

Life is just being life

My name is Soheila Adelipour and I am honored to be standing here today in front of you, when I was asked to speak on Yum Kipur, My first response was, How? It is difficult enough to get people's attention on a regular day, it is quite a task getting one thousand five hundred caffeine deprived, undernourished and dehydrated people to listen to me while their stomachs are grumbling and their throats are dry. I better be extremely interesting and brief enough.

I wouldn't be taking much of your time, I will be short and direct to the point. I promise. I can't lie on such a holy day! or maybe it's the only day that I could lie! after all It would be forgiven by 7 o'clock tonight, wouldn't it?

As I told you, I am Soheila Adelipour and I have written a book called from 'Wrestling with God to Resting with God'. I have been challenged by life many many times and have lost loving, remarkable, kind, exceptional and young family members in a span of just a few years.

This world would have been a much nicer place if my wonderful son Stefan, my vivacious sister Zohreh and my brilliant younger brother doctor Fariborz Noban-degoni were still in it. But Universe had other plans for them.

Three years ago, when my wonderful and caring brother passed on five years after loosing my 22 year old son and 8 months after loosing my sister, I felt sad,

heartbroken, devastated, angry, upset, disappointed, bitter, defeated and frightened.

However, I knew I had two choices: one, either go to my room, lock the door, sit in the dark corner and lick my wounds or second choice look at everything that life has to offer and go on living instead of gradually dying and, as one of my dear friends constantly reminds me, celebrating life.

The first choice would be considered a natural and easy emotional reaction, not a mindful response but a reaction. The second one needed an effort a great effort. I decided to choose life.

In words of Nietzsche, 'He who has a why to live for can bear with almost any how.' And I realized that I have so many Whys to live for. My extraordinary family, my amazing kids, my great and kind friends , my lovely community and my foundation that I have named after my son, Stefan Adelipour for life to name a few.

We all have wonderful WHYs to live for, just look around you. What happened to my family was not personal, It was just life being life.

And I am here to talk to you about exactly that, Life!

Life is not on a written schedule. Life doesn't come with an unlimited warranty, a road map or built-in navigation; on the contrary, it comes with a lot of curveballs.

Life, like a wave, changes as it moves along. Life has never promised anyone

'Happily Ever After' stories. Life just continues on, the only way it knows how, forward.

Life is like an ocean, fluid and in motion. It moves forward every second without fail. It never stays the same. It can be beautiful and soothing one day and horrifying and intimidating the other. That is the nature of an ocean, that is the theater of life.

The key is to be one with the nature of life, to be fluid, not solid, to be in motion, not stuck in our old rigid ways as we make our way through life's adversities.

Throw a rock in water, no matter what size, watch it sink instantly. Throw a ton of water into the ocean, watch it dance, blend in and become one body.

As one grows older, one is bound to experience pain, anxiety, discomfort, sadness, anger, disappointment, failure, loss, worry, stress, sickness and ultimately after Sado Beest sal, death. No one is an exemption, no one is protected, no one holds a 'get out of jail' card. We all come to this world and we all leave at some point. Some suffer more than the rest, but the pain and agony is universal. It is the truth of life. It is the nature of life. It is how life is.

Pain is the price we pay for being alive.

Life is full of ups and downs, full of happiness and heartbreaks, full of miracles and disappointments. While we take the joyous and pleasant ones with open arms and do not question our good fortune, we become distraught and de-

pressed with the occurrence of the sad and tragic ones. It is only human to be affected by those feelings, but it should not define us or change us forever. Life is full of surprises and varieties. "Expect nothing and be ready for everything." Expectations and disappointments come hand in hand. Nothing is guaranteed in this world. We don't mind surprises or varieties, but we want to have only the ones that we have wished and planned for, the ones that suit our lives.

This world consists of the known, the unknown and the unknowable. The known is what we see and understand, the unknown is the one that could be discovered and understood, the unknowable is a mystery and will stay a mystery forever.

Our "five senses" cannot comprehend nor understand it and that is why to most people it is considered all a "nonsense." Life is how life is. Do not try to understand it, do not question it, do not expect anything from it, Life has not stopped for anything, or answered to anyone for billions of years, it will continue to do the same for billions of years to come. Life is a mystery to be lived. Life is not here to be understood. Life is magical, not logical. Life is just is, it moves forward undisturbed.

When tragedies or hardship knocks on a door, one has to make a conscious decision. There is no need to stay in darkness. Darkness in reality is simply a lack of light. Darkness does not exist, but light does. Bring the smallest candle or a flashlight to a room and you get rid of the absolute darkness right away. But the

opposite scenario does not apply, you cannot carry darkness in a box or in your hands to a bright room and make it dark. You need to go through an effort to do that. The doors and the windows have to be tightly closed, the curtains have to be pulled, and the light switch has to be off, still carry one candle in that room and the darkness is gone. It is the choice one makes.

When you wake up in the morning, Choose love, Choose light, choose life.

We should not continue on living the rest of our lives in darkness and asking, why it happened? It did happen and It's done. We cannot press the delete button, un happen or undo what's done. 'How' we react to the circumstances, or 'What' we would do about them, is what we should ask ourselves. By living in our past and worrying about our future we are losing our today, our now. We are sacrificing our everyday for yesterday or the next day. The past is buried and the future is anybody's guess. The only sure thing that we have is NOW. "Don't wait for the perfect moment, take the moment and make it perfect."

Fast forward three years after I lost my wonderful and caring brother and sister, ten years after losing my son I am at peace, I am still heartbroken but not devastated, I get upset but not sad, I get angry once in a while but I am not frightened, I get disappointed but never defeated.

I understand this is how life is, that is how life operates, it never changed its nature for anyone nor did it ever stop being just because. Death is as much part of life as being born is. Death and birth are the two covers of a book, the book on life.

I also understand that this world, this universe cannot be only about what we want or wish, As much as we would like to think this world is all about us and it has to revolve around our needs, it was not programmed for that app!. We expect it to deliver exactly what we ask or hope for, but once we expect we set ourselves up for disappointment. No one promised anyone a fairytale ending. Fairytales remain fairytales.

Tomorrow morning when you wake up and face the beautiful sun the dark shadows have no choice but to fall behind you. notice a flower, gaze at the stars, watch the sunset, have a belly laugh, call a loved one, make a happy plan, let the music take you away, add joy to your life, see the magic in it, Dance with life, Live for the whys that you are surrounded by. Fill your heart with love and unconditional love for those whys. Life is still beautiful, Celebrate life, choose life, after all life chose you!

Soheila Adelipour