of thousands of letters, emails and texts from fans who comforted him in his illness, and that he genuinely felt that the love and prayers actually helped him profoundly. This is what good support can do for all of us. We certainly don't need hundreds of thousands, to be honest, all it takes is one very good, very supportive person who can make all the difference in our journey through grief. This is yet another reason support groups can be so helpful and healing. It's just so good to know that we are not alone.

Our losses quite often can bring many other smaller, yet not insignificant losses, in their wake. Some people, as I mentioned, may have lost the desire to watch Jeopardy, others lose their desire and love for music, others cannot look at photographs for a long time, others can't return to a vacation spot or home, some need to leave their homes altogether, and some cannot read

anything for quite a while. As we always say, it is different for everybody. We never really know what the trigger will be until it hits us. It can be the smell of a perfume or cologne, it can be a certain kind of car or truck, or just the rush of a memory that feels too painful at the time. Triggers suck. But in time, as we navigate through this wilderness together, we can learn that not only are these triggers necessary, they are nothing to fear. They will come, but they will not destroy us. They are a part of our grief. Quite often, like grief itself, the triggers do soften, but new ones may unexpectedly emerge. We eventually can learn to ride these waves and let them come and pass over us. Please be patient with your grief. These smaller losses do not have to be forever. I love when I hear that someone is able to listen to music once again as it can be a tremendous loss of something always appreciated and loved. After a time, quite often, people can become able to look at photos without the acute pain of early grief. The memories will return, and they will not always be as painful as they are in the beginning. As Helen Keller said, "What we have once enjoyed deeply we can never lose. All that we love deeply becomes a part of us."

I would like to end today with deep gratitude for all the years that Alex brought joy, consistency, normalcy, fun, laughter, and bonding to me, my family and to so many of you. And let us all take a moment to be thankful for whatever support we may be receiving during this difficult and exhausting time of grief. It makes a difference. You will get through this. We will get through it together.

Peace and Serenity, Kevin