

## Re-weaving the web of my life ...

For several months one summer, a spider lived on my balcony. This spider spun its web suspended between the handle of the gas BBQ, the balcony railing, and the wall of my house. Although an apparently vulnerable place to construct a life (especially since every use of the BBQ required a re-weaving of the web!), for a whole season the spider lived with us. The overhanging roof protecting it from the elements, and the balcony light drawing bugs, giving the spider regular and easy access to a food source. So by the fall, the spider, now well practiced in web spinning, was big and fat.

Every time I saw that spider, I was reminded of the idea I learned from Thomas Attig, in his book *How We Grieve - Relearning the World*<sup>1</sup>. He writes primarily about the loss of bereavement, but speaks of the experience of any loss in our life as one of having a whole pierced in the web of our life.

A small loss or disappointment like missing a bus, may leave an inconvenient, but easily repaired tear, while the death of a precious friend leaves us with a huge wrenching hole in the center of the fabric of our lives. There is often no choice involved in our experience of loss - the phone call from the Doctor's office, the merging of businesses leading to job layoffs, the stick turns blue ... out of 'nowhere' our lives are irrevocably changed.

There IS however, choice involved in grieving a loss. Every time something triggers a wash of emotion, and with a significant loss - one that touches the core of our lives - those waves come frequently, we are faced with a choice moment. Like the spider every time I opened the BBQ cover, we are presented with the choice of whether or not to invest the energy in re-weaving our web.

Do I have the courage to again recreate the many facets of my life that have been touched by loss? Some of these include my physical surroundings (what do I do when I instinctively reach for the phone to share some news and remember there's no one there to answer?), my relationships with others who may or may not be grieving themselves (and dealing with those who think I should already be 'over' my grief), my very self (who am I when I am no longer Office Manager?), my place in space and time (dealing with anniversaries, and other significant days, coming to terms with memories, hopes and dreams associated with this particular loss), my spiritual place in the world (facing the questions about our understanding of life, death and suffering in the world, and my relationship with God that may have been precipitated by the loss).

---

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Attig - *How we Grieve - Relearning the World*. Published by Oxford University Press 1996.

No matter the size, ANY loss, has some effect - reverberates through the WHOLE web of my life. The challenge, as always, is to be accepting of and gentle with myself; taking all the time required to make meaning of the gift to my life of whatever has been lost, and being willing to experience all the emotions that wash through me as I do the work of re-weaving the web of my life - learning appropriate ways of being myself in this new world of my experience.

This grieving is part of the mystery of coming to know and re-create meaning and purpose as a 'self' in the world. In time seeing myself as irrevocably changed, but whole, and bearing an enriched gift to offer the larger whole with which I once again feel connected.