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**Opinion: Seeing one another, and crying together**

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Published: 6/4/2022 6:02:25 AM

Modified: 6/4/2022 6:00:15 AM

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Anais Nin said, “We don’t see the world as it is. We see it as we are.”

I believe when we’re fully in the present moment, seeing, feeling, sensing, and absorbing what is right in front of us, it “is” who we are.

When I see the faces of the children and teachers who were gunned down at Robb Elementary School, my belly starts to shake, and I can’t stop the tears. Can’t. I’m a mom, a grandma. I can’t imagine how you make it through.

How you get up the next morning, and the next, get breakfast for your other loved ones, take out the trash, pay bills, take a shower, clean . . . how you live through the birthday each year, grill hotdogs on the 4th of July, carve the turkey, hang the Christmas lights, all without the little one you’ve lost.

What do you do with all that sweet — please don’t touch it — mess in the bedroom that was hurriedly left behind on that fateful morning? How do you continue on “as if” things were even remotely something like they used to be? How do you do that? I can’t begin to say. And yet, so often now, moms, dads, grandparents and other loved ones do, every day.

But something else happens if we’re fully in the present moment with all the horror, the absolute most painful and tragic times of life. Sometimes we can feel ourselves abruptly jolted and cracked open, to now fully “see” one another as simply fellow human beings.

In times like these, I could care less if those grieving are Hispanic, Republican or Democratic, Black, brown or white, rich or poor. Care less. Now all I see is my sister, my brother right there in front of me. I am them. They are me. And we’re crying together.

And I feel something that is often, at least temporarily, awakened in many of us in the quake of such horror, a love for my fellow brothers and sisters that is now truly unconditional.

Perhaps this is the unintentional byproduct, or could we possibly even say the gift of such times, to now be able to feel our oneness, free of labels or conditions, with those who, just yesterday, were simply strangers passing by. If so, just for a few moments, we are changed for now we see the world as it is, “and” as we are, one with all our brothers and sisters, beyond the surface of all those differences we may have once felt were so important.

Something I love to do is to go out in nature and find different items wanting to come together to create something new and beautiful. Much like us, these nature items are, initially, unrelated in almost every way.

They’re found in different places, they’re different colors, textures, sizes and at different stages of growth and life. But when I look at what’s created, it makes me wonder if we too could come together in much the same way in times such as these?

I believe we could if we can allow ourselves to see, feel, fully know the horror of this moment, and to experience all the unconditional love it arouses. If so, maybe, just maybe, we could, together, imagine some new, more beautiful pathways forward, pathways that honor those brief moments when we were cracked open to see and remember our oneness with all our brothers and sisters.

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