

Veteran Holiday Season

December 1, 2019

For many of us the holiday season tends to be one of the more emotionally charged times of a year. This phenomenon repeats itself every year, regardless of how we work to lessen its impact on us. For me it is like the changing of the seasons, I know it is coming, I may not like it, I realize I cannot change it and I need to adapt to it. Now in my 69th year on this spinning globe I finally accept the fact I cannot change the coming of the seasons, nor can I change the coming of the emotions during the holiday season.

Over the years we've operated Qualified Listeners I've had the honor to spend about 1,000 hours listening to Veterans and their family members share pieces of their lives. From great joy to intense pain and everything in between. I never predicted the amount of diversity in the stories people have to share. Even now I know I cannot predict what I might hear, because every person is unique in their experiences and I've come to develop a great respect for that uniqueness.

I know December is a very difficult month for me because I lost my best friend and my brother in a plane crash on December 22, 1996 at 6:05 pm, EDT. My world will never be the same without him and it took me a full year to begin to internalize the positive from our relationship instead of only focus on the pain of losing him. It took my wife and me 10 years before we even put up any Christmas decorations again and even now it is not every year.

I know this is coming and the thoughts begin at Thanksgiving or the traditional start of the "holiday season". The power I have now is I recognize it is coming, I know pain is coming down the track again, but I control my reaction to it. For a few years it absolutely devastated me for most of December, put me in the dumps and I felt bad. I know many people who have emotions that arise this time of year for a vast array of reasons.

I can now process and deal with it because I have talked about it a great deal, and I do every year. I have some people in my life I can talk to very candidly about what I feel when the train arrives. Please find someone to listen to you, and if you cannot, give us a call at 720-600-0860 and we will. It is imperative you talk to someone and share your feelings and thoughts.

You may be amazed on how much better you feel if you just talk to someone who won't judge what you feel but listen from their heart.

After all, this is what this season is about, loving, caring and sharing. It should not be about giving gifts, it should be about giving love, kindness, understanding and compassion.

There are thousands of us who care about you, you are not alone!