

August 29, 2021

The Quest

Dear Friends,

Back in my college days, I was very active in theater, and I had the awesome opportunity to play the role of Sancho Panza in the musical, *Man of La Mancha*. It was a blast. I got to follow a crazed knight on his glorious quest, no matter how hopeless, no matter how far.

Our losses have put us all on a quest of sorts, it's a quest to find ourselves again in the rubble of sorrow and grief; a quest to find meaning and purpose again, to find happiness and joy, to find fulfillment and contentment. All of this may seem so very unattainable, but the fact is: **it is all attainable**. Sometimes it may feel like we are fighting windmills, but we must clear through the illusions and distractions, through the necessary raw emotions, through the questions with no answers, through the pain and suffering, before coming to our own spiritual truth, which is where our quests ultimately take us.

Don Quixote sang of an impossible dream, but he did not let the impossibility stop him from continuing his quest and following that star. His story shows that it is the quest itself, not so much the goal or the destination that is important. It is on the quest that things really happen.

Grief will bring us to some very scary, dark places. We already know it is a roller-coaster ride of emotions, but the ride does take us somewhere, it is not a ride to nowhere (though it may feel that way). Each part of our quest has its own *questions* and stepping-stones, and each must be stepped on in order to get to the next. We have to go through all of the letters of the alphabet before we get to the end. Each step, each letter, can possibly teach us something or help us to get to the next part of our journey. And because this is so painful, we often don't want to stop anywhere or learn anything, we just want it over; we want the pain to go away. Of course, this is not possible - in order for our pain to go away we would have to stop loving. And love cannot be turned off like a light switch. More than anything, we need to be patient with this quest and each step along the way, trying desperately to trust that it is taking us somewhere.

This past week, a dear friend sent me a most inspiring quote from a book she is reading called, "***The Top Ten Things Dead People Want to Tell You***," by Mike Dooley:

"The dead, therefore, want you to get that no matter where you are, everything is okay, getting better, and happening just as it 'should,' in a steady progression that will forever take you higher. This is God's trajectory within time and space: eternal expansion. They want you to know that even in their absence, however much you might miss them, the fact that you still live is exquisitely meaningful. It means that you still have places to go, friends to meet, and lessons to learn; that there can still be more smiles than frowns, more laughter than crying, and more joy than sadness, in a living, loving Universe that's literally conspiring on your behalf. They want to remind you that the world is still your oyster, though your 'work' is not done. Let go of the past, return to the here and now, and begin shaping the rest of your life. Hang in there and keep dancing life's dance, knowing that you are inclined to succeed and prone to joy because these are propensities of the Divine, traits of the Immortal, your eternal birthrights."

As we continue our quests, sometimes bearing with unbearable sorrow, let's continue to run where the brave dare not go, - to face our grief, and to give ourselves permission to mourn, knowing it is not in vain, that this quest is taking us somewhere where our hearts will be peaceful and calm once again.

(If you never heard the song "*Impossible Dream*" from the Broadway play, *Man of La Mancha*, you missed a lot of references in this reflection LOL. It's a great song if you can give it a listen.)

Peace and Serenity,

Kevin