

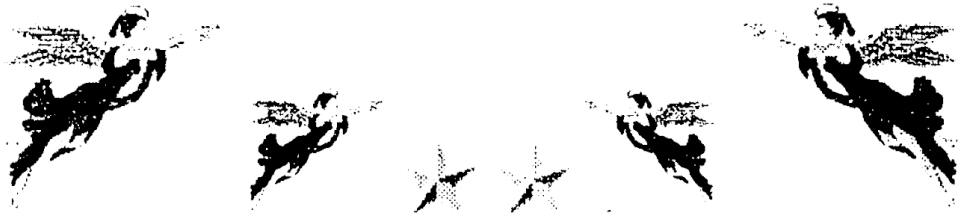
Subject: [Fwd: Do Not "Hurry" Grief - Do Not Ignore "Fear" - Reasonable Solutions]

Date: Mon, 29 Oct 2001 09:23:35 -0500

From: Foxcom—Janet Scollo <Foxcom@snet.net>

To: IANDS Board Members <board@iands.org>

"Carla Wills-Brandon Ph.D." wrote:



Professional acquaintances recently went to New York City to assist the family members of those who had lost loved ones in the horrific World Trade Center bombings on September the 11th. Upon returning, they commented on several observations. One was that many of the family members were still in denial, having difficulty accepting that their loved ones had died. This is to be expected and its normal. Very normal. When the Challenger space ship blew up, Michael and I assisted flight medicine. Many of the surviving loved ones, professional peers, etc., were in shock for a full year. With all of the media attention given to the tragedy, many found it difficult to really have grief. As one woman put it, "I didn't really 'defrost' until 18 months later. Then the reality of my loss set in." This too is normal. One other professional reported an observation which was much more concerning. Some well intended helping professionals have been trying to "force" grief. A few of the television "media" self help folk have also been doing this. Trying to force us as a nation, to "sprint" through our grief. Move on...heal "now!" Return to daily living. This in my opinion is extremely inappropriate. Numbness is a feeling, a valuable defense mechanism. When we are not prepared or ready to feel the full impact of loss (rage, grief, fear, gut wrenching tears and hopelessness, abandonment) numb comes to our rescue. This emotion must be honored. I must hear the word "anthrax" at least 50 times a day. Though many of us maybe "sick and tired" of hearing such reports, a residue of fear remains. Fear is a "healthy" emotion. This emotion alerts us to possible danger. If we were to come home at night and find our front door ajar, "fear" would encourage us to call the police and use caution upon entering the house. Fear forces us to move out of the problem and into the solution. Fear without solution moves into "terror." Terror leaves us feeling powerless, vulnerable. What can we do? Take action. Terror is defused with action. This action can range from joining a support group, meditation group, 12 step group, church group, coffee group, to discuss these world events, to taking a martial arts class. Taking action is the key. Sweeping "fear" aside only perpetuates terror and this terror will surface as nightmares, increased anxiety, physical illness, depression, sideways anger, irritation, hopelessness and in extreme cases, bouts of agoraphobia (the need to stay home - fearful of venturing out to take care of business, meet with friends). Canceling Halloween is an example of extreme terror. Respect "numb" and honor your "fear." Move from the "problem" into the "solution."

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"There is no room for the person of good will to experience..."