

**The Bad News Call,
(The flood of feelings and the reality of losing, letting go and ‘getting’ it)**

Teri R Gentes

A middle of the night, startled out of my sleep, the rings resounding through the silent stillness, phone call. The ‘change life in a second’ happening about to be revealed in the purpose of the call. The ‘can never go back, ever be the same, never ever feel the same, news.’ It’s a ‘hit in the head, blow to the heart, robbing of breath,’ happening that takes my conscious and rational thinking mind and turns it to feelings of initial, absolute and stunned refusal to comprehend or accept, denial. “What, who” and “Oh my God!” are my initial responses as an ominous weight begins to grip my gut. My head floods with thoughts of stupid things that don’t really matter or even seem to make any sense in my struggle to comprehend. The utter shock, disbelief and attempt to absorb the news, it numbs my mind and grips my body in tension. A fog moves in and numbs my nerves. It is likely labeled ‘the initial phase’, yet it lasts awhile.

Then, with the passing of some time and constant queries from friends, “when will you be yourself again?” and their expectations for me to return to ‘normal’ and my attempts to be this way, there come feelings. “Oh God, I am so not okay” interspersed with the auto-reply of, “sure I’m alright, taking it one day at a time” while a silent painful mourning makes home in my heart. In the days that follow, a grieving plea of why screams within, then feelings of anger, hate, fear, disbelief, exasperation with the legal system and ever present dread. It just does not make any sense, and how do I go on without them? More time needs to pass.

Eventually there is a learning of how to live with the sorrow, yet it is not an “I am over it” sense. I do not think we ‘get over’ feelings and why would we have to, how could we get over the painfulness of losing precious loved ones? We can learn how to handle emotions, learn to live with the missing and longing and wishing and yes, those regrets. There is the lesson of ‘letting go’ to get, and forgiveness, and acceptance and gratitude for what was had and what I have, rather than what has been lost. This takes time – and there are stages to pass through and healing to happen and I am on the mend.

Life has many blessings and joys and treasures, but this? Rationally, sure, I am better for the experience, humbled, human, compassionate, more consoling to others, appreciative of the present moment, yet the reality is feeling completely and continually besieged with their absence. The hugs, the letters, the calls, the visits,

the sharing and listening, teaching and loving – now seemingly only a memory, the occasional dream, ongoing prayers and yes, endless one way conversations.

Heaven is probably fabulous and with out a doubt they are there and are now angels watching over all of us lost in our own grief. And life does goes on. I remember, I forget, I reminisce with relatives, recite – retell stories, revisit familiar landmarks and justify, rationalize, reach out for reasons and understanding and I always, all ways, really, really miss them.

Their perfection, their imperfection, strengths and weaknesses, the sacrifices, shared joys and pains, triumphs and tragedies, fears and doubts, faiths and hopes. Our history together– now a memory, melancholy and melodramatic. And they were so supportive and loving and loved.

The regrets, oh these are many with my son in the forefront. They were not here to be part of it, to witness their own daughter going through one of the most, my most amazing experience in life. Big regret.

We all do have our crosses to bare, some more tragic, seemingly unbearable, yet still all about pain, loss, sorrow, grief and despair. We deal with it. Each of us has our own baggage, stuff, heavies, a story to tell. It does help us – to grow, become a better person, learn about life, compassion, acceptance, and forgiveness (if we choose to).

I know it all happens for a reason, and we are never given more than we can handle and we move on. Except I remember my relationship with my mom often being strained and I wasn't always patient and I felt I knew so much and was just so busy doing my life, I just don't know if she ever really knew how much I appreciated and loved her. (Well maybe now I do, yes absolutely).

My dad, with his philosophical soul, had been struggling with his own stuff for a number of years – maybe even longer, (yes, it likely was). And I don't remember if I ever really spoke to him about what it was and how he was and if I could help. I have missed sharing so much with my folks. The wisdom and woes of hindsight.

Sure I am older now and more matured, experienced, humbled and compassionate and connected to God – a better soul absolutely. Yet I felt that I was a good soul back then, self-righteous, naive I suppose, perhaps it is all simply relative. And they were so patient and accepting and loving and human with their own frailties.

Life – here and gone in a flash, out of our hands. Yet is it? We have life right now, you, as you read this – me, as I write. Each breath, often taken so for granted until the threat or reality of actual loss. Caught up in the past, concerned/consumed with the future and all too often oblivious to today – this gift so appropriately called the ‘present’.

I have learned life teaches and learned I have much to learn. As I open myself to the miracle that being human can be/is, I realize the many many blessings in my life. By this I mean I take notice and enjoy what is here, in this very moment and I also believe/know, I create/welcome/manifest continued blessings into my daily existence. I know that may sound way out there to some of you – and all I can say to this response is, once you get it – you get it. Humans cannot teach nor be taught direct experience and we cannot see what we do not want to, or what we doubt.

Though it took a number of years to get it, I can now easily say the loss of my parents has been an incredible gift in my life. The lessons it brought and continues to bring, the connection I feel with them, the understanding and acceptance and trust in divine order – it is more than I know how to explain with words. In my personal view, it is our humbling and heart-ful experiences that exemplify life. Living it fully means living with all of the emotions we have and polar opposites – yin and yang, are the reality I have come to know. It seems for us to know light, we must know dark, and joy and sorrow are intermingled. Consider Mother Nature, with her sun up and sun down and our ever revolving moon, and the changes of seasons, and a breath in and out. Perfect order and balance and harmony and the infamous law we all have heard...”what goes around comes around.” I have learned to trust in all of this.

I share this with you not in hopes to convince you to see as I do – we only see from our own perspective. I share this with you in hopes of planting a seed, encouraging a more open mind, a broader perspective, the consideration of possibilities, anything can be’s, hopefulness, and a quiet acknowledgment, acceptance and knowing of the inner strength each of us is blessed with. In my experience, all we need to do to access this personal strength is to actively utilize it and trust we can handle whatever we face.

A drunk driver killed my parents. Less than 2 minutes from their home. My sister and her young ‘almost son’ were in the back seat and with God’s graceful blessing they survived. The driver of the stolen car, with a long history of similar offences,



was driving with a suspended license, racing through the quiet neighborhood and he ran a stop sign. Darin B. broad sided my parent's car and changed the lives of so many in an instant. This is how life is – both fertile and fragile. Life and death change it instantly. To 'get' that all we have is 'now', is an epiphany, a knowing, and a blessing of divine wisdom. It is available to us all – our birth-gift. One we merely need to accept to access.

May you choose to celebrate and embrace each breath, each moment with an open mind and a full, loving heart and peaceful spirit.

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