

May 2022

Wings
A Grief Education Ministry

Honoring the Past and
Rebuilding the Future

www.wingsgrief.org

Published by Nan Zastrow

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How Long Should Grief Last?

Harold Ivan Smith

Editor's Note: In this book, Griever Ask—Answers to Questions about Death and Loss, by Harold Ivan Smith, (published by Augsburg Press) he lets his audience know the value of questions and encourages the bereaved to ask any question. He believes “the greatest tragedies are unasked questions. “There are no easy answers and some answers may not meet with a reader's satisfaction or sensitivity, he admits. Follow along with this particular segment and read his book to find answer or at least very plausible possibilities to the questions you ponder.

Smith writes: Too many individuals distance themselves from the questioning process with a “Don't go there! Sometimes a look or a tone of voice discourages a question. Even those who deal professionally with dying, death and bereavement may have a fear of death that shapes or limits their openness and their answers. A professional credential does not bestow immunity from death fears. Grievers quickly learn the consequences of a premature question or a question that makes a comfort uncomfortable.

How long should it take to get over a death?

It depends. Grief is an individualized experience of a particular loss of a particular relationship. Suppose a mother of three

adult children dies after a battle of cancer. Biologically the siblings had the same mother, but emotionally and relationally they had different experiences. The mother may have been closer to one child; she may have had a favorite (or a child may have assumed Mom had a favorite). One of the children may have been more of a caretaker during the mother's illness. Moreover, some of the siblings may have anticipated the death; they may have been handling anticipatory grieving since the diagnosis or since the reoccurrence of the disease. These siblings may assume they had a head start on “getting over” the death.

It takes as long as it takes. Grief theorist J. William Worden cautions, “Asking when mourning is finished is like asking how high is up.” He further explains: One benchmark of completed grief reaction is when the person is able to think of the deceased without pain. There is always a sense of sadness when you think of someone that you have loved and lost, but it is a different kind of sadness—it lacks the wrenching quality it previously had.

My friends say I should be over my grief by now. What do I say to them?

You are grieving your loss in a “get-over-it”, “move-on-with-it” world. Many individuals assume a grief should last about thirty days. Some of your friends may have

HOW LONG SHOULD GRIEF LAST...CONTINUED

never experienced the death of a close family member; they have no real understanding of what you are experiencing. Focus on your grief. In the future, when your friends experience grief, as they will, your example of taking as much time as you need to work through your grief will encourage them to do the same.

With some friends, you may have to be direct, saying: “Let me tell you how the idea that I should “be over it by now” sounds to me. In fact, you may be doing them a big favor by having a straightforward conversation with them, so they realize how their words affect others.

Will I have to live with this pain for the rest of my life?

My friend, whose eighteen-year-old son died thirteen years ago concluded, “It doesn’t get better—it gets different.” The pain will change early in a particular grief, the pain and confusion dominate. But if you “dance” with the pain and pay attention to it; you will learn to live with the pain.

The real question is, “What will you do with the pain?” “God’s role,” according to Harold Kushner, “is not to protect us from pain and loss, but to protect us from letting pain and loss define our lives.”



Someone told me I need to do grief work. What is grief work?

Grief work is paying close attention to grief. Grief work is the necessary psychological and spiritual energy you must expend to integrate the loss—or the latest loss—into the story of your life.

Grief work focuses on a simple question, “Now what?” Or to restate: “What do I do with the life I have left to live?” Or, “How do I live meaningfully without (name of the person who died). Grief

work is about reflection, journaling and prayerful conversation with God about the future—a future that has been altered without your permission. Grief work is about participating in grief groups and learning from the experience of others. Grief work is talking about your feelings with a bereavement counselor. Grief work is not about “getting over it and moving on with our life.”

Many people want to do something about their grief. The wiser guidance is, “Do something with your grief.”

Is it wise to “keep busy” and to get back to a lot of activities?

In January 2001, Jean Carnahan from Missouri, was appointed to fill the senate seat her deceased husband, Mel, won in 2000. A plane crash had killed not only her husband but also a son and close family friend and aide. Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware approached his new colleague at the well of the senate chamber after she was sworn in. He offered this advice. “Work, hard work. It’s the sure path to healing.” Biden had a keen experience of grief. His first wife had been killed in a small plane crash on election night in 1972 when he won the Senate seat.

Variations on this advice are being offered to thousands of grieverers as you read this book. “Back to work” is something of a litmus test, the assumed proof of a completed, “successful” grief. Some of the most common advice mumbled in funeral homes is “Stay busy!” Unfortunately, many grieverers use work and activities as a way of dodging the pain of grief.

Grief, however, has ways to get your attention—your full attention. Give yourself and others in the family repeated permission to ignore the advice to “keep busy.”

What is grief recovery?

We often use the word grief recovery as a financial or medical term. You recover from a bankruptcy or a plunge in the value of your stock portfolio. You recover from an accident, from trauma, from a heart

attack, or from a bowel obstruction. But, you do not recover from a death.

For many in this culture, “grief recovery” is a polite euphemism for “getting over it.” Used in this sense, the term is a clichéd oxymoron that most grieverers are too polite to challenge. Over the last two decades, grief has become increasingly medicalized. Adults often turn first to a physician for help. One hundred years ago, a

griever would have sought out a minister, priest, or rabbi.

I do not believe in recovery from death as in the euphemism “grief recovery.” I believe grief recovery is a process and an expectation. I agree with Bruce Vaughn, who says, “What we need today is not grief recovery, but the recovery of grief, meaning not recovery from grief, but the recovery of grief. He defines grief as a “process in which we learn how to go on loving someone who is not longer there.”

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

(author unknown)

A man was seen in his yard looking for something on his hands and knees.

A neighbor came by and said, “What are you looking for?”

The man said, “I am looking for a key.”

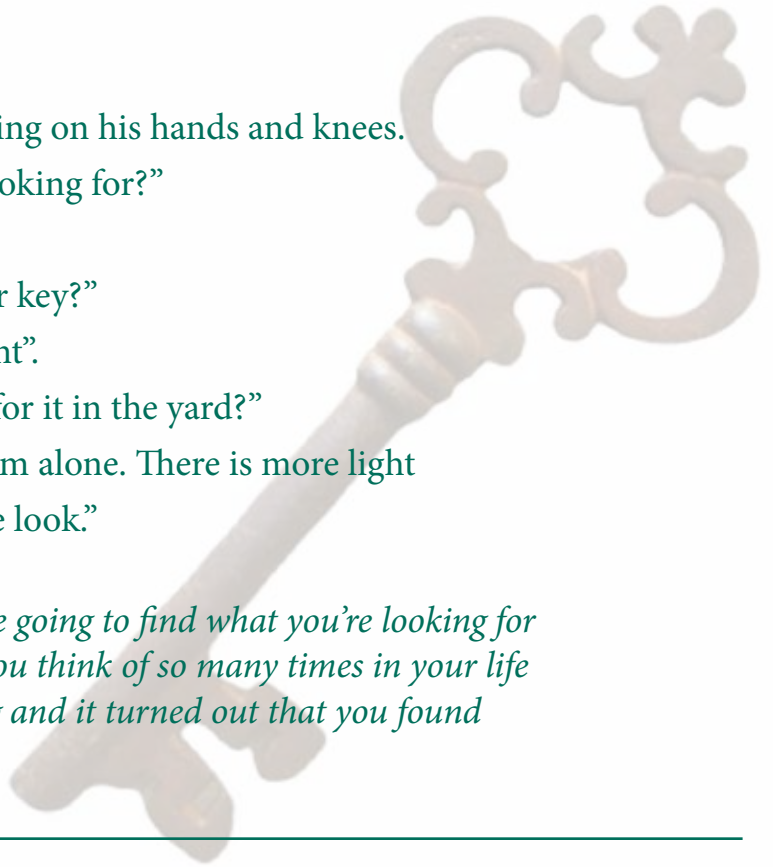
The neighbor said, “Where did you last see your key?”

The man said, “I last saw my key in the basement”.

The neighbor said, “Then why are you looking for it in the yard?”

The man said, “It’s dark in the basement and I am alone. There is more light in the yard and I have a friend who can help me look.”

Moral of the Story: You never know where you’re going to find what you’re looking for and who is going to help you. This story makes you think of so many times in your life when you thought you were looking for one thing and it turned out that you found something better.



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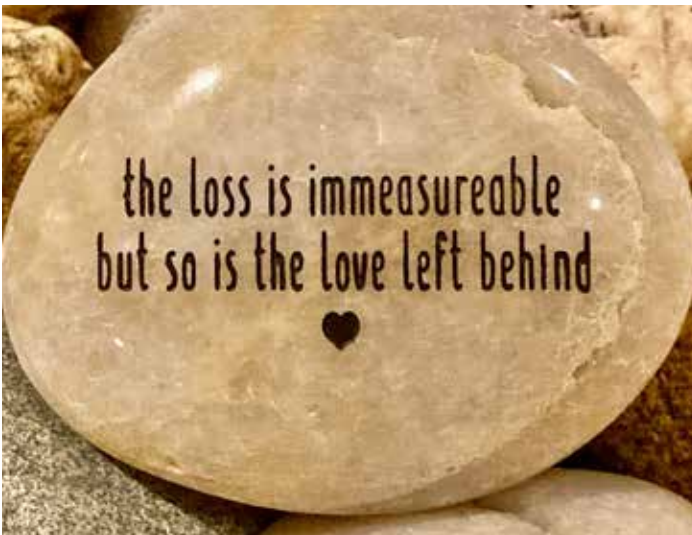
EDITOR'S JOURNAL

NAN ZASTROW

Co-Founder,
Wings - A Grief Education Ministry

WILL I FORGET HIM? NOT EVEN WHEN I BECAME A SEASONED GRIEVER

Someone recently asked me, “How can you relate to grief and the newly bereaved when your loss occurred so long ago?” I wondered if there was an expectation, that at some point, a griever just “quits” grieving. In my mind, a blizzard of plausible explanations shouted loudly with a great desire to be expressed. But I wanted to respond with a simple answer that would satisfy all doubts to my sincerity without being impolite. There is only one absolute answer and it is repeated over-and-over again



by the bereaved: “Grief never goes away. You just learn to live with it.”

Most grievers know instinctively that this is true, but any comforting alternative that gives a ray of hope is highly

welcomed. This may not be true for everyone, but this is my story. “Time” has little relevance on recovery, resolution, or peace— whatever term you wish to identify the outcome that describes what you are seeking. Every griever (of a significant loss), at some point in their grief, will think or ask this age-old question. In a bereaved person’s mind, there is an almost frantic search for something that will lessen the pain and hurry the process. If a griever could count down the number of days until “it’s over!,” this might offer consolation for grieving so long. An open-ended period of bereavement and adjustment is often just too overwhelming to grasp and too difficult to imagine.

Unfortunately, there were no timelines...no magic moments in our grief. There were no clues or revelations to solve the mysteries or answer the questions we asked. It was a journey we had to take ourselves and learn along the way. There was no such thing as turning back time and regaining something so significantly lost. It just takes as long as it takes.

There are some things that are certain. You never forget your loved one. The memories play out in your mind when you allow them to nourish your soul. You relate them to milestone life events that others celebrate and you will never know. The image of my son, lives in my mind and nothing will erase that. He’s no longer were I wanted him to be in my life, but he is everywhere that I am (in my heart).

May 2022 ELetter: Wings - A Grief Education Ministry

Honoring the Past and Rebuilding the Future

How long is long? This year, the ministry of Wings®, celebrates its 29th anniversary. In April 1993, our beloved son, Chad E. Zastrow, died at the age of 21 as a result of suicide. His fiancé Jenny, took her life 10 weeks later.

My husband, Gary, and I consider ourselves “seasoned grievers” now, but not without feeling and not without knowing that at any moment, either of us can be right back there, emotionally, “in the moment” of our significant loss. A seasoned griever evolves typically through a significant death of a loved one. Through their griefwork they acquire blended experiences that turn into life lessons. They internalize them and convert them to intimate knowledge about the behavior of grief through empathy and soul. You may become an experienced griever but not necessarily a seasoned griever. Seasoned grief is a “rite of passage”.

Grief is not an event that occurs and ends. The death of a loved one typically plays out its victory dance in grief bursts (subtle reminders that some things can never be forgotten), memories, loss of dreams, and anniversary dates for many years to come. But I am absolutely certain when I say, that most of those who grieve deeply will never forget what occurred, or what’s missing. Therefore, there is no question, and no doubt that I can remember what grief felt like... even though it occurred eons ago (possibly in your thoughts), but only hours ago in my recollection.

How could I forget?

Just because you become a seasoned griever doesn’t mean you forget the experience that brought you to this point. Loss remains as a dull ache in your heart even when you made the commitment to move on to find new purpose, new relationships, and renewed passion. Moving on becomes the only true way to fully live the life you deserve. Forgetting or wiping your memory-bank clear of this person’s life just doesn’t happen.

- How could I ever forget the darkest moment of my life on that early spring day in April when we received the horrific telephone call that gave us the news?

- How could I forget when my dreams for Chad’s future were suddenly aborted and crashed? Memories in a scrapbook ended at a prime time with a bright future head.
- How could I ignore the assumptions of life like “Children should not die before their parents” –when I know that assumptions are just that...not always true.
- How can I forget when I see Chad’s friends grow older, more mature...and remind me that I never got to see Chad fulfill his dreams?
- How can I ignore the fact that many personal relationships changed just because Chad died?
- How can I forget when family and friends dote on grandchildren that I will never have? Why does the family circle feel incomplete and why did it stop with him?
- How could I forget when honored family traditions are no longer meaningful or appropriate because someone who lived and was a part of them is missing?
- How could I forget to count the number of years since his birth on his birthday or the passing of time on the anniversary of his death? This is “lost time” that I don’t get to celebrate and make new memories.
- How can I forget when my meaning and purpose in life shifted from “mother” to something far more unexpected than I ever imagined?

This list could go on and on... but I’m sure you get the idea. The thoughts of what caused my grief and the dreams of what would never be really never cease. I chose not to dwell on what might have been. I don’t allow the reflection of unfulfilled moments cloud the vision of how far we’ve come and how we’ve rebuilt our lives with purpose after loss.

What repairs the broken heart?

Though it’s impossible to forget our loss (because so many things trigger memories), the visions of the experience aren’t as tragic and consuming as they were in the early days of grief. Pain softens; fears subside; unpleasant

memories fade; faith grows; and lives are rebuilt with new goals and brighter futures. Our personal lives evolved and were redesigned into lives that are every bit as significant and worthy as the lives we once thought we might have lived before Chad died. Though our dreams took an abnormal shift from children/family to “others”—we were able to take pride in unexpected blessings and positive outcomes.

So, to answer the question of “How can I still help other bereaved...even though I am a seasoned griever?” Here are my thoughts. No matter how long a time since Chad’s death, I am defined in some ways by the event. I don’t live in the dark shadow of his death anymore nor have I allowed it to suppress my world view in a negative way. It has been a personal journey that not only put me in touch with the Greater Good, but in all things that make a human spiritual, compassionate, and whole. I chose to remember, because for me, it is the path to living in harmony with my grief. This is what is important to me about the journey from grief to healing. I can now answer the question, “Who am I now?” I am and always will be a bereaved parent.

Grief changes you. You become redesigned with unique survivor traits. I am a seasoned griever who is still capable of bringing hope to someone new to their journey. I encourage you to look forward to the Benefits of Becoming a Seasoned Griever. In the end, this is what defines who you are and how it transformed your life in a positive way.

The Benefits of Becoming a Seasoned Griever

Compassion truly becomes Empathy

You instinctively understand the anguish of how someone else feels after loss, how it hurts; how they struggle. Though you can’t take away their pain, you can be empathetic to their sorrow and willing to companion them through it.

Crazy Isn’t Crazy Anymore

You become engaged and interested in listening to someone’s grief talk. You know they aren’t crazy. They are in transition. Though the path seems lonely and scary right now, you can assure them there will come a time when

there will be a clearer understanding and peace from their experience.

Time is Irrelevant

It takes whatever it takes. Time can be your adversary or your friend. Use your time to honor and pay tribute to your loved one, not to forever mourn his or her loss.

Adversity Was the Your Teacher

Adversity that is not long-termed or permanent can be life’s greatest teacher. It teaches you to accept change. Difficulties create what otherwise might be missed opportunities. What happens to you often makes you more resilient and prepared for the next inevitable adversity.

Regrets-Just a few

You can relate to the song “My Way”. “Regrets, I have a few, but then again too few to mention. I did what I had to do.” You understand the value of making peace with your past, finishing unfinished business, and letting go of things that steal your future happiness.

Mysteries of Life and Death Aren’t Mysteries

Your world evolves around the unexplainable. You welcome signs and symbols as messages. You believe in angels. You find comfort in all the possibilities of connections beyond, anything that transcends reason.

Stories Are Like Sharing Your Love

Initially your stories may be filled with woe but as time passes your stories will celebrate his or her life with dignity and joy. Memories are your keepsakes. No one can take them away from you.

Gratitude Is When What You Have Is Enough

Gratitude makes you appreciate life as it is, today. “It makes sense of your past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.” (Melody Beattie) Be grateful for what you have and focus less on what you’ve lost. Acknowledging gratitude everyday counts.

Faith Changes Sorrow into Grace

Faith challenged by grief awakes a stronger, deeper relationship with your God. The struggles of grief force you to

answer your own questions about your beliefs. Entering into grief with God aligns your faults into a personal relationship and trust in His infinite grace. God is patient. He is the definitive resource for Hope.

Borrowed Hope is the Light in the Dark: You borrowed hope from others when your grief was new. And now you have an opportunity almost every day to share it and brighten someone else's path. Others look to your example of living beyond your grief and not just surviving but thriving! This is the power of hope.

Our grief isn't "old" or out-of-date. It's seasoned by adversity, and it's enriched by all those who have shared their journeys with Gary and me. You've encouraged me to write, and I've turned that into a word chronicle of ideas and hope. We call you friends because you have allowed us to feel your pain, share your struggles. We remember you—maybe not all by name—but you are a part of us, too. We've learned from your experiences because you've

filled in the blank spots of things we didn't experience, so we could help others who have. We share a "forever" bond. When you thought we were helping you, you were helping us. Grief wasn't meant to be carried alone; it was meant to be an journey that involves others and reminds us to value life. Wings®—and our ministry is our legacy, and the lessons continue. As long as we live, we will not forget our loved ones who died!

Chad has been our inspiration. God has been our guide. Both have been the Wind beneath our Wings®. We trust that our experience will continue to benefit you.

Editor's Note: Watch for my ZOOMGRIEF, virtual program on Becoming a Seasoned Griever, gracefully. Follow the Wings website or Wings Facebook page for program announcements.



IN LOVING MEMORY OF: CHAD ERIC ZASTROW

12-4-1971—4-16-1993

BECAUSE WE LOVED YOU,
WE REMEMBER.
BECAUSE WE REMEMBER,
YOU WILL NEVER DIE.

*You are the wind
beneath our Wings.*

Reader Feedback



Sometimes in grief, we don't feel comfortable saying the things that are really in our hearts or thoughts at any given time.

What would you like family, friends, or others to know about your grief?

Yes, grief still hurts! There are times when I would like to talk about the many losses in my life but life goes on and most people have no idea of what others are going through.

I lost my daughter, my grandson, my husband as well as both sons-in-law, and recently several good friends. At times, I wonder why I'm still the one standing and wish I could share these feelings, but I don't feel truly comfortable talking about it. I'm the one that's supposed to have all the answers and there are times when the knowledge is far overcome by the feelings.

Bunny,
Boynton Beach, FL

This process is taking longer than I want but grief seems to direct me, not the other way around. And, yes, I'm tired of it. I wish I didn't hurt so much some days.

Diana

When people even family say "It's been long enough, get over it." This really hurts. I love Mom so much I still cry every day and will miss mom and dad always.

Debbie,
Schofield, WI

It has been almost seven years since I lost Jay. I wish people would stop trying to have me act in a way that is more comfortable for them. What I want people to know is that grief does not go away. You don't get over your loss, move on from your loss or forget the person/people who has/have been such an important part of your life. The grief is incorporated into who you are now. Hopefully, eventually, the memories bring more smiles than tears but sometimes they don't and that is okay. Grief is as much a part of you as is love.

Donna,
Merrill, WI

I think of the years when my/our grief was so fresh we did not know how to respond to the emotions of grief. How was I supposed to act without giving attention to myself? And then, what are others thinking?

Was I possibly looking for sympathy? attention? I couldn't really tell others what I needed when I didn't know myself. I feel it's very normal to avoid most others for a long time, although, not healthy.

Gale,
Schofield, WI

I wish others knew it's been 2 years since losing my Dad and I'm still sad about it. Even the smallest things remind me of hm and how things used to be.

Sara,
Chippewa Falls, WI

Grief is the loneliest place on earth. Even when others are around you, even when you seem to be interacting, there is a dark and solitary spot inside you that no one else can see.

Stephanie,
Seattle WA

I wish others would understand I have no control over my grief. It is not getting better with time. I had a meltdown in Petco and ended up sitting on the floor just sobbing. It's embarrassing for you as well as me but grief shows itself on its own schedule.

Danise,
Stevens Point WI

That there is no such thing as "getting over" the loss of someone dear to you. You just need to learn how to live without them.

Beverly,
Milwaukee, WI

READER FEEDBACK...CONTINUED

The thing that I would like friends to know is that I NEED their phone calls, or text messages, or even FB messages just to say Hello.

Dean,
Wausau, WI

I'd like to say to those grieving is let yourself go through it. There's no time limit to any of it.

Remember the good and silly times..... talk, talk, talk to your children, family and friends. My husband has been gone 11 years and I still talk about him--- especially with our kids.

Ann,
Wausau, WI

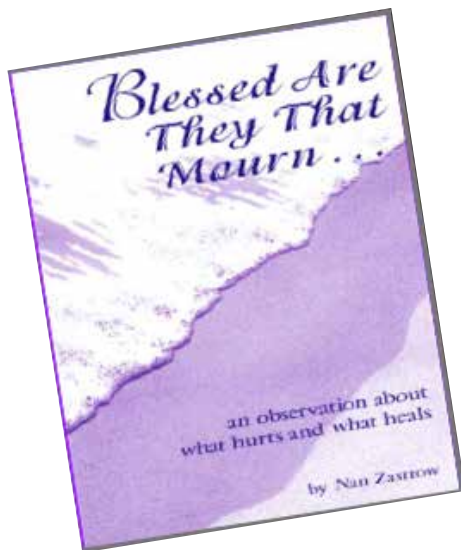
I would like others to know that we never quite move on from, or get over our grief. Grief changes over time, and we are forever changed when we lose a loved one. I'd also like others to know that we appreciate when others ask about our deceased loved one and continue to check in.

Rebecca,
Wausau, WI

I wish others understood that my sadness will never go away, but it will get better. Please be patient with me as I work through my grief.

Sheila,
Edgar, WI

BUT WE'RE
ALL SCARED
TO SAY THE
THINGS
WORTH
SAYING



Comforting doesn't come easy. When someone has died, we step forward to comfort the bereaved. We do exactly what we are expected to do. We act like others act. We say what we've been taught to say. Then, we consider our commitment to the survivor fulfilled. For the grieving person, the journey has just begun. Others cannot understand the depth of pain or the lingering task of grieving.

This book is about Nan's early journey in grief. In these pages observe moments in the author's journey that were painful, as well as those sprinkled with joy. Listen to the things she wanted her comforters to know that hurt her. Rejoice in the awakening of her spirit and her discovery of new-found hope.

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Aftercare

By Linda Findlay

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How Can I Help? (Part 1 of 2)

Grief is as individual as a snowflake—no two journeys are alike, yet the one commonality shared is that it's very hard. Offering support and a warm hug is the most precious gift you can give someone who is mourning someone they love, yet many wonder what else they can do to help. With this past couple of years with covid, even hugs are not as readily available!

Why it matters

When tragedy strikes, it's human nature to say something to comfort the wounded yet many hesitate for fear of saying the wrong thing. The following statements are generally soothing, acknowledge the sorrow, validate the pain, and generally help mourners feel more supported.

What to say (and why)

"I'm so very sorry." And then stay quiet.

This statement says you respect the sorrow without trying to fix it. It reassures the mourner that you feel safe to be around, that you won't try to guide or criticize the journey.

"Would you like to talk? I'm a good listener."

The ability to talk openly about a loved one is critical to a mourner's recovery. It's even better if they can do it without parameters. Listen without judgment.

"I'm going to the grocery store. Can I bring you toilet paper?"

A mourner is often too overwhelmed to know what they need. Even simple decision-making can be difficult. Offering concise choices is very helpful.

"I would love to hear more about _____."

Many people hesitate to bring up a loved one for fear it will cause more pain. The invitation to share helps a mourner to process the loss. The more they process the loss, the better their recovery.

Say their loved one's name.

It doesn't cause more pain, and mourners love hearing it.

"I heard that feeling crazy is common."

Grieving can be very scary, and mourners often feel like they're losing control. This statement offers reassurance that wild emotions are normal.

Prayers are comforting for some.

Those with steadfast faith find prayers very comforting. But reciting prayers and Scripture is helpful only if they have strong faith, not you. This isn't the time to convert them.

If all else fails, say nothing.

Mourners won't remember what you say, but will remember you by their side.

More suggestions

- "_____ was a wonderful person, and will be greatly missed."
- "_____ was very special to me, too. I'm so very sorry."
- "I can't imagine what you're feeling."
- "I don't know what your religious belief is, or if you have one, but please know I'm praying for your comfort."
- "I'm here for you."
- "When you need to talk, I'm available 24/7."
- "I wish I could lessen your pain."
- "My heart hurts for you."
- "Tell me about your loved one."
- "Would you like to go for a walk/movie/dinner?"
- Share a story about their loved one.

Forget-me-nots

- Recognize that you can't fix someone's sorrow. Loss takes years to process.
- Honor the mourner's choice for how s/he wishes to cope with their loss, even if you don't agree. They instinctively know what's best for themselves.
- Do not avoid them. If they ask to be left alone, honor their wishes if it's safe to do so. Otherwise, include them in activities and treat them as you would any other significantly injured friend: with kindness, compassion, and gentleness.
- Resist the urge to fill their calendar as a way to cheer or distract them. Just like all healing, grieving is exhausting and the mourner may not have the energy to keep up.
- If you live or work with the bereaved, their sorrow can quickly deplete your own joy. Give yourself permission to take time out.

- Expect the bereaved to have cranky moments. Pain in any form can easily overload their emotional threshold. If you're having difficulty finding compassion during one of these moments, take a breather for yourself and go run errands or do something fun.
- Crying is a normal, healthy response to emotional pain. Suppressed grief leads to complications. As talking and crying go hand in hand, the bereaved need the gift of listening every single day.
- Grief is an emotional wound. Think of it as a severe injury to the heart. For this reason, it is helpful to think of mourners as a patient in an emotional ICU. Treat them as you would any other hospital patient: with tender loving care, compassion and kindness.
- Grief is often compared to a rollercoaster because it contains emotional twists and blind turns at varying speeds. It is very unpredictable, and can feel very scary.
- Ignoring grief is dangerous. It doesn't go away any faster when you ignore it, and doing so can actually prolong it. Ignoring grief can also cause further complications such as health issues and suicidal ideation.

This topic will be continued next month, including "What Not to Say (and why)".

Linda Findlay is the founder of Mourning Discoveries, Grief Support Services. She is a 29-year career Aftercare Coordinator, a published author, and an advocate for bereaved families. She is the founder and co-creator of The Grief Cruises and managing partner with The International Grief Institute. Linda can be reached at 315-725-6132 or Lf6643@yahoo.com. Visit www.mourningdiscoveries.com, www.thegriefcruises.com or www.internationalgriefinstitute.com.

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On the Lighter Side



45 or 82

Joe the lawyer died suddenly, at the age of 45.

He got to the gates of Heaven, and the angel standing there said, "We've been waiting a long time for you."

"What do you mean?" he replied. "I'm only 45, in the prime of my life. Why did I have to die now?"

"45? You're not 45, you're 82," replied the angel.

"Wait a minute. If you think I'm 82, then you have the wrong guy. I'm only 45. I can show you my birth certificate."

"Hold on. Let me go check," said the angel, and disappeared inside.

After a few minutes the angel returned. "Sorry, but by our records you are 82. I checked all the hours you have billed your clients, and you have to be 82..."

Eulogy

The old man died.

A wonderful funeral was in progress and the country preacher talked at length of the good traits of the deceased, what an honest man he was, and what a loving husband and kind father he was. Finally, the widow leaned over and whispered to one of her children, "Go up there and take a look in the coffin and see if that's your pa."

Be Good to Yourself SELF CARE TIP

Spring is a Time of Change

Grieving is often compared to the four seasons. Each is unique. Spring reminds us of a time of healing and hope in the process of grief. Like the buds on the tree, new growth springs forth anxious to blossom. Birds return and sing new songs of hope.

Like spring, we are changed by grief. When we do our griefwork, we transition from who we were to someone different than before. We grow. We blossom, In time, we sing new songs of hope.

If your grief is just beginning –and it is spring—you may not feel ready yet. Be assured that another spring will come. Your time to grow will come. The seasons are predictable. Healing from grief is predictable, if we diligently work at healing our grief.



Who Is Really Your Friend in Grief?

A friend in grief is someone you can confide in and trust with your most sensitive feelings and thoughts and in return, expect confidentiality.

A friend is not judgmental and allows you to say what you need to say without trying to alter your expression of anger, fear, disappointment, or sadness. These are necessary emotions of grief that help you work through your loss.

A friend is willing to listen, sometimes just sharing the silence with you, and accepting your quiet space and your open tears.

A friend in grief encourages you to share your memories and talk about events in the life of your loved one.

A friend keeps in touch and spends time with you for as long as it takes.

A friend in grief will encourage you to reach out and explore your feelings and eventually create new dreams.

A friend in grief is there when others walk away.

Excerpt from the book Hitch Your Hope to a Star in an article titled “Walk Beside Me and be My Friend”, Written by Nan Zastrow

*Our lives are built on moments of hope
Hope is a mindset, an attitude, and an
emotion we own.*

*Hope comes and goes. Rises and falls.
But it is always in the distant shadows.
Hope waits as a golden opportunity to
be discovered.*

*Hope is the blue sky creating the
spectacular backdrop
For the colorful rainbow after the storm.*

– Nan Zastrow

We Walked Together

We walked together, you and I,
A mother and her son.
We had hopes and dreams for tomorrow,
But tomorrow didn't come.
We walked together, you and I.
We talked, we laughed, we loved.
We shared so many happy times
And for that, I thank God above.
We walked together, you and I,
But only for a short time.
For all too soon it ended
Leaving broken hearts behind.
And even though I miss you,
More than words can say,
I thank God that I got to walk with you
Every moment of each day....

Author Unknown



Rest In Peace, Mr. President

By Todd Van Beck

Rest in Peace, Mr. President. That was the hope...that our presidents would rest in peace, but that has not always happened. For example, between 1865 and 1901 Lincoln's remains were moved 18 times.

Funerals are a reflection of how people live their lives, and this remains true for the funerals of our U.S. presidents. This series offers a glimpse into the deaths and funerals of our presidents, while offering overdue recognition to the scores of funeral professionals who labored ceaselessly to carry out the wishes of the presidents, their families, and in some cases, the wishes of the United States government. Each account tells an interesting story. —TVB

JAMES ABRAM GARFIELD

the twentieth President of the United States of America

At 9:30 AM on Saturday, July 2, 1881, James A. Garfield, the 20th President of the United States, was shot as he walked through the main reception room of the Baltimore and Potomac station. He was about to take a train to Elberon, New Jersey to spend the summer with his family. One bullet tore through his right arm; the other pierced his back and lodged on the left side beneath his heart.

The assassin was Charles Guiteau, a man who wanted a government job and had haunted the White House for weeks. Guiteau blamed President Garfield for his failure in getting a consular position.

Seriously wounded, the President was taken back to the White House in an ambulance. His physicians proclaimed that because of Garfield's rugged constitution, he was destined to recover.

One aggressive physician by the name of Dr. D. Willard Bliss was obsessed with finding the bullet. He made one attempt after another with unsterilized hands and instruments to probe the wound. Unbeknownst to Dr. Bliss, a fatal case of septicemia had begun which would prove deadly to Garfield. In fact, the American proverb "ignorance is bliss" originated

as a mocking statement about the overconfident Dr. Bliss.

Alexander Graham Bell was even brought in to try to locate the bullet using a kind of metal detector that he had invented. Unfortunately, it didn't work.

Dr. Bliss was so confident of Garfield's recovery, that he allowed the President to make the trip to Elberon to be with his family. Once in Elberon, however, Garfield's condition quickly deteriorated. In the end, he was covered with infected boils and suffered a horribly distressing death.

President Garfield died on September 19, 1881.

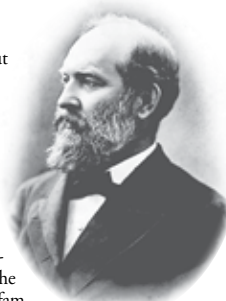
The county coroner and local undertaker **William H. Morris, Jr.** from Long Branch was called immediately. After Mr. Morris had concluded his coroner duties, he notified another undertaker by the name of **Charles A. Benedict** in New York City. Mr. Benedict secured the services of **James W. Walsh**, who was a trade embalmer in New York City, and these two men traveled to Elberon to meet up with Mr. Morris.

President Garfield's remains were embalmed at 4:00 PM on the day of his death. Garfield, who weighed 200 pounds when shot, weighed 130 pounds when he was embalmed.

While he was being embalmed, Benedict returned to New York City to select the casket. The family left this decision up to the undertaker. Benedict returned with a casket that was described as plain and unostentatious, but rich and elegant in its appointments. Garfield was dressed in the same frock coat he had worn when inaugurated.

On the morning of September 21st, Garfield's remains were taken back to Washington.

Funeral director **Willis Reed Speare** was waiting at the station to transfer the President to the Capitol. As a lad, Speare had worked for **Harvey & Marr** and participated in the burials of Abraham Lincoln, John Wilkes Booth, and Mrs. Mary Surratt. It



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was estimated that 80,000 people viewed Garfield's remains. On September 23rd, Garfield's remains were returned to Cleveland, Ohio, which was near his hometown of Mentor, Ohio. **Hogan & Harris Undertakers** were in charge of the funeral in Cleveland. For three days, Garfield's remains were on public view at Monument Square in Cleveland. Formal funeral services were begun on the morning of September 26th.

The funeral procession traveling to **Lake View Cemetery** was long and impressive, but the center focus was the funeral car created by Hogan & Harris Undertakers. The wheeled catafalque was drawn by twelve black horses and made its way down Euclid Avenue to the gates of Lake View. Twice during the long march, sudden rain storms broke up the procession; both times it was reformed and the march resumed.

W.R. Speare, the Washington funeral director who was hired by the government, sent his itemized bill. According to the Congressional record, he furnished a total of 93 carriages, 118 white sashes, 12 black sashes, 30 pairs of white kid gloves, 14 pairs of black kid gloves, and a hearse with 6 white horses and groom attendants. Speare repeatedly sent the bill, which was \$1,890.50, to the government. Fifty-five thousand dollars had been voted by Congress for Garfield's funeral, but Mr. Speare, who did his work so faithfully, never received a penny.



Willis Reed Speare

Todd W. Van Beck is associated with John A. Gupton College in Nashville, and has been an author, teacher, practitioner, and speaker for over 40 years. On May 30, 2018 Van Beck celebrated 50 years in funeral service. You can reach Todd at 615-327-3927.

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10 Ways to Become More Grateful

Robert Emmons (from *theInternet*)

- 1. Keep a Gratitude Journal.** Establish a daily practice in which you remind yourself of the gifts, grace, benefits, and good things you enjoy. Setting aside time on a daily basis to recall moments of gratitude associated with ordinary events, your personal attributes, or valued people in your life gives you the potential to interweave a sustainable life theme of gratefulness.
- 2. Remember the Bad.** To be grateful in your current state, it is helpful to remember the hard times that you once experienced. When you remember how difficult life used to be and how far you have come, you set up an explicit contrast in your mind, and this contrast is fertile ground for gratefulness.
- 3. Ask Yourself Three Questions.** Utilize the meditation technique known as Naikan, which involves reflecting on three questions: “What have I received from ___?”, “What have I given to ___?”, and “What troubles and difficulty have I caused?”
- 4. Learn Prayers of Gratitude.** In many spiritual traditions, prayers of gratitude are considered to be the most powerful form of prayer, because through these prayers people recognize the ultimate source of all they are and all they will ever be.
- 5. Come to Your Senses.** Through our senses—the ability to touch, see, smell, taste, and hear—we gain an appreciation of what it means to be human and of what an incredible miracle it is to be alive. Seen through the lens of gratitude, the human body is not only a miraculous construction, but also a gift.
- 6. Use Visual Reminders.** Because the two primary obstacles to gratefulness are forgetfulness and a lack of mindful awareness, visual reminders can serve as cues to trigger thoughts of gratitude. Often times, the best visual reminders are other people.
- 7. Make a Vow to Practice Gratitude.** Research shows that making an oath to perform a behavior increases the likelihood that the action will be executed. Therefore, write your own gratitude vow, which could be as simple as “I vow to count my blessings each day,” and post it somewhere where you will be reminded of it every day.
- 8. Watch your Language.** Grateful people have a particular linguistic style that uses the language of gifts, givers, blessings, blessed, fortune, fortunate, and abundance. In gratitude, you should not focus on how inherently good you are, but rather on the inherently good things that others have done on your behalf.
- 9. Go Through the Motions.** If you go through grateful motions, the emotion of gratitude should be triggered. Grateful motions include smiling, saying thank you, and writing letters of gratitude.
- 10. Think Outside the Box.** If you want to make the most out of opportunities to flex your gratitude muscles, you must creatively look for new situations and circumstances in which to feel grateful.

How I Feel on Mother's Day Since My Child Died

Note from Nan: these are not my words, but I couldn't say it better. I substituted a few words to fit my son's description. God bless all the Moms who might feel the same.

"Like many things in a grieving mother's life, Mother's Day is bittersweet to the nth degree. On the one hand, I feel immense joy because I was blessed with my child, and I feel gratitude for every moment I was given with him. On the other hand, the pain of missing my child – my greatest happiness, my life's purpose, and my best friend – is intense.

Bereaved mothers live with so many of these confusing contrasts. They are like undercurrents that tug at and toss about our hearts and minds. I am the mother of a child who is not alive. Perhaps a child who you've never met. You can't ask me about their school year, or how he liked being in the National Guards or if he's going to marry, or if I have grandchildren (my words to fit Chad). In my mind, I've imagined my child doing all these things. People don't realize that I grieve each of my child's milestones, knowing they didn't get the opportunity to experience these special days.

I know it's difficult for some people to understand my ongoing grief, I guess because they want me to "get better" or return to "normal." However, I actually am normal. I'm just different now. I believe those who say they want to support me on difficult days like Mother's Day, but part of this is accepting me as a grieving mother who will always love her deceased child. Again, this is just how it goes.


All that said, you asked me what it's like to grieve a child on Mother's Day, so here's what I have to say: This day will forever be hard for me. I live with an emptiness that no one can fill; so I may be sad, I may be unsociable, and I may need to take a break to be by myself in a quiet place. Whatever shape my grief takes on this day, please allow me to feel the way I feel and please follow my lead.

QUOTED FROM *What's Your Grief: A Mothers Chorus—Grieving a Child on Mother's Day*

 **2022**
AUGUST
**** IN-PERSON ****

There is no charge for these groups. Registration is required for virtual groups to receive the link and for in-person groups to save a spot.

JUNE 21, 2022
SPEAKING OF GRIEF...
LET'S TALK
6-7pm CST
VIRTUAL-ZOOMGRIEF
Register for a link.



We invite you to our Open-Microphone ZOOMGRIEF session that allows you to express your thoughts, ask questions, share your challenges, and feel a connection with others going through grief just like you. In this session, the facilitator, Nan Zastrow will encourage you to share your grief, listen to the stories others want to tell, and share your own experiences.

Participants will be asked to honor confidentiality, be non-judgmental and respect each other's feelings so this can be a safe place to talk. This is not a counseling session—and we won't be giving advice. It's a time for you to speak openly about what hurts and what helps. Facilitation may include guided questions to create conversation and each session will conclude with an inspirational thought or healthy grieving tips.

Don't grieve alone and keep your anxieties and fears bottled up inside. Discover how others are finding their way through grief. The goal of this session is to change the dark moments into hope and happiness again. We can do this together.



GIVE SORROW WORDS
SILENCE IS NOT GOLDEN

August 16, 23, 30
and Sept. 6, 13 (Tuesdays)
6:00-7:30pm
YMCA Downtown Wausau - The Landing
REGISTER ONLINE

We live in a culture that avoids talking about loss and one that wants us to move quickly through mourning to become our former selves. But grief is a process that takes time and work. Silence is not golden. When you give sorrow words, you express how you are feeling and begin to release your personal anguish. You teach others about your grief. Grief that goes unnamed and unspoken, remains unresolved. Grief is an emotion that can rule your life. In this 5-week ZOOMGRIEF series, you will learn what's normal and what's necessary to heal your grief. Learn how grief challenges your common sense. Giving sorrow words after loss helps you find peace and meaning in your life going forward.

OCTOBER
FINDING THE OTHER SIDE OF SADNESS
Creating Balance in Your New Reality



Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25 (Tuesdays)
VIRTUAL-ZOOMGRIEF
Register for a link.

You now live in a new reality after loss. This is not something you chose. However, you realize that there comes a point when you must balance life in your new reality and move forward. Letting go doesn't mean forgetting. In this 4-week series, you will learn the secret to moving forward. It's not about escaping the sorrow of grief; but, it's about finding how to build courage to live your life differently. This series is designed for participants who are ready to discover their authentic self, challenge their fears, make forward choices and become a seasoned griever gracefully.

Register online at wingsgrief.org or email: nanwings1@gmail.com



Certified Grief Educator | Facilitator:
Nan Zastrow
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