

March 25, 2020

Dear Friends,

The world has suddenly become very small. Right now, for most of us our entire world is where we live and that's it. Such is life in quarantine. It's interesting how in this very small world, when all of our attention is focused in the right here right now, how we notice things we may have never noticed before. I'm finding dust balls in places I've never looked! I'm finding streaks on my windows, cobwebs in my hallway, and old journals that I forgot I even had. I find I'm spreading out my chores to make the day go by. We're cooking more and cleaning more and reading more and sleeping more and... well you get it because you're also living it. I'm limiting my time to watch the news because it can become an obsession and it only keeps me in a place of anxiety. So even though I think it is very important to keep abreast of what it really going on, especially in our own local area, our small world, I think it's equally important to keep an eye on the global situation as well because it's an indicator of what is to come as it also opens us up to the greater suffering that is happening everywhere. But after I read or watch what I need to get the drift, I change the channel or turn it off and do something else. We need to distract our brains from the constant barrage. We need to try to strike a balance if we can. All of this is new to us of course, but we have to remember how resilient we human beings are. We've been through plagues, pandemics, wars, natural disasters, captivity, and genocide, while at the same time exploring the planet, the seas, and outer space. We are wired to survive and to continue and even to thrive. But I also believe that every tragedy or disaster or event in history serves to teach us a collective lesson. Sometimes I wonder if humanity really has learned the lessons we needed to learn from WWII or the assassinations of the 60's or other such atrocities. And the question that stands before us is: what will we learn from this Coronavirus pandemic? I don't think it coincidental (and by now you should know I don't believe in coincidence at all) that before this world-wide pandemic and quarantine, the world was becoming a more divided, more angry, more intolerant, more unloving, more hateful, more polarized, more unstable place to live. Maybe there is something that will rise out of the ashes of this global disaster that will change us for the better. It certainly is my hope and prayer for all those who survive.

After my dear nephew Jimmy died of suicide in 2004, as I have with all my losses, I did a lot of journaling and writing. I like to write poetry from time to time as well. As I mentioned, I found one of those journals that I forgot I had while I was cleaning yesterday, and in it is a poem that I wrote two months after Jimmy died. It is titled "Aftermath." Even though we are not in the aftermath of this pandemic yet, I would like to share my poem with you as I feel it may offer something to us while we're still in the thick of it so to speak.

Aftermath

***Aftermath is picking up the pieces and restocking again.
It's reorganizing, rethinking and coming up with a plan.
It's the continual battle with guilt and with shame,
that this is something for which we are to be blamed.***

Aftermath is letting things begin to settle and watching where they fall;

*To condition ourselves over again, it's retreat and withdraw.
Aftermath is inevitable, it comes in many ways
Even in the best of moments
You know there'll be dark days.*

*Aftermath is not forgetting
And living with the pain.
It's working through the guilt
And throwing off the shame.*

*It's letting ourselves get strong again
And going on with life
It's cleaning off the blood when life cuts you like a knife.*

*It's taking care of ourselves in new and different ways
It's recognizing the fall of others on their toughest days.
Aftermath is moving on though we will never be the same.
It's putting on the pads again and getting back into the game.*

I sincerely hope this offers something to you as we continue to navigate these uncharted waters. I love that the collective mantra has become: **We are in this together.** We are. You are not alone. We will get through this, we will prevail.

God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Take good care everyone,

Kevin