

Lost and Found

On the 2nd of January, I lost a very close friend to cancer. It had been a long exhausting fight for over a year. I went to see her and her partner, a former Neutral Grounder, at the hospice on New Year's Eve and said my goodbye then. We all knew, as her partner said when we were leaving, "there probably will not be another opportunity to visit". So, after the first of several waves of tears, I started thinking about loss and how it affects our lives. The loss of a friend, the loss of a relationship, the loss of yourself.

As a facilitator for six plus years, I still keep in my thoughts what brought me to Neutral Ground and the feelings that I had when I first walked through the doors in September of 2004.

I had been married for 27 years when I started my divorce. During my separation and after the first year of my divorce, I got into another relationship that lasted 3 years. It ended really badly. Not only was I physically injured, but I realized that I had really lost me. My counselor and another Neutral Grounder had told me about Neutral Ground, but I thought I could do it on my own. After my marriage and my next relationship ended, I finally figured out that I needed more. I needed to understand what had gotten me to where I was at that point. So I grabbed a friend, who was going through a divorce too, and we walked in the door at Neutral Ground. Probably the first positive move I had made in a long time.

When I sat down in Starting Over that week I was determined to do something better or different with my life. The only thing I knew was that the resentments that I had would hopefully not follow me into the future...other than that, for the first time in my life I left myself open to focus on me. Phyllis R. is the Neutral Grounder who had told me more about the support group, and said to me that "the person I should hope to meet at Neutral Ground was me." I have often quoted her in Starting Over as a facilitator. I took several groups and then decided to facilitate. Through the whole process, which I say never really ends; I keep trying to learn about me. If that sounds selfish it isn't. When I know who I am I can be better not only for myself but for all those around me.

So here is what I am really trying to say, when you come to Neutral Ground and are feeling anger and hurt and the loss of a relationship. Your feelings are real. What you do with them is going to be up to you. We won't tell you are "wrong" or to "get over them". We hope we will help you find the way to find yourself again and move on. That feeling of loss will eventually end, or be bearable, and then one day when you least expect it you can "catch" yourself smiling as you get on with your life. This is an opportunity to change what you want in your life and to make it better for you. It takes a lot of small steps to get to your goal. Hopefully, during your journey you will find the person you need to meet. "Yourself". When that happens the loss and pain can be put in its place and you will find the opportunity to move forward.

I wish you all that opportunity,

Gail

I dedicate this article to my friend Barb and her partner Rob