

Connecting

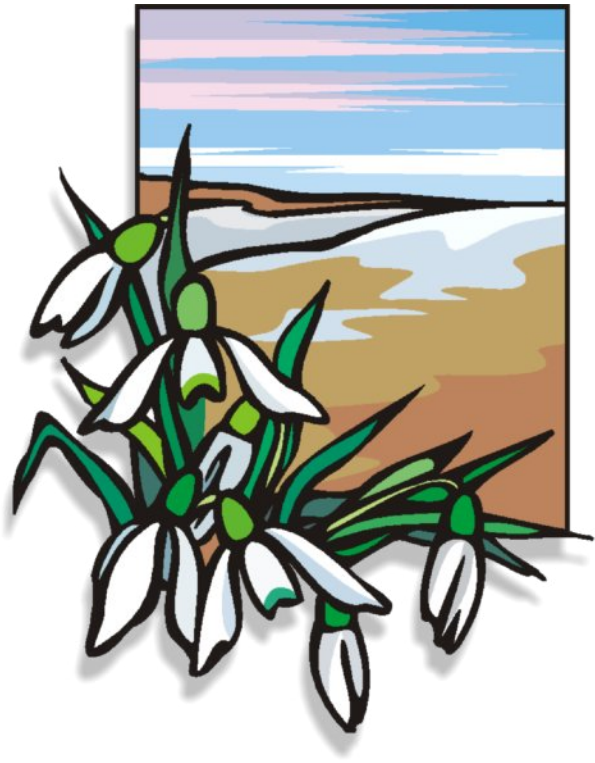
April, 2020

Welcome, everyone, to our first “connecting” article at SABF.

Try to imagine a big virtual hug greeting you right now as some of us (maybe you?) sit in our “Daytime PJ’s”, watching cable news, again; and waiting again...to change into our “Nighttime PJ’s”. Some of us hate the social distancing and isolation, while others call to say they are embracing it. Not having to put on makeup, do dishes, answer the door, or go out to do our usual errands may be a welcome reprieve for some. For those who are grieving, perhaps newly bereaved....you may have sheltered in place-- lonely and alone with your sorrow and fears....at a time when you most need somebody to hold & comfort you...in person. I welcome you!

Suddenly, through this Covid-19 virus outbreak, we found ourselves in a time of hiatus, reflection, perhaps a life review. As you try to make sense of your personal grief, this pandemic has created a whole new reality of its own. We are forced to adhere to strict health and safety guidelines for our own safety, and that of others. A stern reminder, that like grief, nobody is immune from this horrific virus. It has become like an unwanted houseguest...landing unexpectedly on our doorstep, and refusing to leave, even when it has overstayed its welcome.

Many are struggling with concerns about their own health, and that of their loved ones. Others find themselves unemployed and financial worries are keeping them up at nights. For those who still have a job, many are very reluctant to forge ahead into a viral blizzard, fearing that every breath they take may be the invisible enemy landing to settle into a fresh new victim or carrier. It is natural for those mourning the loss of a loved one to feel



disenfranchised in your grief, as everything else around us seems to take precedence over the incredible despair you are experiencing right now. It may feel as though you have nobody who remembers that you are ripped apart by your sorrow, because the conversations all start and end with comments about “the virus”. I am so very sorry for your loss; and hope that through these little connecting articles on our website, you can feel some connection with our members...all of whom have travelled that grief journey themselves. It is natural to be struggling with a lack of energy, feelings of being overwhelmed in a situation that is new and alien to us, and fearful that the future does not look as bright or hopeful as we once believed.

Many say they look around their home, mindful of all they could be doing, or “should be doing” at this time, yet lack the desire, energy or motivation to do anything. I hear you. Grief, coupled with this Covid-19 pandemic has drained us-- physically, emotionally, spiritually, and psychologically. Perhaps this is a time to do only what we

can...don't overreach so far that you set yourself up for failure and even more frustration. Pace yourselves...clean out a corner of your desk instead of the whole office; and then be proud of what you have

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accomplished. Call or email a friend. Take out the garbage. Mourn those who have passed. Pray for those who are ill. Take a chair outside and listen to the birds or feel the warmth of the sun comforting you. At our Links group, we make a point of offering some educational information, coping skills, motivational stories, and yes, even some light-hearted levity to let you know that you have permission to smile and laugh when life throws you a chocolate-covered cherry that you never expected. We all need chocolate sometimes! Treat that last roll of toilet paper with the respect and dignity it deserves. Who knew that our beloved TP would one day be elevated to “Top Seller” on Kijiji?? (insert your smile here!)

I know your branches may feel weak and frail right now, as though they may snap and break with the slightest winds of adversity, but your roots are stronger than you may ever know. The human spirit is undeniably a formidable force, even when faced with an adversary such as the Coronavirus. Now is a good time to dig deep for those roots, give them a good tug now and then to strengthen them, so that we can stay well grounded in the coming days.

We are resilient, strong, compassionate and ever-hopeful beings that can, and will get through this tsunami of emotions...being tossed and turned upside down for a while—but when we finally are swept back onto shore, we may find that we have adapted new and finer ways of moving forward...perhaps with new priorities in our lives, new goals we've set for

ourselves, or new lessons learned on how vital we are to others, and they are to us...and how reliant we are on each other, particularly during times of conflict or crisis. We see, too, how much our actions, big or small, intended or not, directly impact others. That in itself should give us all pause when lighting our way forward.

We know how disappointing it is for those of you who visit our website hoping to see an announcement date for the next meeting. Unfortunately, we do not know when that will be; but will keep you posted via this website as to when our support group and social events will resume again. In the meantime, my heart breaks for each of you who have lost a loved one, and I want you to know that you are being wrapped up and held close with much love and support; whether you are a long-time member of our group, a newcomer, or someone who has yet to become a cherished “Link” in our St. Albert Bereavement family. It is so difficult to sit at home indefinitely, seemingly without purpose, yet it is ESSENTIAL that we adhere to the safeguards that will help us get through to the other side of this angry river that is ravaging our shores and disturbing our lives as we knew them to be.

We are going to link ourselves together, as we always do, knowing that we will be stronger that way. We can, and will, companion you—walk alongside you, through your sorrow & grief. Please stay well; and keep linked into this website for occasional updates, announcements and articles to keep in touch with each other. Even though you may feel alone right now, know that we are close and connected...in spirit and friendship!

Carol Dickson, CGSC
Certified Grief Support Counsellor
Links Support Group (Facilitator)

St. Albert Bereavement Fellowship
(780)458-6528
carol@stalbertbereavement.ca

“I came alone. I left connected.”