

Name

**Time**

***by Deb Kosmer***

When someone we love dies - time stops. It does not take long for us to realize it is **for us only** that time has stopped. We stand caught in a time warp while the rest of the world rolls on by. We gradually become aware of this fact and sometimes have very shocking reminders of it, lightening bolts to our version of reality. Some days we may want to scream at the world and the people in it; “How dare you go on? Can’t you see I am barely holding on by just a thread? How dare you complain about such ridiculous meaningless stuff? Do you have any idea of what has happened to me? Don’t you realize? Don’t you care? How dare you laugh and carry on as though nothing has happened? My loved one has died. Nothing is funny anymore. I don’t think I will ever laugh again.”

When someone we love dies there is that invisible line between yesterday and tomorrow called today. Hard as we may try there is no going back to yesterday, that elusive time before they died. And as hard as others try to push and pull us forward, tomorrow is somewhere we don’t want to go because we know that every step in that direction is a step away from our past and the life we lived before the people we love died.

Yet as hard, as we try to avoid even thinking about it; it looms over us, an unwelcome guest and a constant reminder that it will not be avoided forever. We may rant and rave at God and the heavens, fate, doctors, ourselves, our loved ones, and whoever else we believe brought us to this moment in time. When we stop yelling; nothing has changed and we are still left with the terrible emptiness that surrounds the fact that they died.

Time creeps forward. At times so imperceptible we barely notice until one of those assaults on our reality. Snow falls and begins to pile up in our driveway and we either shovel or remain a captive in our home. Someone sends us a birthday card and we realize we are a year older. Our grandchild starts to crawl and we wonder what happened to the time when they never left our lap. We pull something unrecognizable out of our refrigerator and realize it has been there for months.

Reality begins to overcome our denial, our attempts to skirt what has happened and will continue to happen. Time passes. It does not need our permission or approval. We can no more stop it’s progression than we could stop our loved one from dying; the hard cold truth we must face.

Facing it, as frightening as that may be, is our ticket to freedom. Gradually we realize it is not meant to set us free from the person we loved but rather from the pain and sadness of their death. It sets us free to remember them, their life, our life with them, the love that we shared and that still remains. It does not mean we will forget that they died. It means that more than that we will remember that they lived. It means that we will realize over time that though they may be physically absent they live on not only in our memories but in all of the ways we include them in our today’s. We do this by talking about them, talking to them, allowing ourselves to feel their presence in ways that are comfortable and meaningful for us. They are part of our present  when we allow ourselves  to feel the love we still have for them, when we realize that love is stronger than death and that death changes relationships but does not need to end them. Once we have shared a deep connection with someone that connection cannot be undone. Sometimes when we have been hurt by someone we may sever our contact with them but out head and our heart cannot erase their memory and the connection is still there. Death is no different. We learn over time that our loving someone in presence changes to loving them in absence and though we may always wish it did not have to be that way, it is still a gift and a reminder that our love for them and theirs for us lives on, no matter how many days on the calendar turn.

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