



Living in Two Worlds ***Grace Harlow Klein***

Today I went to visit our friend of long years – Gerald Bauman. Psychologist, like Armin, they were colleagues, best friends, and closer than with their biological brothers they used to say.



The Trio of Nat, Armin and Jerry had been sources of growth and connection for decades. That I was admitted to their inner circle was evident in the photograph at our wedding. I felt privileged.



But over the next few years the dynamics changed and Jerry began to come for weekend visits to our home. Armin and Jerry continued their long talks in our library. I was respectful of their privacy but in our shared meals, cooking together and eating out at our favorite restaurant, Bacco's, and Jerry claiming the guest room as his when he was here with us, the friendship was extended to me.



When the library door was left open a bit, I was welcome to join them and gradually we became the new trio. It was a time of connection, sharing about the important things in our lives – the thoughts and feelings of our inner worlds. As I shared, I became comfortable in Jerry’s respect of my feelings and grew close, as I was with Armin. Once, when I had no words for our time together, Jerry gave it to me – “serious talk.”

The culmination was Armin’s 80th birthday celebration when Jerry came alone and proclaimed his love and brotherhood of Armin as the best “best friend” he ever had. There are beautiful photographs of the three of us from that time, ones of Armin and Jerry alone and one of Jerry and me.





Soon after, Jerry's life changed and he was no longer able to come. Only once, in Armin's decline, did he come to listen and be with us.

Jerry was not able to come when Armin died. And I was not able to fulfill his request that we film the memorial service. But I found someone to film for the first anniversary remembrance of Armin's death. Jerry was pleased.

Thinking back, I remember the moment I realized and said aloud, "You will not be able to come after Armin is gone." It was painful – a sense of loss. Jerry responded that we could continue to meet in New York. As it turned out, it happened sooner and we continued our visits the three of us together and Jerry and Armin alone.

My daughter, Cindy, lives in New York City, thirty to forty minutes from where Jerry lives. Over the years Jerry came there to visit a few times, connecting with Cindy as well as with Keith and their growing family of Mairead and Caitrin.

After Armin died, I made arrangements with Jerry to meet when I came to visit Cindy. I felt grateful he was still here for us to remain connected. And so we did, sometimes for lunch near the investment advisor who held both his and our accounts.

Now today, it is Jerry who is in decline, but ready for lunch which I offered to bring.

In wanting to know what is happening in each other's lives, Jerry said, "I live in two worlds." I understood what he meant. It was our inner worlds we had shared all those years, the three of us. I was deeply moved.

In our talk, he shared that Armin is irreplaceable to him, as he is to me – another place of deep connection between us, actually voiced and shared.

In those lunch time visits when I came to New York, I would pick up food at his neighborhood delicatessen and arrive at the designated time. We made an agreement that he would tell me when he had experienced all his strength would allow – that it was time for his nap.



On this visit, as that time came, Jerry said, “I love you.” His voice was strong, his focus clear. Not so for me. I said, “I love you too,” but I was filled with feelings – barely able to say how much I value our connection all these years.

While Nat and Jerry and Armin shared their inner and outer worlds over many years, it was only with Armin’s coming into my life that the gift was mine – and Jerry added to that. It is a gift of overwhelming value in my life.

After the visit, I wrote in my journal, that his comments, “I live in two worlds,” would be the title of a book I would write – and dedicate it to Armin and Jerry in honor of our shared friendship. I have not written that book, yet, but in my last book, “Kaleidoscope: My Changing World,” I have remembered Jerry and our friend, Gini Whitmire, with beautiful photos with Armin and me, “For Enduring Friendship.”

November 15, 2014 The Journey: I arranged to have lunch with Jerry once again, wanting to be with him and share the marking of this third anniversary of Armin’s death. We had shared so many times of “serious talk.”

I left home at 7:30 pm after my last client, planning to drive halfway to New York so that I would be there in time for lunch the next day. I noticed it was snowing a bit on this November day, but never gave a thought to the weather. By the time I reached the Thruway, it was snowing - and as I progressed across Montezuma, it became the swirling kind that comes at you, playing tricks with vision and brain! I was exhausted by the needed concentration.

The big snow plows were out, with flashing lights and arrows – go right, go left to stay clear of me! No snow was sticking on the pavement, the temperature staying at 31 and 32 degrees. I could not see beyond an impression that snow was on the ground. After three hours, concentrating, keeping at bay the thoughts about the storm and getting home the next day, I saw a sign for a motel at Amsterdam and exited the Thruway, finally seeing the snow on the ground.

I had a hot bath and wrapped myself in the cashmere shawl I have been sleeping in, the soft wool, a deep teal color, comforting. I slept well



though not as warm as I wished, the room temperature staying where it was, despite where I set it, almost as unresponsive as the toilet that did not flush, the handle broken. Too tired to object or change, I slept! When I awakened and looked out, the sun was shining and I was soon on my way. The sun and blue sky, the fluffy white clouds restored my spirit.

Another three hours and I arrived in the village of Bronxville at Lange's delicatessen to choose our lunch. Chicken French, cranberry sauce, cucumber salad and fresh fruit I chose, and then off to Jerry's house. Oh yes, a bit of shopping and blue Italian glasses with white ceramic dots jumped in the bag to go home with me. I was still early and noticed the brilliant red maple trees and walked around the block, noticing more of them. Lunch in hand, I rang the doorbell and Jerry was there with his warm smile and twinkling eyes. The pace slowed immediately. Jerry, walking with his cane, made tea for us. "A feast," he said, enjoying the food which looked beautiful on the plate, the tastes pleasing to me as well as him. I then reminded him of the chocolate almond bark I had sent which he said we would have for dessert.

The chocolate almond bark was both Armin's and Jerry's favorite candy and once we found Mueller's at the Philadelphia Terminal Market, we ordered it for home and for Jerry many times over the years.

We moved with our tea and chocolate to his study. He gave "his" chair to me and took the other. We are two old friends, wanting to know of the other, sharing about our lives now. He is aware the links in his memory and thinking are "loosening" and is interested in it, psychologist that he is even as it happens and frustrates him.

He is comfortable, "home" he feels. He tells me of the time when he was able to buy their house many years ago. The menorah in his window is a gift from us; matching the one we have at home – as do our six adult children in their homes. "Were you in on this?" he asks. I nod, yes. "Armin is here," he said – and so he is, the crucial link between us.

He wants to know of me and I share with him that I am taking new steps, beginning to feel better – that I wanted to share this time with him on the third anniversary of Armin's death. "I knew it was coming," he said. I share with him the invitation and note I wrote to him, thanking him for the gift of our friendship during this difficult time. Soon it is time to



leave as he is tired. My feelings are mixed; glad to be with him, sad that he is leaving us, never knowing if the visit will be our last.

My journey home began in light and Friday afternoon traffic. Soon it was dark and the snow reappeared; just as I am tired, it is blinding again. But this time, covering the road so that I can barely see the lines – and still the cars pass at 70 miles an hour. I should be exhausted but I am filled with energy from the connection and love of our visit. I am ready to clean my house, getting ready for the gathering tomorrow. At 3am I am writing on Facebook what I want the say to mark this day.

I am on a journey. 2017. It is almost six years since Armin died. It has been a painful and difficult process of working through the intensity of grief and loss I have experienced. It was not only the love and connection we shared, but the rich life we made together that changed my life – and then was gone into memory, but leaving me with my work and beautiful home and place of healing in our Center for Human Encouragement. I grew a lot in those years we shared.

My connection with clients, being open and present to their journeys, has sustained the sense of purpose in my life. I have written my way through the pain - and painted “The Colors of Grief,” a collection of twenty-four canvases. I have become a very good therapist as I encounter myself and my clients with many hurts and different backgrounds. I know a lot more than I knew and look now for ways to share more.

I am facing a new chapter in my life, “Beyond Grief: Alone.” As I reflect on all of this, I trust that I will find and create that next chapter. I am reading, No Room for Small Dreams, a memoir by Shimon Peres– “Courage, Imagination and the Making of Modern Israel. My life has been on a much smaller scale, but no less powered by courage and imagination that led to the fulfillment of my dreams.



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