
SATYA - TRUTHFUL IN THOUGHT, SPEECH & ACTION

We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature."



Sonya Renee Taylor

"Quietly go to work on your own self-awareness. If you want to awaken all of humanity, then awaken all of yourself. If you want to eliminate the suffering in the world, then eliminate all that is dark and negative in yourself. Truly, the greatest gift you have to give is that of your own self-transformation."

Lao Tzu

Out of every crisis comes the chance to be reborn, to reconceive ourselves as individuals, to choose the kind of change that will help us grow and to fulfill ourselves more completely.

Nena O 'Neal

as quoted in "Healing After Loss," Martha Whitmore Hickman (New York; Harper Collins, 2002)

Grief and the Pandemic

by Paula Hulet

Elisabeth Kubler Ross identified 5 stages of grief. They are - denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. And while this may appear to be linear process— grief is anything but linear and it knows no timeline. When we grieve we bounce back and forth along the emotional spectrum.

It might seem strange to be talking about grief in connection with the pandemic. We may not be grieving over the loss of a loved one, but we are living with the loss of a way of life that once had. People have lost jobs, lost income, lost purpose, and have lost connections with others. There are those on the front lines – medical staff, support personnel, and first responders - who do not get to see their families out of fear of bringing the virus home.

Along with these losses we also are living with uncertainty and unknowing. Our lives have come under the control of the pandemic safe living guidelines. And so, we wonder and worry about the future. How long will this shelter-in-place continue? Even as rules are eased, will it really be safe to return to “normal” activities? Will a vaccine become available soon? How will we ever make up for the loss of income, jobs, supplies, and restrictions on education? Will there be another round of this disease?

Yes, the pandemic has resulted in loss on many levels. Loss results in grief. Looking at Kubler Ross’ stages of grief, we see grief manifested in many ways.

Many nations initially denied the potential threat of the virus. Conspiracy theorists as well as individuals believe the virus is a hoax. And there are plenty gathering in large groups, including visitors to the Central Coast, who act as if they are immune to Covid-19.

Denial and anger have been exhibited by protestors who have taken to the streets demanding a return to life as we once knew it. They typically are without face masks and social distancing is nowhere to be found.

Bargaining has been on going between nations, corporations, states and communities. There is bargaining, negotiating, or jockeying for medical supplies, who will be the first to successfully obtain a cure, and even toilet paper. All this bargaining and fear in not getting what we want when we want it reflects some of the ugliness and greediness of the human condition.

And then there is the ping pong game between depression and acceptance. Yes, we agree there is a need to shelter-in-place. But that means limited excursions into the world, a lack of hugs and time spent in a room laughing and sharing with friends. So, shelter-in-place must be for someone other than me. Yes, our favorite places will not be opened in the same way they used to be. But how can we shop without trying on clothes. And how much longer must we endure the inability to leisurely browse through a book store. And that Zumba or Pilates class will not be the same if they have to limit attendance. Yes, things will change. But then again change is hard. We think, there has been enough change!

The reality is there has not been enough change. Do we really want to reopen to a world filled with hate, greed, and despair? Do we want to live in a world where the inequity between peoples and nations is horridly inhumane? Have we learned nothing from this crisis?

Our grief, as in any crisis, is actually an opportunity. An opportunity to be in the world and to view the world in new ways. Our grief and this time of shelter-in-place has provided an opportunity for reflection. What is important to us? What changes, improvements, would we like to see in our lives and in our communities? What are we willing to do to make positive changes a reality? As author and activist, Sonya Renee Thompson said about this time in our lives, "We have been given the opportunity to stitch a new garment, one that fits all humanity and nature." May we emerge from this time of cocooning determined to be the seed, the voice, that seeks change - making this a better and far more equitable world for all.

