

Dear Team

A tag line advertising an airline got me thinking, “Journeys are made by those we travel with.” It got me pondering because we regard our work as journeying with others. So often, we are enriched by those we journey with but the common portrayal of a helping professional is one who enriches the lives of others. Anyway, while a journey is a shared experience among a group of travelling companions, each member of the group will have their unique take of the experience. Whether travelling companions choose to stay together or to go different ways really boils down to personal choices and decisions.

Recently, I bumped into a mother and her children on a Sunday. She had her mother with her and she told me that it was a family day-out she had organised. The entire family was all smiles and her mother looked real pleased spending the day with her daughter and grandchildren. I have known this family for a long time and have been humbled by the numerous times they have bounced backed from their difficulties. That Sunday, it looked like life was getting kinder for them.

This week I learnt that this mother has been incarcerated and we are now supporting her extended family as they make plans for the care of her children. Hearing the information was a sad moment and it made me wonder if we could have spotted this mother’s struggles earlier and supported her in a manner that would have prevented her from committing a crime. The truth is we could have spotted her struggles but the choices she makes are beyond us. I am saying this so that we have a realistic and humble appreciation of our presence in the lives of those we journey with.

Journeying puts us in a vulnerable position especially when a “companion” is hurt or dies. Inquiries and other due processes that follow are a natural and necessary part of the terrain that teaches and strengthens us. By their nature, journeys present challenges and they are indeed made by those we travel with. A group of traveling companions who have clarity where they are heading, why they are together and continue to honour each other in the face of challenges will make the journey worthwhile.

Journeys enrich us. Thank you for journeying with us.

Have a good weekend.

Gerard

*“Sometimes, reaching out and taking someone’s hand is the beginning of a journey. At other times, it is allowing another to take yours.” – Vera Nazarian*