

GRIEF IN BRIEF

Those that know me well - know I am usually a fairly private person. Meaning I don't necessarily talk about things in my personal life. In our Worship Design meetings as we talked about the upcoming series on grief, we had some very special moments as we openly shared thoughts, feelings and remembrances. We grieve about many different things. Today I am focusing on my husband, Gary Kinney. He passed away from cancer and like Marilyn's husband he was in his late fifties. We did not necessarily want to have this in common.

All of us have had loved ones who have died and we've been thrown into the heartache of grief. Every person handles it in their own way. I may look at things differently than some people but just to get out of my comfort zone and share with you today can be cathartic. Pastor Mary showed the Great Circle illustration last Sunday and that was so "spot on". It was better than anything I can say.

But, going back into that time in my life and the time since, and knowing the message today, here are some of my personal thoughts.

1. I cringed then and I still do when someone says the phrase: "Now you have closure." There is never closure; those we love shape our lives. Love never dies, you always have a connection.
2. Another thing I heard: "I know someone that had such and such a protocol or treatment and they are doing just fine." That makes a person feel guilty – like I did not do the right thing – I should have done something different. I already have some regret; I already second guess some decisions we made. I have "what if" moments, but I remind myself that with the options and guidance we made the best decisions we could at the time. It's not a "one treatment fits all". We are all different and our bodies do not respond the same.
3. I feel it makes some people uneasy if I start talking about Gary and there seems to be an urgency to change the subject. I believe people think it will upset me. Do not hesitate to talk or ask a question about the person, especially later, because we frequently hear, "I'm sorry," right away – which is good – but afterwards there is a real comfort in continuing the remembrances even years beyond. Losing someone is not like turning off a light switch – they are never gone from our lives.

My children always still remember our anniversary, their Dad's birthday, and the date he died. We love to share all kinds of memories of him like -- no Christmas music before Thanksgiving, he would say to our son - all men in our family cook, or over and over he would always ask my daughter's friends, from 8 to 20 – whenever he saw them "Are you married yet?" It makes me feel good, I mean, that part of my life is not a closed book. He will always be part of us and we have been forever changed by him.

Even now there is not a day that goes by when he is not on my mind in some way. Something can trigger it – a song that always brought us to the dance floor, an item at the store he always picked up, the fall season which was his favorite, something on the work bench in the basement, or a toilet seat that was left up – well, he wasn't perfect!!

Yes, grief is all these things up here and more. I heard once that grief is a wound. And 13th Century Poet Rumi wrote "The wound is a place where the light enters you".

During those melancholy moments I look at it like this. I have been blessed. Gary was a great father, husband, caretaker, supporter, protector. We are blessed to have had him with us for as long as we did. Some families do not ever have what we had.

It is such a blessing. Thank you, God.

November 11, 2018 Betty Kinney