When No One Sees You Crying

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Even though no one is talking about it, I can't be the only one, can I?

I've asked myself these words more times than I can count since March, when the reality of COVID-19 hit our country. When everything was new, friends and I had numerous discussions of what was going on and how it made us feel, and they helped.

Those conversations are few and far between these days, despite what we're learning is a massively shared experience. I'm talking about the sudden outbursts of tears triggered by something as simple as riding a bike or cooking dinner.

Or getting lost in our thoughts, as I did earlier today.

Now, I'll admit, I'm the gal who cries at Hallmark commercials and movie trailers, but the cause of today's tears is something much more intense. And unsettling. It's more than the stress of what's happening in our world.

Today's tears come from deep sadness.

Working at home, being isolated from friends and family takes its toll on most of us, whether we wish to admit it or not. And with the fall and flu season upon us shortly, it all starts sinking in that life as we knew it is unlikely to return any time soon, if ever.

We're beginning to see how drastically things will change in

the coming months for those of us in cold climates. Few are returning to their offices this year, and the ability to socialize, even at a distance, will be severely limited when the snow starts flying and the temperatures drop. And with that, many have adopted a new motto: It is what it is. What it is, is depressing.

Perhaps that's why we're spending less time talking about it now. We've resigned ourselves to this altered state of normal and how it makes us feel. We don't like to admit to being unhappy, and sadness, by its very definition, characterizes sorrow. But knowing the origin of something helps us understand, cope and eventually move through it.

A change of seasons often ushers in conflicting emotions, yet everything is amplified by what is happening right now. People are dying in the streets, in their homes and alone. In the United States, the pandemic and civil unrest are taking an unimaginable toll on the hearts and souls of our citizens. No wonder we're grieving.

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As the death toll grows higher, the impact of the loss of human life smacks us like a gut punch in a back-alley brawl, and just as swiftly, we're drowning in sorrow when the tears begin to flow.

It's no surprise that these experiences interfere with our ability to do the things that mean the most to our family and ourselves, whether that means working, learning or spending time together. They throw us off our game and mess with our

carefully planned schedule (that didn’t have crying listed). What matters here is knowing we’re not alone and to let others know the same.

Remember, even when no one sees you crying, you’re not the only one.

We cannot deny the emotions that brought our tears to the surface and we cannot change what’s happening in the world around us. The only thing we can change is how we cope with everything that’s happening.

Compassion for ourselves is an invaluable first step.

Call up a friend, hop on a video chat. Talk about what you’re experiencing so you can understand it better. It’s the first step to getting back to doing what matters most in our lives, even if the world around us never returns to what it was before.

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