

WHAT is the NEW MEANING

or GIFT in YOUR LIFE?

COVID has touched each of us in some form or another during the past year and a half. For some of us it has been a loved one dying from COVID, others had a loved one die and were not able to see them or be with them in those days, weeks and months during their illness and decline, for others it has been COVID itself touching them and curtailing their everyday activities for however short or long that was. There have also been so many family members that have had a loved one in a facility and were not able to see them. How difficult that was not only for you but also for them. The most difficult thing for many families when they did get to finally visit was their loved one did not know them. It doesn't matter who we are; we all need to heal through each day and reach out to that person who will listen to us and not judge us. COVID hasn't gone away but hopefully the painful situations we were in before will not walk beside us in such a tragic and horrendous way.

So as fall and winter fast approach us and darkness is becoming more visible each day; we pause and reflect on what it is that this new season is calling for in each of us. At this time of the

year, I find people more entrenched with their grief and want to curl up under a blanket until spring is bringing them signs of new life. However, that is not what we are called to on this journey of grief. We are encouraged to look beyond and find the beauty of a sunrise and sunset. Somewhere in that magnificence, you may find the gift or message of love that your loved one is sending you. Your grief can be all encompassing but with the strength and love of others you live day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute. Every single one of us grieves in their own way for that person or persons who have died. Often we feel overcome and are unsure of the next road to take. Sometime all roads seem rocky and bumpy and we want to run or curl up and just be alone. The paths we take can be long and in that hike we find ourselves out of breath and drained and feel as if we will remain there. This path, whether we believe it or not, can take us beyond our wildest dreams; but the question for all of us is are we ready for the hills and valleys that we will journey. Sometimes we think the tears will never end and we will never see the sunshine again and feel only pain. Is that what you want? Look around you and see the beautiful colors and the gifts that are being given, the memories that are filling your heart and encouraging you to take a step

forward. Each day is a long journey and some days it seems as if it is filled with total darkness that binds you so tightly that you are unable to feel the hand of God reaching out and asking you to walk along the shore. Cry awhile and feel the pain. Do not let it pass you by and listen to what it is asking take the time to grieve. Your grief is hard work which seems as if it will never get easier but eventually in the sunrise and the beautiful colors which surround you; you will find healing, peace and hope. They do not come, however, without hiking the mountains of our lives high and low to see what was and what lies beyond. Grief for each of us takes time and is different. There is no time pattern. The time it takes one may take another twice as long or longer. Do not judge yourself or anyone else but allow the feelings to flow and honor them. If we push them aside and not deal with them, someday they will come knocking at our door. Let the beauty of the seasons unfold you in color, radiance, peace, hope and love. Today may be a day of great sorrow and tears but tomorrow may bring a ray a sunshine that makes you smile and be open to the gifts each new day brings. Whatever you do as you wake each morning, pause, remember and honor with love the gifts your loved one filled your heart with and then pass them on to

someone that needs them at that particular moment. As you look around you today, find a treasure, a beautiful leaf, a stone, the sunset, the sunrise, a rainbow, a cardinal etc. that touches you with a sense of peace and beauty and says feel my love which guides you through each minute of this day and the days to come which bring a great deal of beauty and hope. What gift do you need in your heart at this moment? Don't fear reaching for it; it is within your reach.

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