

April 23, 2020

Dear Friends,

Yesterday our friend, Dr. Wolfelt in his book, “Grief One Day at a Time,” quoted a Buddhist monk and today he quotes a Catholic monk named Thomas Merton. I really admire how Alan Wolfelt is able to draw upon the wisdom and insights of all religions while not advocating any one in particular. It is very obvious, however, that he clearly sees tremendous importance in the role of spirituality in the healing of grief. This has certainly been my personal experience in my own losses, but also my own observation as I have strapped in and taken this roller coaster ride with countless people over the past 30 years. Much like the philosophy of AA, I and all those who put the mission together for Stephy’s Place, believe that one’s spirituality, whatever that may be, can be enormously helpful not only in the healing of grief but in our overall becoming. I also believe that this applies to us not only individually but collectively as a human race.

The people of our world are learning, albeit slowly and painfully, as a result of such tragedies as 9-11, the tsunamis, hurricanes, cyclones, earthquakes, famines, fires, wars and now COVID19 that we need to find new ways to take care of one another and love one another, that we live on a very fragile and volatile planet, that our resources are running short, that the gluttony and greed of the few are causing suffering and hunger for too many, that our irresponsibility with the resources of the earth are now poisoning the planet causing weather catastrophes of epic proportion, and that despite our differences of race and religion there are common threads that bind us all. I also quoted a Buddhist monk yesterday in my reflection, and let me quote him again today... as the Dalai Lama also said to his audience in Central Park: “Though we may find differences in philosophical views and rites, the essential message of all religions is very much the same. They all advocate love, compassion, and forgiveness. And even those who do not believe in religion can appreciate the virtues of basic human values.”

For some reason I believe that we, humanity, are at a pivotal moment in our evolution, in our unfolding. Times like this one in which we are living are definitive notches on our growth chart for sure. As I have been speaking to many people in our Zoom groups over the past few weeks, I have noticed that people are mentioning that this is not as difficult for some of us as it is for others because we were grieving before the quarantine began, and in a sense many of us were already used to this kind of existing. Ironically, we who were already grieving were in some kind of training ground for what was to come. Perhaps, just perhaps, God was somehow preparing us. Like all of grief, this will not last forever, this will

pass, but when it does we will be different, in fact nothing will be quite the same ever again. This is change, but it does not necessarily have to be negative. I look forward to seeing the positives as they too unfold. Like the monk Thomas Merton, we have no idea where all of this is going, but we can live through it trusting in whatever we believe God to be, that we are loved and we are never truly alone.

Peace and Serenity, Kevin