

## **Ways of Transforming Through Wilderness - Pandemic, Loss, Grief**

Tim P. VanDuivendyk, DMin, MDiv, BS, Retired Chaplain, LPC, LMFT

### Methods of “feeling” your way into new thoughts and actions

- Emotional catharsis, release, and expression can clear the way for creativity, new thoughts, new action and a lighter load.
- Be aware of how your feelings of grief can collect teaspoonful by teaspoonful.
- Go into and through grief, not around it. Don't avoid or suppress grief.
- Process feelings and grief with a trusted friend, colleague or mentor.
- Name your anxiety and why you are anxious.
- Name your fears and why you are fearful.
- Pray real. Be open and honest with your feelings toward God/Higher Power.

### Methods of “thinking” your way into new feelings and actions

- Come to value being not just doing.
- Develop gratitude - Be grateful for the small stuff.
- Search for the positive and reframe the negative.
- Name the negative but do not dwell on the negative.
- Think different - get out of sameness thinking.
- Think that worth/value is not limited to role, job, status, material things.
- Think that God will see you through this wilderness, loss, storm, change, pandemic, etc.

### Methods of “acting” (taking action) your way into new thoughts and feelings

- Start positive actions and new feelings and new thoughts will follow.
- Visit and talk with loving people and family.
- Rather than avoid change, be a part of change. Try on new roles and/or activities and be open to what might happen.
- Offer love, service or altruism to others... giving love away can fill you up (energize you).
- Do not act upon new thoughts and feelings until you first process them.
- Eat healthy, exercise, play, and sleep regularly.
- Develop a prayer/meditation time in your daily schedule.

### More “spiritual pathways” that can transform you through the wilderness/change

- Come to believe - you are being transformed every day.
- Come to believe - change is an unwanted gift but a gift.
- Come to believe - change leads to new possibilities and opportunities.
- Come to believe - God is out ahead in the future, and brings good out of virus/chaos/loss.
- Develop the balancing faith act between “letting go of” and “holding on to”.
- Develop letting go, letting be...letting God.
- Experience prayer/meditation time every day.