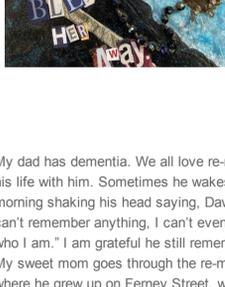


Re-remembering

For the last few years I have given up on resolutions and have chosen a word instead. Last year it was **simplify** and it's manifestation was a strong desire to finish projects, get rid of stuff and make my world simpler. I am happy to report my To Do List is almost done. Some of the things have been on the list for over 5 years. And things do feel simpler.

Well, my word this year is **remembering**. Stick with me here a minute because my 2020 word has already taken a bit of a meander. Consider this, the word **member** is defined as "a constituent piece of a complex structure." Can I hear an amen for the fact that yours truly is a complex structure?

When I pondered the word I was reflecting about all the parts or members of who I have been throughout my life...dreamer, spiritual director, farmer, artist, gardener, quilter, sewer, canner, cowgirl, labyrinth builder, Camino pilgrim, kayaker, biker, etc. I miss some of those parts of me. As I age I realize some of those parts will always just be great memories but I want to reclaim those parts that still bring me joy. In essence, I wish to "**re-member**" some my favorite parts of me and bring them back into my life.



The last 10 years have been a lot about ambition, transition and humbling in that order, from leaving my primary care patients at Crowne Pointe, then leaving UF and Gainesville, becoming a Hospice doctor for a while and then finding my niche as a Hospitalist, changes in my body and lifestyle after I was diagnosed with melanoma, and even bigger changes after my partner in crime was diagnosed with advanced throat cancer, all in the midst of launching The Still Place. I am reminded of this art project my niece Livi and I did when she was young. She pulled these words out of a poem in a book, "...and the wind just blew her away." We both did our own collage based on those words. Over the last decade, I've been a bit like my rendition... a bit dis-membered.

My dad has dementia. We all love re-remembering his life with him. Sometimes he wakes up in the morning shaking his head saying, Dawn, "I just can't remember anything, I can't even remember who I am." I am grateful he still remembers me. My sweet mom goes through the re-remembering of where he grew up on Ferny Street, where they fell in love at Pat O'Brein's in the French Quarter, who his kids are, where he worked, the farm in Dover. Sometimes he asks was I a good father, was I a good husband? He has had such a rich life it is pretty easy and before long he relaxes and starts his own re-remembering.



At The Still Place as I spend time with families from the first phone call introduction to our conversations years later, I often see reflections of the same. Beautiful, creative, loving men and women who have fought battles on so many fronts for so many years that they have trouble remembering the parts of themselves they enjoyed before...before that fateful day when they heard the worse news possible and woke up the next morning to know that it wasn't just a bad dream.

So many traumas pile up that either frantic busyness or overwhelming numbness (and sometimes a little of both) take over and become a way of life. Sadly, as I know personally, even when the threats subside we somehow feel safer or think we are more functional living in the chaos and sometimes even creating more chaos. It is so easy when transitions and crisis happen to lose track of ourselves. We are in warrior, survival mode to fight the disease or the crisis at hand. And honestly for me everything became a little crisis or threat of crisis even when it wasn't. There was not much room for me sometimes in my own life, only a sense of relentlessly being on guard for the next assault, for the cancer to return, for the guilt to rise, for a mistake at work, for the next worse thing to happen.

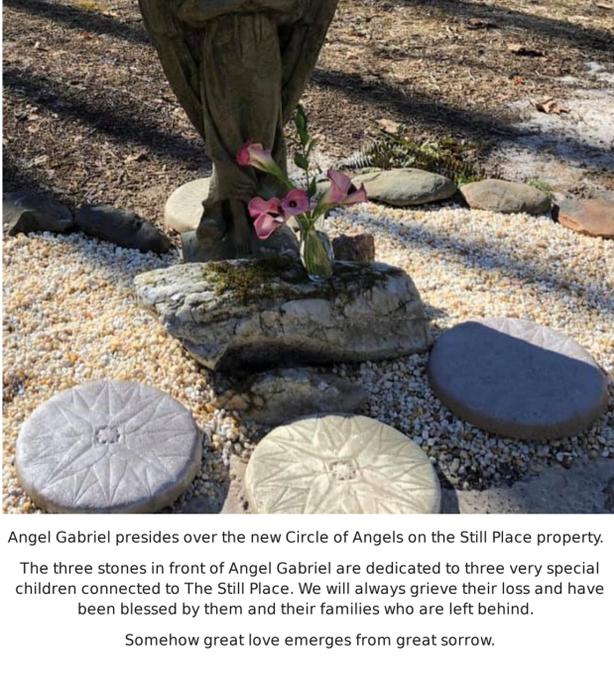
And I can tell you it is so real for so many of the families I have met at The Still Place. As soon as your child is out of the woods, you lose your house, you are diagnosed with cancer, you are detached from your spouse or partner.



If you see 2020 as a time of transitioning into a new decade filled with possibilities for change, I invite you to join me in **re-remembering** all those parts of yourself you have had to set aside over the last decade. Be still. Ask yourself if you can step away from the chaos and remember the parts of yourself you enjoy. Release those things that will never be again, find the ones that you still cherish and dream ahead to new adventures that delight your soul and bring you energy.

Then, perhaps when you look back one day and your children help you re-remember you will be strength that pulled you through the difficult times and days of celebrating the love that lit your way.

Dr. Dawn



Angel Gabriel presides over the new Circle of Angels on the Still Place property. The three stones in front of Angel Gabriel are dedicated to three very special children connected to The Still Place. We will always grieve their loss and have been blessed by them and their families who are left behind.

Somehow great love emerges from great sorrow.

Helping Someone Who's Grieving

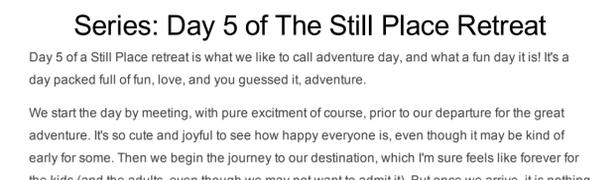
When someone you care about is grieving after a loss, it can be difficult to know what to say or do. The bereaved struggle with many intense and painful emotions, including depression, anger, guilt, and profound sadness. Often, they also feel isolated and alone in their grief, since the intense pain and difficult emotions can make people uncomfortable about offering support.

You may be afraid of intruding, saying the wrong thing, or making your loved one feel even worse at such a difficult time. Or maybe you think there's little you can do to make things better. That's understandable. But don't let discomfort prevent you from reaching out to someone who is grieving. Now, more than ever, your loved one needs your support. You don't need to have answers or give advice or say and do all the right things. The most important thing you can do for a grieving person is to simply be there. It's your support and caring presence that will help your loved one cope with the pain and gradually begin to heal.

Kelli

The keys to helping a loved one who's grieving

- Don't let fears about saying or doing the wrong thing stop you from reaching out
- Let your grieving loved one know that you're there to listen
- Understand that everyone grieves differently and for different lengths of time
- Offer to help in practical ways
- Maintain your support after the funeral



Series: Day 5 of The Still Place Retreat

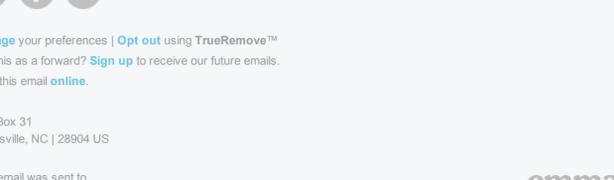
Day 5 of a Still Place retreat is what we like to call adventure day, and what a fun day it is! It's a day packed full of fun, love, and you guessed it, adventure.

We start the day by meeting, with pure excitement of course, prior to our departure for the great adventure. It's so cute and joyful to see how happy everyone is, even though it may be kind of early for some. Then we begin the journey to our destination, which I'm sure feels like forever for the kids (and the adults, even though we may not want to admit it). But once we arrive, it is nothing but laughter, fun times, and good memories!

Some of our favorite adventures are horseback riding at the base of our beautiful mountains, white water rafting down the Nantahala River, ziplinning through the North Carolina canopies, or adventuring for some pretty awesome gems. Thank you to all of our amazing partners for making these adventures possible!

Giving the feeling of resiliency and empowerment is such a big part of what we strive to do at The Still Place, and Adventure Day definitely has a way of bringing that out. Our kids and families are constantly told what they CAN'T do. The illness fills their minds with a constant NO NO NO. But on this day, it's YES YES YES, you CAN do it!!!

WE LOVE OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM!



[Visit our website for more information](#)



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