

Military Families Speak Out

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Troops Home Now?

Editorials from MFSO members:

By Dan Kelly

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT - What are we committed to creating?

As I dance with the emotions that always emerge on Memorial Day, I'm struck both by my grief and my awareness that what I do with it is my choice. A lot of men and women were left behind, friends, comrades, children, families.

How do we honor them?

Life is a process of creation and recreation. The question is what are we going to make of it? It's time to take stock of our recreating. Each day we're at a powerful crossroad that defines how we use our grief and, indeed, the rage that often underlies it. Once again it is time to consciously choose between having the rage and pain drive us, or to own its presence without letting it define us. The pain of loss is always an opportunity to change poison into medicine, heal and create new realities.

We have two choices. We can continue at the whip-end of all that we've been through as veterans and warriors as the families of warriors OR we can transcend the pain in a redoubling of our commitment to a world beyond warring. The price of the former is the bile of bitterness. The reward for the latter choice is a renewal of compassion and a reclaiming of our vitality and voice that honors the fallen. When we shift our ground-of-being to one of compassion as the framework to live out of possibilities beyond the pain and brokenness we do what they would have us do: live fully.

As Wernor Erhard said years ago, to move on, choose what you have as perfect as it is AND as it isn't as the opening from which to re-create. I'd suggest that we don't forget that recreation is re-creation. Holding it as such, we can find joy in reinventing ourselves, the ails and pains of the process notwithstanding. I firmly believe the purpose of life is to live with joy and happiness, regardless of the circumstances we find ourselves in. What we experience as loss, trite as it seems, is, nonetheless, a new opening.

The greatest gift we can give ourselves is to create a sense of equanimity. That isn't sitting passively in the lotus position in the proverbial cave. It is, rather, a most demanding and rigorous discipline of reflection, meditation, and self-nurturing leading us to a continuing discovery of our own innate spirituality. That includes doing the work we need to do to create real ontological clarity about who we choose to be and root ourselves in possibility and a vision or stand for who we say we are. With that clarity which only you can create for yourself you can be empowered to be peacemakers as exemplars rather than as victims of war.

When we live out of that clarity rather than stick ourselves with the abundant evidence for what's broken, we find two precious things: an internal peace and the capacity to serve our children and extended circle with wisdom and love that transforms the quality of life in our space. When we can find equanimity in the face of the storm we can embrace what's broken as a nuisance and use it as an opening in our personal world for transformation. None of that is possible without compassion. And in order to live compassionately we must grant compassion to our own selves. When we do, we find humor in our struggling and quit fighting against it.

Now it's time for you to put the rigor in place to find joy in the now that you stand in. Life's much more pleasant when we embrace possibility in the face of whatever is broken, whether our broken hearts or our broken culture. In knowing the brokenness can inform us we can put our energy into transformation rather than

4,582 American Troops killed in Iraq; 2,449 American Troops killed in Afghanistan

knee-jerking in response to the onslaught of what's broken. Our cultural malaise is a result of allowing the powerful evidence for brokenness to define who we are in the face of it instead of just informing us. Personal and cultural workability comes out of clarity about who we say we chose to be and the courage to live out of a well conceived and well articulated declaration.

When I'm at my best I live out of my own ontological statement: who I "be" is love, compassion and humor as an opening to transformation in every realm of my life. EVERY realm: friendships, business dealings and my stand for peace in the world. None of that was possible until I chose to puzzle through what I chose to be as a defining framework for myself.

That simple statement has been the nexus for everything I've created in my space: relationship; friendships; the property I'm blessed to inhabit (Kelly's Coop); and my roles in activism that gives me openings to contribute in my community as well as my reach into the wider world. My joy is a direct correlate of my choice to exercise the rigor of that stand: to be love, compassion and humor as the opening for transformation in my space. May we stand for workability and vitality rooted in a celebration of life that is the greatest measure we can give to those we left behind as we work for a compassionate world at peace.

Dan serviced in Vietnam 1966-67, Parent of OIF Marine and lives in Arivaca, AZ.

In the News:

Delay of military funerals adds additional sorrow Military Families are finding that closure is elusive without honor guard, gun salute or folded flag ceremonies. The Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration suspended military funerals at San Diego's two national cemeteries in March in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. [Link to story](#)

Remembering Pat Tillman without the spin Pat Tillman Memorial Day Run and remembering the wars continues. [Link to story](#)

They survived the worst battles of World War II and died of the virus. Inside the Holyoke Soldiers' Home was a man who had served as a jailer to Hitler's top aide, a man who had rescued Japanese kamikaze pilots from the sea and a man who carried memories of a concentration camp. [Link to story](#)

Afghanistan's Ghani Vows To Expedite Release Of Taliban Prisoners Afghan President Ashraf Ghani launched a process on May 24 to release up to 2,000 Taliban prisoners after welcoming an offer by the militants of a three-day cease-fire to mark Eid al-Fitr, the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. [Link to story](#)

Our son, a Marine, died needlessly in training at Pendleton. Nearly as many service members were killed in the last year in high-risk training as in combat. Why is a Marine or soldier dying every single month in military vehicle rollovers? Can anything be done to reduce this appalling death toll? Why are military tactical vehicles - Humvees, LAVs, Bradley fighting vehicles, MRZRs, 7-ton trucks top-heavy and prone to tip over?

[Link to story](#)

Will Trump pull U.S. troops out of Afghanistan despite continued Taliban attacks? Mr. Khalilzad and the U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Austin S. Miller, were to meet with Taliban representatives in Qatar last week to "press for steps necessary to commence intra-Afghan negotiations, including a significant reduction of violence," according to the State Department. [Link to story](#)

China to push for stable Afghanistan in regional conference A stable Afghanistan plays into Chinese economic interests, as Beijing looks to extend the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor through Afghanistan as part of its Belt and Road Initiative. China is currently Afghanistan's largest foreign investor, with significant stakes in oil and copper developments. Afghanistan also shares a short border with China. [Link to story](#)

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