

Palliative Care : It's More Than You Think.

"The "ME" that is".

The diagnosis is grim and very heavy to carry. I set off, alone with one's thoughts.

Did he say palliative care? Who me?

Is death nearby?

Who are you DEATH?

A moment in my time, lonely, solemn, fearful. But what is that I feel, a caring hand extended in compassion and friendship, bringing forth hope and a warm surge of serenity. Yes please, says my care, I will be your companion on this new road, that we shall travel, let us turn together and face forward in the sunbeam shaft of golden goodness.

We have NOW – no further yet! Let us just BE.

My dignity takes a tumble and embarrassment keeps up a presence, but the sun continues to welcome me each day and I gain a great chance to interact with my carer, a new awareness of my personal world as I now find it.

There is no blueprint to follow in this living of day and night, it is about some choices, it is my NOW to BE.

Emotions rock me from every angle, is this really ME who now gratefully accepts the many services of a palliative care team as they go about their professional duties of personal care, medication, toileting, mobility, religion, culture, spirituality, emotional wellbeing – overall holistic care.

They are the angelic hands that bring my unreal, fuzzy, confused world back to reality and motivate me with words of endearment and encouragement. They bring their humanness and daily doses of goodness to join together all the many moments of my day and life. I am now joined with them and they with me as our lives, both physical and spiritual move forward from NOW to tomorrow and any that may come after.

Time spent in contemplation, solitude, companionship passes the hands around the clock, which we appear to dwell on for orderly routine to succeed.

Food and nourishment prepared and presented, pain management also with the attention to the clock.

Time now to open oneself to the sound of the birdcall, to smell a flower, to watch all the colours that flash by so quickly – to take a time - journey in mind and share with a companion who can actively and reflectively listen to my own past footprints of travel.

Search among photographs, smile at the faces looking back at me, a silent powerful message between pages of sepia. Ofttimes it seems I can even enjoy the smell of the ink and paper of a treasured photo and the warmth of feeling that brings. A smile now on our faces together as we ramble along the memory trail. Life and death mingle and have less power to fear.

My fear has subsided for a time, I have moved through some baggage trunks buried deep down in my core of being and thrown out some of the heaviness of my heartstrings.

Out went Malice - I packed Forgiveness

Out went Suspicion - I packed Trust

Out went Greed - I packed Satisfaction

Out went Pride - I packed Acceptance

Out went Self Guilt - I packed Appreciation

Self-Care

Let it go and let it BE.

Much room now to relate to memories of family, parties, celebrations, children. Pain is a constant companion and the heartache and worries of yesteryear are part of the whole ME so I gather them up as best I can each day and blend them in the mix that makes up the person I am. I know that every day I can search for and find a measure of happiness in myself now that I have wonderful, caring support to lift me up when I feel down, to listen when I need to speak, to just BE when I AM. They leave their own concerns and wishes and come to me to be my world each day.

So you see!! Palliative Care is Absolutely Loaded with Love.

Ellen Della Bosca.