

October 18, 2020

Dear Friends,

This week's reflection does not come from me, but rather a dear friend who three years ago last week lost her 16 year old son to suicide. Sheila and I were so deeply touched and inspired by her words, thoughts, feelings, and transfixing honesty, that we asked her if she would mind us sharing it with our Stephy's Place family. Over the past three years, Lori has been putting her grief to hard work as she already has been volunteering at Stephy's Place and is quite involved with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (ASFP). I am certain that her words will touch each of your hearts. Have a good week, Kevin

October 15, 2020

Three years. Three f%^&\$#@ years. I cannot really believe that it has been 3 years since I have physically seen, felt, heard or touched my son. But I am ok.

I have learned so much in these 3 years and now realize I still have so much to learn. I am not scared of that. I actually look forward to it.

The most profound understanding for me right now, is that of gratitude. I know most of you are thinking, "Gratitude? Is she kidding?" No. I am not. I now realize that whatever we are given in this life yields us opportunity – opportunity to learn, to let go, to grow, and to heal. I believe Pierce sends me these gifts now, these opportunities. Pierce's death has opened me up to look for and to find the truths of my life.

I truly find gratitude every day now. There is something in every single day that we all have to be thankful for, as long as we are looking. I practice finding that daily. Some days are more difficult than others, but there will always be at least that one thing to be grateful for. Once you look, and start finding that one thing...so much more comes your way.

I recently had lunch with a friend, and she asked, "How are you doing?" referring to the impending October date. I thought about it, and I said that I felt peaceful and full. There

is a space there for Pierce, but it is filled with love. Just because he is not physically on this earth with us does not mean that I, or anyone else, should stop loving him.

I have learned to find gratitude, joy, beauty and connections in ways and levels of intensity that I never expected. I know this is Pierce. I know this because none of this makes sense. My son is not here physically... but I am ok. Really.

How I wish that I could have helped Pierce to feel this way, to help him to understand that our challenges are purposeful and here to help us to feel and to learn and grow. The best I can do now is to move forward with this knowledge and try to pay it forward.

So, find that thing to be grateful for, feel your feelings, and allow yourself to just be.

My love for Pierce has not ended. It grows stronger every day. For those of you who knew and loved him, please do the same. Continue to love him. I know he still loves you.

Pierce Jarck you are always in our hearts. 38hugs.