

JOURNEY

through grief

SEPTEMBER EDITION

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THIS MONTH

How leaning into grief will open your heart to healing.

JUST FOR YOU

Debunk some common beliefs about the grief process with this month's Grief Toolbox.

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FIND SUPPORT

Hospice of North Idaho continues to support our community's griever.

Find out more with Upcoming Events.

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LEANING INTO GRIEF

SETTING REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

by Kaylee Kron, LMSW GC-C

Following the loss of someone significant, the grief process can be exhausting, especially when tears of mourning keep you from getting out of bed and remembering the loss leaves you feeling drained.

The act of mourning; the crying and not getting out of bed part of loss, is across the board, the most exhausting part of the grief process. You wake up in the morning and remember that your loved one has died, and suddenly you feel drained. You go through your day, doing relatively low energy activities like showering and reading mail, and you feel like you have run a marathon.

During grief counseling sessions clients often say that even though they have done virtually nothing all day, they are more exhausted in grief than they have ever been. This is normal.

Actively mourning a loss takes extensive energy whether you realize it or not. Following a loss, our brains are working out a lot; processing the loss, working through emotions like anger, sadness, and confusion you may be feeling, and trying to help you figure out who you are without the person who has died.

The best advice I can give during this time is to lean into it. Do not just lean into the grief, the internal pain that you are feeling, but also lean into the mourning. To lean into your mourning is to allow your grief to be experienced outwardly.



By doing that, your grief becomes seen and then healing can start. After crying every day for a month, it is understandable that you are tired of crying, but that does not mean it's time to stop. If the tears begin to flow as you look at photos, or read old letters, let them come! After this work is done, many, many times over, you will get to a place where you no longer feel the need to cry every time you think of them.

By allowing yourself to mourn, you are healing your heart, and getting to a place where moving forward is possible.

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GRIEF IS NOT A DISORDER,
A DISEASE, OR A SIGN OF WEAKNESS.
IT IS AN EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL,
AND SPIRITUAL NECESSITY;
THE PRICE WE PAY FOR LOVE.
THE ONLY CURE FOR GRIEF
IS TO GRIEVE.

-EARL GROLLMAN

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GRIEF IN THE ARTS

GRIEF AND MUSIC

LEANING INTO YOUR GRIEF THROUGH THE USE OF MUSIC

Every so often, when we are driving down the road listening to music, a song comes on that brings us back to a place and time. For those three brief minutes, we are transported back to a time, a feeling, a smell, or an incredibly vivid memory that has long since passed. This overwhelming sensory experience can be welcomed, but when we are in grief, can be devastating.

However, grief counselors will often encourage grievers to set aside time to lean in to grief by looking at photos, writing in a journal, all while listening to music that can help evoke emotions to help process through hard feelings. Which songs to choose for this time is largely personal, like your wedding song, a song you use to sing to your child, or one that feels as though the singer was living your life as they wrote the song. However, there are also several songs that can help you lean into your grief.

I suggest creating a playlist on your favorite site, whether it be iTunes, Spotify, or Pandora, press shuffle, close your eyes and allow yourself to fully experience the music and see where your grief takes you.

Fire and Rain by James Taylor

Who You'd Be Today by Kenny Chesney

Tears in Heaven by Eric Clapton

Whiskey Lullaby by Alison Kraus and Brad Paisley

If Tomorrow Never Comes by Garth Brooks

See You Again by Charlie Puth

I'll Fly Away by Gillian Welch

I Will Follow You Into the Dark by Death Cab for Cutie

Let it Be by The Beatles

Remember Me by Miguel from the Pixar film, CoCo

Just a Dream by Carrie Underwood



MOURNING YOUR LOSS

WHAT IS MOURNING?

by Rev. Jennifer Hackenbruch

Mourning is the period or interval during which a person grieves or formally expresses grief. It is the expression of deep sorrow for someone who has died. What does that even mean? How long does it last? Will it ever go away? Will heartache dissipate; do you want it to?

A few weeks after my mother died my supervisor called me in a gasp asking when I would return to work. During the conversation, she said something about our organization allowing a strict, three days off for bereavement requests. I was dumbfounded by the expectation the organization put on me, and my sacred grieving. The most important person in my life just died and my boss not only wants me to get over it in three days but celebrate the gift of three, paid days off.

Honestly, I didn't stop crying within the first three days, or weeks after. When all the arrangements and social expectations were over, I still wasn't ready to go back to my life, my job, my community, my friends. Yet, I could see that life was continuing without my favorite person in it. I saw myself mourning and grieving my loss while the world around me was telling me to get over it. Getting back to it, as my boss expected, was never going to be the same.

From that moment on, my lifetime was segmented into two distinct parts: life with mom and life without mom. Life without mom was never going to be the same as my life with her. In fact, back in the day when a loved one died, people wore black for a year or more and others knew they were in mourning. People would ask how they were doing, and who in their life had died. It was a shared grief. Now, people



barely talk about dying and death.

When someone important to us dies we may not be given a long period of time to graciously mourn, grieve, cry, or share. After a funeral and memorial, when family and friends have gone home, it seems we are expected to get over it. How much time is long enough for grieving? Honestly, I think it is as much time as you need. This is your process, after all; no one else's. I suggest being with grief for as long as you need to, because it is your experience.

Honor yourself during this time. Regardless of what the outside world tells you, this is your time to honor your loved one, and to honor the love you shared. It is real, it is special, and it is yours.

What can you do to honor your loved one? During your mourning period there are a number of things you can do to honor your loved one and the love you shared.

- Create a sense of place to focus your grief. If your loved one was buried, go there, and share your grief with that place. If your loved one was cremated, create a place where you can express your grief.
- Plant a tree or create an altar and spend time there. Speak of the afterlife and what is happening on the other side.



GRIEF IN THE ARTS

RECOMMENDED POEM

WE REMEMBER THEM

by Sylvan Kamens and Rabbi Jack Riemer

In the rising of the sun and in its going down,
We remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,
We remember them.

In the warmth of the sun and the peace of summer,
We remember them.

In the rustling of the leave and the beauty of autumn,
We remember them.

In the beginning of the year and when it ends,
We remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength,
We remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart,
We remember them.

When we have joys, we yearn to share,
We remember them.

So as long as we live, they too shall live,
For they are a part of us,
As we remember them

- Talk about your loved one and share your stories and memories. Allow yourself to cry and emote.
- Offer rituals to cut cords and to say goodbye, while honoring your relationship and the love you experienced together.
- Pray, meditate, allow yourself to settle into the silence and let go of everything, and breathe, just for a moment.
- And finally, be open to life never being the same, while trusting there is beauty in life after your mourning period.

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GRIEF CHANGES US.
THE PAIN SCULPTS US
INTO SOMEONE WHO
UNDERSTANDS MORE DEEPLY,
HURTS MORE OFTEN,
APPRECIATES MORE QUICKLY,
CRIES MORE EASILY,
HOPES MORE DESPERATELY,
AND LOVES MORE DEEPLY.

-UNKNOWN

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THE GRIEF TOOLBOX

THE 5 STAGES OF GRIEF AND OTHER LIES THAT DON'T HELP ANYONE

by Sonja Dove, LMSW

"The stages of grief were not meant to tell you what you feel, what you should feel, and when exactly you should feel it. They were not meant to dictate whether you are doing your grief "correctly" or not. They were meant to normalize a deeply not-normal time." The truth is you can't force an order on pain. You cannot make it tidy or predictable. The stages of grief are a net thrown over a fogbank -- they help neither to define nor contain.

To do grief "well" depends solely on individual experience. It means listening to your own reality. It means acknowledging pain and love and loss. It means allowing the truth of these things the space to exist without any artificial tethers or stages or requirements. There is no set pattern, not for everyone and not even within each person. Each grief is unique, as each love is unique. There are no stages capable of containing all the experiences of love and pain. There are no stages of grief. If we take away this bedrock, what remains? What do we do without those landmarks?

Here are some things to remember:

- There is no finish line. This is not a race. Grief has its own lifespan, unique to you.
- There is no time when pain and grief are completed; you grieve because you love and love is part of you. Love changes but does not end.
- What will happen, what can happen, as you allow your grief, is that you will move differently with pain. It



shifts and changes: sometimes heavy, sometimes light.

- Anger will happen. So will fear, peace, joy, guilt, confusion, and a range of other things. You will flash back and forth through many feelings, often several of them at once.
- Sometimes you will be tired of grief. You will turn away. And you'll turn back. And you'll turn away. Grief has a rhythm of its own.
- Grief can be absolutely crazy-making. This does not mean you are crazy.
- There is no way to do grief "wrong." It may be painful, but it is never wrong.

Remember that there is no "closure." Grief is part of love, and love evolves. Even acceptance is not final: It continuously shifts and changes. The truth is, you will seize up in the face of pain and soften into it, again and again, both things in rapid succession, and both things with silence in between. You'll find ways to live inside your grief, and in doing so, it will find its own right place. Your love, and your grief, are bigger than any stage could ever be. The only way to contain it is to let it be free.

As Ms. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross said in the last days of her life, "I am more than these five stages. And so are you."



FOR YOUR SPIRIT

A GIANT PUZZLE

by Lisa Selander, MACM, BCC

There are so many things that cause suffering. Loss causes grief and grief is commonly experienced as something that creates suffering. Suffering often seems pointless, frequently leaving us to question if it has purpose. I believe we do this because suffering is uncomfortable. It causes us pain and forces us out of our familiar routine into new, unknown, harsh territory. We categorize it as pointless because we have a hard time seeing any potential good that can come from something so painful.

What if there is a much larger picture than what we can see? What if all our experiences - pain, loss, joy, confusion, fear, love etc., are like single pieces in a puzzle with a gazillion pieces? Normally when we do a puzzle, we know what the completed puzzle will look like. We have the option of looking at the box top for a guide to lead us to the whole. The hard part with our experiences building this giant puzzle is we don't have any clues as to what the completed

puzzle will look like. We don't know the final picture, but I trust that we have a good God that does.

In Genesis 50:20 NIV, Joseph speaks to his brothers of God's character saying, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good". In Romans 8:28 NIV we read "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

I believe that God is at work on an eternal timeline that is occurring at the same time as ours. The big difference is that we are only able to see what happens within our limited awareness of measurable time; history and our attempts to guess at the future. We think in terms of years, months, even milliseconds. God's understanding of time is eternal. Try to imagine life outside of time... it's impossible. That is the timeline God works on with all our puzzle pieces weaving between our time and His.

Romans 5:2b-5 NIV says "And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

So I encourage you to press into your grief and allow God to meet you there, trusting that He is at work on the giant puzzle that is your life, bringing about what is best for you with His Loving eternal perspective!

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WE RUN FROM GRIEF
BECAUSE LOSS SCARES US,
YET OUR HEARTS REACH
TOWARDS GRIEF BECAUSE
THE BROKEN PARTS
WANT TO MEND.

-BRENE BROWN

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HOSPICE OF NORTH IDAHO

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CONNECT WITH US!

FIND OUT ABOUT SUPPORT GROUPS
CONNECT WITH A GRIEF COUNSELOR
AND STAY INFORMED ABOUT EVENTS AT
WWW.HOSPICEOFNORTHIDAHO.ORG

DID YOU KNOW?

FUN FACTS ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION



SHOW ME YOUR GRIEF In many parts of the world, a red poppy is a symbol for mourning. This symbol was first used following the end of the First World War to symbolize the many lives lost. Much like black clothing grievers use to wear, pinning a poppy to your lapel shows those who see you that you are grieving, and encourages them to ask about your loss.



DEFINE THAT Grieving versus Mourning: **Grief** is the constellation of internal thoughts and feelings we have when someone we love dies. Think of **grief** as the container. In other words, **grief** is the internal meaning given to the experience of loss. **Mourning** is when you take the **grief** you have on the inside and express it outside yourself (TAPS.org).



THEY'RE NOT JUST FOR LOOKS Flowers do more than just brighten your room, they can have an uplifting and brightening effect on your mood too. "Flowers can chase away anxieties, worries and the blues, making people feel less depressed, troubled or agitated." This is linked to their color, smell or even the act of giving or receiving flowers (countryliving.com).

UPCOMING EVENTS

FOR OUR GRIEVING COMMUNITY

YOUTH SUPPORT GROUP

This group is open to youth who have experienced the death of someone close to them. Through this 6-week support group series, youth will build communication skills and learn that they are not alone in their grief. Mondays from 4:00 - 5:00PM beginning September 28th. This group is offered once each year. Registration is required.

SPOUSE LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

For many, the loss of a spouse often feels like the loss of your best friend. Whether you were married 1 year, or 70, the loss often echoes throughout every aspect of life. This support group which is open to all adults who have lost a spouse. 1st Tuesday of each month from 4:00 - 5:00 PM. Registration is required.