

February 7, 2021

FRIGHTFUL OR DELIGHTFUL?

Dear Friends,

The snow is falling softly outside my window as I write today. So... the question is; Is the weather outside frightful or is it delightful? I'm one of those people who love snow, so I'm finding it most delightful with my fireplace lit and a warm cup of tea. But even snow, in grief, regardless of how you feel about it, can be a huge trigger. Listening in groups this week, I couldn't help but to feel for those for whom the snow is a downer, a rude reminder of who you lost. And there are so many: It could be the snow shovel or blower that sits leaning on a wall in the garage that only he knew how to use and now you need to find the instructions, or YouTube it, or call a helpful neighbor. None of which is fun. None of which you want to do. It could be the stinging reminder that you would be in Florida by now and miss all this wintery fun if she or he were still here. Isn't it amazing how weather systems can have such an impact on our nervous and emotional systems. Storms can be raging within our bodies much like the blizzards outside.

Just as storms need to ride themselves out, so also do we. A storm will rage until all the water and all the energy has been released. And we need to do the very same with our grief. If we keep what is inside us clamped up and privately our own pain, it could rage and rage and rage and keep us in unwanted places. Some people have trouble giving themselves permission to feel their feelings, whatever they might be. Some find it difficult to cry. Others may push feelings like anger deep down which can often reappear as depression or anxiety. There are others who actually find it difficult to let go of their anger and actually find ways to feed it. They feed it because it helps them feel more in control and distracted from the hurt that lies beneath it. They can't control what happened, but they can control their rage. This can go on for lifetimes and even be passed from one generation of ragers to the next. (I've seen it happen)

These are just some of the ramifications of how unresolved, or un-mourned grief can have long-term effects into, not only our own future, but generations to come. We all have inherited our own understanding of death and grief from the families and cultures we grew up in.

This is how most of us have learned to grieve. If we have had loss in our families, we simply followed the protocol from those who had experienced it before us, not knowing if it would lead to healing or suffering. I think it is when a person decides they are suffering enough or too much and reaches out for some kind of help, that it can all break open toward healing.

Those of us who have a new understanding of how support can make all the difference in the grieving process are now ambassadors to others who will suffer such loss in their lives. It is a message that people need to hear: - that they can in fact be comforted, that they can find some release and relief, that there are others out there who do understand, that there are people in our world who do still care about one another, that it's ok to feel our feelings, that it's important to release them, that healing is possible, and so is new life.

We must, of course, first and foremost, believe this for ourselves.

Peace and Serenity,

Kevin