

Time Heals, but it Still Leaves Scar Tissue

Triggers. We all have them. The pesky thing about triggers is that we think we know all of them, and then out of nowhere, they show up unannounced. Triggers are there to protect us because they're stored in our limbic brain. I'd just assume they stay there and not come out, personally. Today I was triggered and I thought I'd write about it.

Today would have been my best friend's 50th birthday. She died in a car accident when we were 16. She was my soul sister and even my blood sister. (some of you actually remember doing that with friends...it would probably be creepy now, lol) I am still very close with her family, and we named our daughter after her. I'm very intentional about keeping her memory alive, and I devote time on her birthday to remember the innocent, authentic friendship we shared beginning in the 4th grade.

There is no time table for grief, even though people will tell you there is. The thing is, we all process it differently and in our own way. Grief is any loss- a loved one, a job, a pet, a relationship, or even a big transition like a move. It is part of the human experience and my thinking brain knows this. My feeling brain forgets. My feeling brain remembers what used to be and what I wish things were today. There are numerous ways we heal from grief, and time seems to be the one thing that helps the most for me. The wound slowly grows back together in an uneven, broken kind of way; scar tissue builds up around it to protect me from the gashing pain. And most of the time I'm okay. And then I'm triggered. To cope with the sudden impact of emotions, I could talk about it, go somewhere far away in my mind and remember fondly, do an act of kindness in her memory, visit her grave. Being that close to her is cathartic for me, even though in my faith, I know her spirit is no longer where I sit, brushing off the dust, and arranging the flowers.

Another thing you can do is process some questions, and I am including them here. You can journal them, share them with someone close, or just think about them. Somehow, working through them dulls the ache and brings a sense of peace when otherwise there is none. So the next time you're hurting, or grieving, or you're triggered out of nowhere about a loss you thought you were handling for the most part, consider answering these questions:

Name the grief- what are you grieving, exactly?

The hardest time of day is...

I miss...

What is your fondest memory?

My support includes...
I wish my friends would say...
What season holds the most memories?
The things that help me the most right now are...
I can lean on...
I have hope in...

My hope is that this exercise is helpful for you in your grief. Remember there is no time line, or rule, or "normal" except what is right for you. The good news is, you will be okay...scar tissue and all.

Peace