



## Fires, pandemic teach that we are one

by Gary Zukav    Monday, October 5th 2020

The fires at home and the global pandemic teach us the same thing in the same ways.

Driving to Central Point from Ashland, I saw some of the ashes of the fire in Phoenix from the freeway. I cried in the car. I was not prepared. I saw the videos of these neighboring towns on fire. I had seen the videos of Napa and Sonoma counties on fire, where our friends evacuated their homes, too, but I was not prepared. Why did these ashes beside the freeway move me to my core? Why did my soul stir?

Who in Ashland has not thought, "What if the wind had been blowing south that day?"

Who in Talent and Phoenix and Medford has not thought, "What if the wind had been blowing south?" I realized that whether my home burned or my neighbor's home burned, a home burned, lives were changed, and I would not be the same. The deep connections I feel with my neighbors — here in the valley and around the world — came into me with a depth and richness I had not felt before. I intend to keep that depth and richness, that love, alive in me long after new houses are built, and the shock of changed lives evolves into the power of new and deeper lives, awake with the wonder of neighbors so dear, of love around us, and of life.

I felt the same things while talking with a friend who was brought home after five days in an ICU with the coronavirus, with barely enough strength to hold her phone.

"Today I thought I was going to die," she told us — not only about the ICU, but about the day when we were speaking to her. My spiritual partner, Linda Francis,

and I read her chapters from “The Seat of the Soul” until her strength began to return. She lived. Others did not. Our home still stands. Others are gone. The hugeness of the change is the same. The pandemic shows us that we are all in this together. The fires show us that we are all in this together. The opening of homes to those without them, giving of food to those without food, and the care and support that flows toward our neighbors here shows us the same thing.

We are one. If we were not, why would we be so deeply affected? What lines of communication transmit grief, despair, hope and love from one of us to another? They are experiences of love. If we are as separate as I once felt, why would driving by ashes of homes I seldom noticed before bring tears to me?

Our adopted Lakota brother, Phil Lane, Jr., told us, “The honor of one is the honor of all, and the pain of one is the pain of all.”

So we cry for one another, even while driving on the freeway, because their pain is our pain, and our pain is their pain.

In every way, at every moment, we are one. That does not change and has never changed. Only our awareness of it changes. The fires at home and the pandemic everywhere are showing us this in the tender and resilient ways of the heart. They are teaching us the greatest lesson that we can learn, if we are open to learning it. We are one. What greater lesson is there?

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