

“We learn from wounds, we teach through wounds. We grow from the wounds of others, we grow through our own wounds. Within that woundedness, we experience healing. The primitive shamans knew it. Krishna knew it. Buddha knew it. Abraham knew it. Jesus knew it. Mohammed knew it.

As therapists, counselors, and helpers, we must respect our wounds and the wounds of others, knowing that there is healing in the midst of them, not apart from them, a healing that transcends culture.

As Remen (1993) said, ‘It’s our woundedness that allows us to trust each other. I can trust another person only if I can sense that they, too, have woundedness, have pain, have fear. Out of that trust we can begin to pay attention to our own wounds and to each other’s wounds- and to heal and be healed.’”

[Douglas C. Smith, Living With Grief, Chapter 21, p. 284, Hospice, 1998]

Coming to Harvard from a small boarding school, was like being dropped into a candy jar, and yet I had not completed grieving my early loss of my mother, and so I took a half year off to travel and live in Greece, Turkey and Israel in 1967, until just the day before the Six Day War.

I returned to Harvard to complete the AB degree requirements and did not finish still the grief.

I decided to become a nurse as my mother had been in nursing training when she and my father married in the middle of WWII.

If life is about loss, then we have to grieve it, and we do it through anger and depression. A psychiatrist friend told me about a young patient who drew the anger in red finger paint with the blue spot in the center being the “sadness”, brilliantly illustrating how the anger and rage can “blanket” the sadness.

(When I see anger in public, I always see it as a form of grief felt by that person...)

However, if we experience and feel these painful emotions, we are better able to live through the next loss.

I lost my mother to acute myelocytic leukemia, suddenly, as we were not even told she was terminally ill, when I was thirteen years old, and I still keep in touch with other friends who also lost their mother at that age. We found each other and did random activities together, cross country skiing on a blizzardy day, and had children the same ages, and could share time with humor mostly but an intense and empathic connection due to our early losses, and we did not feel that it was by accident.

(Perhaps, we had to ask something of the other or acknowledge our early wound that triggered the response. OR was it that we were very sensitive to a certain way of being when you have been wounded early in life??)

THIS REUNION is such a happy time for us all. Think of how we can continue this connection and relationships during the next five years. Read the big red book. Write to each other. Share a common

new found hobby or passion. Really try to find new connections, as we, yes, grieve our lost youth and friends along the way.

Fill your relationships with affection, humor, and a positive mindset, (even with a taxi driver!) and you will feel a shift of mood.

Feel the wisdom and compassion balance. Live The Buddhist concept that we come to understand our differences with our heads, but we find our humanity with our hearts.

Whether I putter in the garden or in a desk drawer, I may feel anger at shoveling and slicing into a previously planted bulb, DARN, or sadness in going through old photos and letters reminding me of our children's childhood, which is gone but not lost.. but we feel the loss. We have to grieve, and it is painful. Take it in short spurts. We downsize but save what we can handle. We have time. Focus on doing what you love or learn something to focus on more than you allowed yourself before.

I was moved to tears by performances last night. Sensitivities can cause painful emotions even in the midst of joy. Be open to all connections..