

Receiving the Gift

After my wife, Kathy Yoselson, died in 2012, I was left in turmoil. I still am. But how that turmoil shows itself, how it works for transformation, seems to change over time.

One of my main concerns has been to stay connected with Kathy, with her spirit, and to honor her memory. For the first year, friends and I had monthly gatherings at my house where we would hold Kathy in the heart: we would sing, read poetry aloud, listen to opera, watch old Saturday Night Live shows, talk about Kathy. There have also been gatherings and plantings held at her grave on her birthday and deathday. These will continue to be important times.

More important than remembering her as she was—and more subtle and more difficult to talk about—is being with her as she is now, in a way that might free her, help her, do what she has to do. This has to do with allowing her and my relationship to develop and also sensing her influence in the world.

So now it's not so much asking what would Kathy have done in this particular situation, what would she have liked. It's more learning to stand under, to receive, her active love. That love is now unfathomable, but even as I say this, my finite mind links it to her activities in the world when she was alive: her love and participation in music and dance, her engagement with social justice (especially in the workplace), her connection with animals...

I had inherited some money from Kathy and wasn't sure how to deal with it. I wanted to put it to good use, to support causes she would have supported, and not to have my federal income taxes go to pay for war-making. A friend suggested the Community Foundation as a way to do all those things. Using the donor advised fund, with the help of the kind and competent staff, I have found that I can meet those goals.

But this is only part of the learning. Giving a check every year was not quite enough. I had to learn—and in this I was helped tremendously by talking with Rose Feerick of Harvest Time (www.HarvestTime.cc)—I had to learn to receive this money as a gift from Kathy and then truly give it as a gift. I'm still learning this.

What happens now is that every year, when I present a check to the Community Foundation, we have a little party. Friends who knew Kathy come to the office and along with the staff, we have some refreshments and some conversation, about Kathy and about what the Community Foundation does.

And we are a little more connected with her and with each other, which she would like.