

Grief is a particular experiencing of emotions. Particular in that the emotions simply need to be experienced. Feelings come and when they are on us it feels as though we will feel them forever. But we don't. One day you wake up and the emotion is not there, and its absence is lightness, and its absence is almost in itself a grief.

And in its place grows a particular kind of knowing, and this is, for me anyway, the shape of this knowing ... Life is short and I am grateful that this person I loved was a part of my life, even for a short time

Gratitude, and gift share greater space in my heart over time than loss, regret, anger or dreadful sadness.

Then the knowing deepens a level, in my experience ... to the knowing that my life, too, will be short, and that I want to be a gift to others. When I am gone I want others to be grateful for the gift of me.

Because this is part of the journey of grief ... it takes us deep, deep into ourselves, but it also leads us out of ourselves, outward again to care for others.

because grief clarifies things. It clarifies my love for the one who has gone, and what I valued about them.

and it clarifies what I value about my own life, and who I want to be.

Grief is a universal experience. We share it with our animal cousins also. For us humans it cuts across all divides of race and culture, education or income. So, we guess, it is part of our made-in-the-image-ness. We can only guess at how God grieves.

God too ... not the 'unmoved mover' of some theologian's fantasy, some men wishing for a break from the mess of human existence, who created God in their ideal of a spiritual dimension high high high above such uncomfortable, messy things as tears and snot, sobs and rages.

Jesus wept. Not a polite tear to be dabbed by a hanky. Jesus wept.

My knowing that God shares in my grieving helps. Because grief can feel very very alone on the inside. It's easy to push people away and shut people out because no one can share this pain, this utterly unique-to-you whirl of emotion that is yours and yours alone.

I can only trust for you that you are held in a place beyond touch. And I trust that your grieving is witnessed by the Spirit of all knowing. You are treasured and held as you grieve. It's no bandaid but it is permanently present and available from the dawn of time till the end of time, the Lord of Heaven and Earth who chooses to love you, particularly through this darkest of times for you.