

Hi Friend,

Wow it sounds like you have been hit with a lot of heart heavy things all at once. I'm glad you give yourself the space and time to cry. Very necessary. Talking to someone skilled in helping people deal with grief sounds smart to me. Part of the healing process is just speaking the grief out loud with someone listening. And you nailed the commonality in all the things you are dealing with. Grief isn't just felt when a loved one dies. A divorce or ended relationship is kind of death. A big change in family relationships - like your girls leaving for college - is a kind of death. But the last one is also a birth of a new relationship with your daughters. From how you have talked about them I am guessing they will keep their relationship with Mom strong and close. And now you get to help with deal with adulthood - and it seems even more challenging now than it was for us.

The yoga and biking sound like very good outlets. The more relaxed you are the more open you will be when an opportunity for something good pops up in front of you. There is a meditative aspect to yoga you may want to look into. For calm and equanimity to exist you have to have a center that is not affected by external events and other people. Letting go of attachment is hard, but necessary for calm abiding to grow within us. Meditation is a wondrous way to grow that calm. It gets you connected to the oneness that we are all part of, that we are all living expressions of. When you become aware of that reality outside things can never really upset you as much as they have in the past.

I got this magnet in a mailing from some library vendor. It tickled me so I put it on my refrigerator. It says "When things go wrong, don't go with them". Simple I know, but a good reminder that while we can't control a lot of things outside of us, we do get to decide how to respond to whatever reality gets conjured up around us.

I pray that your life is blessed by many good things in the months ahead, that hope and joy do bloom in your heart, and sooner than you think things are better than you could have imagined. I know it can be hard. When life seems overwhelming to me I pray to the Universe "Loving Universe this is too much for me to bear, I surrender myself, I surrender this grief, to you. Please lift this pain from me". I sure said that prayer several times after my Mom passed on.

It will get better. With warm Aloha

Hi Friend,

Thank you for your understanding. I was touched by your kind words about my condolences to you. I had focused on the loss of your mother. I forgot that is was also the loss of your second parent. That's a whole other level of loss. I lost my mother first. When my older brother Arthur called me with the news of the death of my father it was like being hit by an intense wave of pain and sorrow. The first words out of my mouth where "Art, I am not ready for this". So when you say "I feel like an abandoned orphan and want to curl up and cry for a while.", that is a very natural reaction. That's what hit me like a hammer when I heard my father had died - that I was an orphan, that I was no one's baby, and that now I was part of the eldest generation. Quite a staggering blast of realizing my mortality. So it's very ok just curl up and go fetal sometimes.

You have also come face to face with one of the hardest parts of grieving. You say "Meanwhile, everyone else expects you to just get up, go to work, take care of your kids,

and keep it all to yourself. It's hard." . Yes it's hard. I got about a month of sympathy from the people around me. Then it was as you say - they don't want to hear about it - because it makes them uncomfortable to consider their own mortality. Don't keep it all to yourself. You have to let it out, to give words to your pain and grief. I pray you have some special people in your life that can offer that empathetic ear. I found some real help from a hospice group here on Kauai. The first year was especially hard around the holidays. The Kauai Hospice had a workshop about dealing with grief around the holidays. They offered some good advice and I got to hear the stories of people whose loss was way more tragic than mine. It gave me a sense of perspective and some gratitude for the kindness of the Universe. The hospice group also had a special event before Christmas. They had a remembrance ceremony in a church. Everyone who had lost someone went up and lit a candle in remembrance of their loved one who had passed on. It helped me a lot.

I remember you mentioning before about your family relationships being problematic. That does make it harder to deal with the grief. You ask "How do you grieve when you both loved and resented the person who died?" . You grieve by focusing on the positive aspects of your relationship with your Mom: that you know she loved you very much, that she finally accepted you as a good person, and that she counted on you to help care for her in her last days. In regards to the other stuff "All hope of future, better reconciliation is over, and no resolution of past issues is possible." . You have to let that go and focus on what good was there at the end. The Tibetans have their own version of the Serenity Prayer : "Why be unhappy about something if it can be remedied? And what is the use of being unhappy about something if it cannot be remedied?". You did the best you could in your relationship with your mother. You got to be there for her at the end. That's a lot. Embrace that and grieve its loss. Ignore the people who tell you that you should "be over it" by now. Nonsense - everyone grieves in their own way and on their own schedule. It took me about two years to start feeling ok after my Mom passed on. Give yourself the time YOU need to go all the way through the process to acceptance and being at peace.

Tonight I went to a special Japanese Buddhist ceremony called the Toro Nagashi. Japanese Buddhists celebrate O-Bon every summer. It's a time when the spirits of loved ones come back to visit the living. Bon Dances are held on summer weekend evenings where participants dress in traditional Japanese dress (like kimonos and hapi coats) and dance in a circle around a central platform. It's a celebration of your passed on loved ones and a way of saying thank you for all they did for you. At the end of the O-Bon season the Toro Nagashi ceremony is held at a harbor - in Koloa it is down at the Kukuiula Small Boat Harbor (near The Spouting Horn). Paper lanterns are made with candles inside them. The names of the loved ones you are remembering are written on the outside of the lanterns. There is a wooden boat built about five feet long and painted white. The lanterns are placed on wooden rafts that are tied behind the boat. As night falls, the Buddhist priest says prayers and then reads the names of the people being remembered. The candles are all lit. The boat is put into the water and one by one the rafts are also put in. Divers pull the boat and rafts slowly out of the harbor and let it go as it clears the harbor and catches the ocean current. The boat and the rafts slowly go west out to sea (symbolizing the visiting spirits returning to their heaven realms).It's a very moving sight to see those lighted lanterns bobbing on the ocean. Lights on a huge dark sea - like our

spirits in the vast ocean of the multiverse. It makes me sad and makes me happy. I had a lantern for my Mom and Dad and one for my late English uncle and his wife. It gave me a chance to thank them for their love and to pray for them. It leaves a peaceful feeling in my heart.

My prayer is that someday, not too many years from now, you experience that kind of peace as you think of your Mom. Take care, be kind to yourself (and patient, and careful when you are distracted). Aloha,