



KARYN SHANKS MD

Heart, Hope, Healing

How to Work With the Grief of Change

BY KARYN SHANKS MD | APRIL 27, 2020



Dear One,

"You'll never get people to change."

"It'll bring down the whole economy."

"People aren't ready for it—they're too much in crisis mode."

"You're too idealistic."

What are they talking about?

This is the flack I've been getting for speaking out about what we're called to do. How the pandemic and the suffering it's brought is illuminating our weaknesses (it's blinding!). How COVID-19 is our opportunity to strengthen ourselves, our communities, and our world—to create resilience! To not just survive but *thrive*.

It's so clear to me.

The vast majority of those hospitalized and dying from COVID-19 have at least one, and typically more, chronic disease, most notably obesity, hypertension, and diabetes.

All preventable.

All related to the collision between our genes, environment, and lifestyles. (We've talked about epigenetics and the science of human potential before!) Each one of these conditions is modifiable.

We can change this.

We have the knowledge, science, technology, and support to do this ... and the guts!

So, what am I missing here? Why do I get such resistance to suggest we have the answers we need?

We can take back our power.

We can claim responsibility for our healing.

We can step up to the challenge.

We can do the hard things we're called to do.

There it is.

Change, even good change, even *necessary* change, is our big sticking point.

To change is to face uncertainty. To change urgently is to be drop-kicked right out of our comfort zones.

We grieve change—all of it.

Even change we very much desire distresses us as it asks us to creatively navigate things in a different way.

I get it.

I grieve change too.

Here's how I've learned to look at the grief associated with change:

Grief is the *energy* of change.

It's how we discharge our unhappiness about moving into the uncertain future. Of not being able to tightly control the outcome. Grief, itself is uncomfortable, like a warning that overwhelm is just around the corner. It may be all too, too much.

But what if, instead of resisting the grief of change, we meet it straight on? Rather than let grief paralyze us, what if we use it as a chance to grab hold of our own bootstraps, stand up straight, bellow out a big 'ol howl, followed by a loud declaration that We Will Step Up to This?

I believe in the indomitable human spirit.

Idealist? Maybe.

I've also been witness to such courage time, and time, *and time* again in my consultation room as people face the soul crushing effects of suffering and chronic illness. They learn to hear the call of their illnesses. And they find it in themselves to rise.

They will tell you—they're not superpeople with superpowers. They're just ordinary people accepting the call to create change in their lives. We *all* have this in us.

They've taught me what's possible.

They've taught me to settle for nothing less as I ask others to join us on the quest to heal ourselves. To heal our communities. To heal our world.

Thanks for listening.

Got flack for me? Bring it! I want to hear it all.

Love,

Karyn

p.s. I'd like to support you on your journey of healing and resilience and my new course is coming soon!

I'm calling it ***Unbroken: The Healing is In You—How to Become Vibrant and Strong to Thrive in the New Era.***

It's a virtual workshop for creating resilience, inspired by the **science of Human Potential**—epigenetics, neuroplasticity, core Functional Medicine systems biology, and body-mind psychology—and the **wisdom of Life School.**

I'll keep you updated on the rollout. I've loved reading all your requests and suggestions for what you need. Keep the ideas coming—I'm listening!

KARYN SHANKS MD

Karyn Shanks, MD, is a physician who lives and practices in Iowa City. Her work is inspired by the science of Functional Medicine, body-mind principles, and wisdom gleaned from the transformational journeys of thousands of clients over her twenty-five-year career. Her work honors each individual and the power of their stories, their inner wisdom, and innate healing potential. She believes that the bones of healing are in what we do for ourselves. She is the author of *Liftoff*, a manual of energy recovery and healing through essential self-care practices.

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