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The DOWNTOWNER

Randy's Ramblings...

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Sadness is not a weakness...and myths about grief and loss..

Love from Mikki...

This note from a grieving sister, mourning the suicide of her brother, crossed my desk recently. I thought it needed to be shared.
~ Randy Allman

So the other day a friend of mine was a bit upset...her boyfriend had been obnoxious when she was feeling sad and down...she had noticed a pattern...If she felt sad or hurt...he would respond by putting her down or by making her feel uncomfortable about it..or getting angry...instead of comforting her. She said to me..." I finally realized...he thinks sadness is a weakness".. This made sense as he often seems to run from his own feelings.. and tries to act like things don't bother him.. or drinks too much.

I mentioned that a friend of mine thought I could overcome my grief over my brother by just changing how I think about things. I just didn't think it was that easy and my other friend and I talked about this. We thought that there are certainly some losses you can overcome by thinking of them in a more positive way...but the ones that involve your HEART...you just have to go through the feelings. Grief is recognized in every culture.

I was taught, "You can't go around, over, or under your feelings...you just have to go through them and either express them or physically get them out.. or they won't go away." I have always found this to be true.. If I don't get them out.. I can't move on from them.

Another friend said that she just thought our emotional wounds heal slowly just like our physical wounds. When we have losses it takes time for our brains to adjust. It doesn't happen overnight necessarily.

Last night I read an article in a Reader's Digest that talked about this idea that "Sadness means you are weak".. It talked about how many men who act out in anger are actually covering up sadness and even depression. Our society often projects the idea it is "Not Macho" to be sad. Before my brother committed suicide, he was apparently acting angry a lot. He lived in New England...where the culture extends from the English...who preach..."Keep a stiff upper lip" and "Never let them see you cry."

When my brother died...one male friend said..." I remember when I learned as a little boy..."Boys don't cry."

Women also get caught up in these ideas. Women's Lib led to American Women believing that they should and could be everything a man could be.. exactly the same. Hey...our bodies are different. Generally women are more emotional because of our chemistry. We aren't men.. we are meant to be female.

Again.. this doesn't mean we are weak.. or even unequal...just different. Most women are quite strong in their own right.

My favorite men are the ones who are real. They expect me to be a girl.. and allow for that and understand it. I am very lucky to have men in my life who just let me be a girl. They fix my car, let me be emotional, mow my lawn, admire my femininity, understand my PMS, apologize when they are a**es (LOL!), and talk about things when needed, etc.

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