

The Revolutionary Love Learning Hub

“What Does it Mean to Grieve?” - Grieving Transcript

Recording by Valarie Kaur, 2021

Grieving is the practice of feeling the pain of loss. Grief is the price of love.

We grieve what we have loved, loving someone means that one day there will be grieving, they will leave you or you will leave them. The more you love, the more you will grieve in this lifetime. Loving someone also means grieving with them, it means letting their pain and loss bleed into your own heart. And when you see that pain coming, you may want to put up the guardrails. Sound the alarm. Raise the flag. But you must keep the borders of your heart porous when you love someone.

Think of the closest relationships in your own life. I think of my own husband, my partner, and any time that he is undergoing loss and pain, what it means to sit with him and let his grief into my heart. That's what it means to love him well. There's no fixing grief. There's only carrying it and helping one another carry it.

You see, grieving is not something we just survive and overcome. It's an ongoing journey. It's an act of transformation. And when we are brave with our grief, it deepens our understanding of the world in ourselves. It deepens our capacity to love.

Now, what does that mean in a time of unprecedented grief in the world between a global pandemic, a racial uprising for justice, all the economic pain that people are feeling. So many years of assaults on our safety and security for those of us who are people of color or oppressed people that has gone on not just the last few years, but much, much longer than that.

What does it mean to be grieving with people we don't know? You see grieving with people in the face of this kind of loss, this kind of injustice and violence—being present to their pain—is about building new relationships. You don't have to know people in order to grieve with them. You grieve with them in order to know them. And this shared grieving creates deep solidarity.

You see our solidarity is only as deep as our ability to love one another. And our ability to love one another is only as deep as our ability to weep with one another. Who we grieve with determines who we fight for. And not in a superficial way, not like I donated once to that. Or I use that hashtag that one time. No, I'm talking about a deep and sustainable way of showing up for communities because they are your sisters and brothers and siblings.

That is how we last. That's how transformation happens. And grieving together, that initial act of sitting with each other and taking that pain into a heart that gives us information for our particular role in the fight for justice. This is how grieving, shared grieving becomes an act of revolutionary love.