Columns



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Grief was knocking at my door and refusing to go away because I was mourning the loss of some belongings I once held dear. It was a different kind of grief, without a way to replace what was lost. I had a collection of CDs with my favorite music saved over the years. I moan: Where is my music? No one knows. Not a clue.

I had carefully recorded all birthdays and special moments on a perpetual calendar that hung on the wall in my bedroom. Years of special days recorded — not to forget. Remembering and it breaks my heart to forget.

Start over. I am angry to the point of tears.

I was sick and in the hospital with pneumonia and a recent stroke. I was unable to go back to my apartment, and it needed to be cleaned and closed. Generous friends volunteered to do the job. I was not there to tell them what to store and save, and what to give away. As a result, precious items were discarded. Without malice. Just helping out as friends.

So I thank my friends, but grieve the loss and continue to search for memories. That’s all that is left for me. More moaning. Where are those treasures?

I do not regret the rage or the tears. They all remind me of what had been and are worthy of what has been. The pain is certain, and the loss is forever, but the memory leaves behind joy.

So I thank my generous friends but grieve the loss and search for treasured memories. It breaks my heart to forget. More moaning. Where are those memories?

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I do not regret the rage or the loss or the tears. They all remind me of the glory days and are worthy of memory. The pain is certain, the loss is forever, but the memory leaves behind joy.

I mourn the loss of some of the belongings that I held dear. A different kind of grief with no relief. And it hurts my heart beyond measure to remember holding my mother as she took her last breath — but I cannot remember the day because the calendar is nowhere to be found.

Who has my music? No one has a clue. That is all that’s left me. It breaks my heart to forget. More moaning. Where are those memories? I am angry to the point of tears. Where is my music? Whoever has my music is not here. If they were here, I would be hearing the music once again.

I am grateful that friends stepped up to help me out. Stuff that was valuable to me probably did not appeal to them, but they had to put stuff somewhere to make space. So, basically, I know who sorted my stuff, but I don’t know where they put it. And I miss it. It is gone, gone, gone.

Treasured memories. Never to come back. I do not regret the tears because they will not let me forget the glory days, full of love and worthy of remembering.

So finally, not who took the stuff, but who helped me and gave me the gift of generosity as they cleared and cleaned what I could not do so that I could remember.

What is becoming clearer and clearer to me as I search my memory for what I am still missing from my home since I moved is that what is missing is not as important as friends willing to give their time and energy to help me to re-establish my home. And of course, it becomes clearer and clearer to me that the one thing that cannot be replaced is the kind of friendship that shows up when most needed.

In the process I lost my home and the space that I had made my own. It is lonesome, even now, to think about it. To remember it and what I had done to make the space mine.

Fortunately, I belong to a religious community that takes care of its own. Our motherhouse is situated on many, many acres of green, green nature with plenty of space for rest and relaxation. So I had a place to go with an already built-in community that welcomed me and provided space for me to make my own. It is not nearly the same as the home I had made for myself before.

But it is enough.
It is enough.
And I am grateful.