

# Gratitude and 2020

By Jennifer Benson

I don't know about you, but at the beginning of 2020 I had all these plans, projects, etc....and that was all shot to hell come March. Friday the 13th of March, before the lockdown for the pandemic here in Michigan, one of my oldest friends had died suddenly from a heart attack early that morning.

I was mad, sad, hurt and a whole list of other emotions that I wasn't aware of at the time. I didn't know it then but the very night he passed I had a very heartfelt realization I was letting go of many things that no longer served me. I didn't even know that I was holding on until I cleared space and resolved unfinished issues.

I reached out to people that I hadn't spoken with in months or years to say things I needed to express (appreciation, love, etc). Over the weeks that lead to months, I was grieving and just trying to eat, sleep, do laundry and spend time in nature. I would chat with friends and family, and a few of my regular massage clients and I would text back and forth. But since it was all a blur, much of the pandemic just kept raging on without me.

Some of my friends got swept up in the news coverage and started having "what if moments" --I personally couldn't deal with their energy. I know that many are dealing with anxiousness, fear and a wild belief that Covid is a political thing. No one asked if I myself could mentally deal with this barrage of negativity. I was trying to deal with my own boundaries. Even though I was lost in grief, I couldn't see what they were seeing.

I could only see how the whole world was having a reset---A HUGE PAUSE! People were having to re-evaluate what was important to them- family, career choice, choices in life, etc. Conversations were happening about healthcare and inequality. Mother Gaia (the planet) was having a GREAT breather with wildlife coming back to areas that had been lost to the hustle and bustle of life.

When May arrived, the grief fog slowly started to lift and even though I wasn't working I was taking the opportunities to take classes to renew my licenses and start seeing all the positive things that happened because of my friend's passing and the pandemic---NOT that I wanted any one to die or get sick. Just all the positive changes in me. We can choose to pause but in that space I am hoping that most are realizing that life is too short to hold on to anything that is getting in your way for gratitude and greatness.

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