

News

Happy Tears

By Lauren Sachs

While living with loss is a daily study in emotion, some days are particularly full of feelings. As I sit in the sunny cafe which has provided a realm of refuge during my time of recovery, I am acutely aware that today epitomizes the concept of Happy Tears. Today would have been my late husband's 52nd birthday. Though my daughters and I have been anticipating this day for weeks, I was still taken by surprise as my phone calendar alerted me once again about the meaning of this day. It has been almost three years since my husband suffered the massive heart attack which made me a widow and the passage of time has removed me from the anguish of early grief. Still, as I have learned from my loss, grief is an ever-evolving part of life which changes each of us in unique ways as it lingers in our lives.

One of the most profound lessons I have learned about loss has to do with the wide and simultaneous array of feelings one can experience when reflecting on the people who have come and gone from our lives. Before losing my husband, I often felt my feelings on a one-dimensional plane. Most of the time, happiness was distinct from sadness, fortitude was the opposite of fear, anger was set apart from serenity. But loss seemingly takes all our varied feeling states, shakes and agitates them without abandon, and spits them back out into a tangled array of emotion. In my personal experience, living with loss is an exercise in feeling “all the feels.” Early in my loss, I frequently had the urge to pack up all my intense emotions in an immense box, seal the box tightly, and ship it to a far-flung destination. Eventually I discovered that giving myself permission to feel my feelings not only helped me find joy in the happy memories but also helped me grapple better with the heartache of my loss.

And so today, as I sit in the warmth of the sun, I simultaneously recollect my husband's hearty laugh and effervescent energy as though he were still here with me, while I also recollect the day he died and the last time I saw his beautiful blue eyes crinkled at the edges as he smiled. I feel joyful when I recall the time we had together but also saddened that his life was cut short so abruptly. Most of all, I have learned that to feel loss deeply means that you have loved deeply and I now understand that I can hold the sorrow with the joy and the pain with the gratitude. I also know that, in grief, there is no wrong way to feel. Just as the sun warms me with its glow, I am aware that it can burn me with its heat; today I choose to accept both truths and will keep smiling through my tears while feeling everything all at once.

Lauren holds a bachelor's degree in English and Psychology, and a Master's Degree in Social Work, from the University of Michigan. After completing advanced clinical training at Yale University, Lauren worked as a therapist and consultant in a variety of settings. During her time in Jewish Toledo, Lauren has received the Harry Levison Young Leadership Award and the Shining Light Award, and is currently a board member of the Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo. Lauren is also the author of a forthcoming book about her late husband, his joyful approach to life and work as an oncologist, and how examining his life helped her better cope with her grief.

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factory with the dictator and chats with a worker who expresses dismay that he will have to stay late to work and will miss dinner. She tries to assuage his concern by reminding him that he could still get overtime.

When he says he is unfamiliar with the concept, she gets a dreamy look in her eyes. She is then shown speaking passionately to the workers.

When Pochenko and Miller reunite outside, he lambastes her for acting out of turn.

“You know,” she replies, “I might have said the word ‘strike.’ I say a lot of things! Who listens?”

Drescher has received criticism for her stance against vaccine mandates in the film and television industry during her time as SAG-AFTRA president, though she says she has received all doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Days before the contract with the AMPTP was set to expire, Drescher was the focus of more criticism as reality TV star and businesswoman Kim Kardashian — whose net worth is around \$1.2 billion, according to Forbes — shared a photo of the two of them together in Puglia, Italy, in the middle of guild negotiations. Kardashian has more than 362 million Instagram followers.

Drescher later clarified that she was in Italy for a work event related to her position as a brand ambassador for Dolce and Gabbana (she says she had not met Kardashian before they took the photo) and that the negotiating committee was aware of her attendance.

The strike is not the first time she has faced down the studios. Speaking on a Los Angeles magazine podcast in 2020, she said a network had initially pressed her to make the “Nanny” character Italian instead of Jewish. At first, she said, she considered making the switch to facilitate her big break — but she decided against it.

“I do not like living with regret, and I don't want to rush into doing something to get the job and then when it doesn't go right or it fails, I kick myself because I thought, ‘Why didn't we follow our instincts? Why did we listen to them?’” she said on the podcast. “I thought, ‘I can't live with that regret. I know this character needs to be written very close to me and all the rich and wonderful characters that I grew up with.’”

Referring to her co-writer and then-husband Peter Marc Jacobson, she went on: “Peter and I have a brand of comedy that's rich in specificity, and not only couldn't we have written it that way — if the character were Italian — but I couldn't have performed it that way. So we kind of mustered up our chutzpah and said,

‘No, Fran Fine must be Jewish.’”

Now, Drescher is hoping that the same chutzpah will translate into a better deal for actors who say they are not being fairly paid for work that streams online. Key issues in the contract negotiations include “economic fairness, residuals, regulating the use of artificial intelligence and alleviating the burdens of the industry-wide shift to self-taping,” according to the SAG-AFTRA website. The AI proposal from AMPTP in particular has been a disturbing development to guild members.

“They propose that our background performers should be able to be scanned, get paid for one day's pay, and their company should own that scan of their image, their likeness, and should be able to use it for the rest of eternity,” said SAG-AFTRA chief negotiator Duncan Crabtree-Ireland. “So if you think that's a groundbreaking proposal, I suggest you think again.”

In June, nearly 98% of the guild's members voted to authorize a strike, and the strike began on Friday. Not only are guild members prohibited from shooting, but they are also banned from promoting films and TV shows that have already been made, including through social media posts, participating in print and radio interviews, and making late night talk show appearances about their work. The actors' strike is also occurring on the back of the Writers Guild strike, which began in May. Studios and the AMPTP estimate this strike will continue until October.

“The endgame is to allow things to drag on until union members start losing their apartments and losing their houses,” a studio executive told Deadline last week regarding the writers' strike.

Drescher herself is also a member of the WGA, and in May she expressed solidarity between the two unions.

On moving forward with the actors' strike, Drescher told the AP, “In earnest we extended, hoping that they would make deeper inroads, give us some meat on the bone so we can really have a meaningful conversation.”

“They locked themselves behind closed doors, they kept canceling our meetings and we thought, okay, maybe they're really duking it out in there,” she added. “Maybe they're gonna come back with something that we could really have a meaningful discussion. But we got bupkis,” she said, using the Yiddish word for zero. “And I think that we were duped.”

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