

Dog Gone Grief

Last month, I responded to a woman struggling with her dog's terminal heart condition. It was a difficult issue to address because my dog Barnie had the same diagnosis. I'm glad I took my own advice. This month's column is dedicated to him. My beloved best friend of 13 years died suddenly on Saturday. His little heart just gave out and mine shattered into countless pieces.

Synchronistic miracles brought Barnie into my life, and the magic never stopped. He provided comfort through the illness and passing of my first husband, North. Afterwards, just the two of us traversed the U.S. for nine months in an RV before making a new life in Colorado. He thrived on connection and treats, mastering the art of "holding the high watch" through countless practitioner sessions and workshops.

I attended a Marianne Williamson lecture on her new book "Tears to Triumph" the night before he died. Quite a "coincidence" considering she played a pivotal, supportive role through North's cancer, sharing life-altering insight with me within minutes of his last breath. So hearing her echo my passion for allowing ourselves to FEEL life's heartbreaks unexpectedly prepared me for my own once again.

I say this to you, my friends and readers: Deep love is worth the pain! If you are in anguish, allow it, honor it. Do as I did — slip down the well of grief and let that keening sound rise from your throat! Because, by the grace of God, our swollen eyes will see the light again. As Williamson wrote of her own experience, "... my journeys through deep sadness have ultimately shown me as much light as darkness." I'll let my favorite poet bring this column home, but first, I extend my deep gratitude to all of you and to Barnie. I miss you fiercely, little dog! ❀



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THE WELL OF GRIEF by David Whyte

*Those who will not slip beneath the still surface on the well of grief,
turning downward through its black water to the place we cannot breathe,
will never know the source from which we drink, the secret water,
cold and clear, nor find in the darkness glimmering
the small round coins thrown by those who wished for something else.*