

Contents of this ELetter

- The 5 Major Ways Grief Changes the Whole Person
- Editor's Journal: The Stories of Love are Stronger than Death
- On a Wing and a Prayer: The Cab Ride
- Be Good to Yourself Grief Tip
- Poem
- On the Lighter Side
- Reader Feedback: Values or Memories from a Parent
- Articles from the Archives

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THE 5 MAJOR WAYS GRIEF CHANGES THE WHOLE PERSON

by Larry Barber

One of the biggest myths about grief is that grief is an emotional reaction or state of being. When people label grief as just “emotional,” they are minimizing grief, how much the mourner is affected by grief and the extent of the struggles the mourner has to endure. Grief affects much more than just the emotional state of the person after a death.

Mourners are more than one-dimensional victims. Grief affects the whole person just as the relationship with the loved one who died affected every aspect of the mourner's life. We miss the person in the following ways:

Emotionally

Mourners love or have emotional ties to the person who died. Therefore, the love we still have in our heart for the person needs to be expressed—even after their passing. Death doesn't end our relationship with the person; death changes the relationship from one dependent upon the physical presence of the person to a relationship dependent upon our continuing emotional and spiritual ties to the person. For many mourners there is a feeling that grief and its emotions are the only tie they have with the loved one who is no longer physically present. We mourners can experience and have

the need to express shock, disbelief, denial, emotional numbness, sadness, depression, anger, abandonment, regret, guilt, fear, anxiety, and panic within ourselves. Also sometimes mourners can experience relief, joy or peace for the loved one who is not suffering any more in this life. Everyone's grief is different depending upon the relationship they had with the loved one, the mourner's personality type, how they got the news, how the death took place, the age of the loved one who died, how others around them reacted to the death, and many other factors around the death. Mourners have the need to express these emotions honestly (to release the emotional tension the death causes within them) and to know that others get and understand what they are experiencing. Emotive mourners get in touch with their grief emotions and openly express them to others in sharing their story or maybe even through obvious mourning behavior. Stoic mourners get in touch with their grief emotions and dispel their inner emotional tension by thinking through their experience and/or physical activity (working on a car, exercising, taking up a hobby or involvement in church or charitable activities).

Continued on page 2

5 MAJOR WAYS...

Continued from page 1

The activity allows the stoic mourner to be busy, to think through their grief and to expend emotional tension building up inside. Most people feel a need to expend emotional tension after a catastrophic event. We feel the need to respond to the occasion...to do something. Those who are with the mourner need to listen and observe what is said or done without judging the mourner. Just be present. Don't give unsolicited advice. Also you may need to feed back to the person what you hear if they are emotive mourners. Being present and being supportive with stoic mourners will go a long way to help them feel your support and care. Encouraging words help let them know that you are there for them.

Mentally

Mourners are impaired in their thinking and ability to remember, concentrate or focus on anything but the loss...especially during the first few weeks, months and even up to a year following the death. One member of a grief support group shared that in a two week period she locked herself out of her car three times. She quickly learned to make extra copies of her car keys and to keep



them stored in secret places to avoid having to pay \$50 or more to have a locksmith open her car! Mourners often need to rely upon detailed calendars, to do lists, messages/notes to themselves and reminder alerts on their computers, phones and other electronic devices to help them with appointments, dates, times to pay bills, and other important activities. Mourners are usually advised to not make any major life-changing decisions during the first year after the death. In cases when decisions have to be made quickly, mourners are well advised to seek the opinions of others they trust and who have their best

interest at heart. Those who are with the mourner need to have a lot of patience and to be able to remind the mourner of important dates and activities without embarrassing or shaming the mourner. Again, your being present without being judgmental or dictatorial is most important for the mourner. Understanding that grief impairs the mourner's thinking and being patient will be extremely helpful. Offer to help organize small things in their life, help with shopping or other chores and show them care and support without invading into their private stuff.

Physically

There is a strong tie between the emotional, mental and physical aspects of all people. When you don't feel good emotionally or mentally, it can affect how you feel physically. When you don't feel good physically, it can affect how you feel mentally or emotionally. Mourners are the same—only they aren't just dealing with the usual up's and down's of life. They're also dealing with grief with all of its sharp emotional and mental up's and down's. The roller coaster ride of grief can be expressed in physical ways because of the

Continued on page 5

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- Email: nanwings1@gmail.com • Postal: P.O. Box 1051, Wausau, WI 54401 • Ph: 715.845.4159
- Follow the EVENTS calendar posted at the website wingsgrief.org
- Subscribe to the free online ELetter sent quarterly.
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NAN ZASTROW

Co-Founder,
Wings - A Grief Education Ministry

A Storyteller's Creed

I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge - That myth is more potent than history.

I believe that dreams are more powerful than facts - That hope always triumphs over experience -

That laughter is the only cure for grief.

And I believe that love is stronger than death.

Robert Fulghum

Many years ago, the neighborhood children asked if they could explore the forest behind our house. When they didn't return in about a half hour, my husband, Gary, got concerned and went to look for them. He located them by the sound of excitement in their voices.

They made a great discovery—candles, remains of a burned down hunting shack, a shoe, a soda can and more. As they accumulated the items in a pile, they talked about how "old" the things were. They decided the items "must have been there before there was electricity." Gary let them weave their story and imagine the details of what might have been.

THE STORIES OF LOVE ARE STRONGER THAN DEATH

The real story was that these items were all connected to our son, Chad. Gary could have interrupted the kid's fantasy and told them the real story of how the "boys" burned down the hunting shack when an unguarded candle fell on the floor while they partied around a campfire.

Though it was only about a dozen years before that the event occurred, to the kids it could have been fifty! The discovery the kids made and the story they imagined brought back rich memories of a happier times when Chad enjoyed his own adventure. And, evoking such a memory was priceless!

When Gary told me what happened, I thought about the significance of all the stories I've told about Chad over the years while publishing the Wings magazine. I believe that stories are the greatest healing balm available for the bereaved soul. Stories give untold meaning to pain. Stories bear witness to frustration, fear, and triumph. Stories console the heart with memories of "better days". Stories relive the experiences of "life" and gently uncover the lessons learned. And, telling the stories of life weaves the threads of memory that bind us to our loved ones.

Recalling the stories of Chad's life are continued testimony to me that "his life mattered". Chad's life enriched me; many stories are legends of great joy. His death challenged me and made me acutely aware that our paths are never certain. I am who I am today because of Chad's death. I am a reflection of my



journey and a reflection of the love I have for Chad not only when he died, but continuing through eternity. If I can get through this traumatic journey by hanging onto my memories; then, I encourage others to try it too. There is a purpose for "telling the story" in our journey to healing and sometimes that means facing the pain, feeling the tragedy, and etching the scars with triumph.

Telling the story makes it real

Acceptance is a major hurdle when we are faced with the death of a loved one. Over the years, Gary and I have told the story of Chad's life as it unfolded before his death: a member of the Army National Guard, a student in EMT, a volunteer for a village fire/ambulance/rescue team, holding a full-time job, and engaged to be married. Chad was living a life that was full and purposeful. It's hard to imagine "death by choice". It took me over three years to accept that this "really" happened.

A traumatic loss challenges our belief system and the core of life's assumptions. We immediately wonder, "How will I survive? What purpose is there to living? What next?"

Continued on page 4

Telling the story is supposed to help make sense out of the senseless. I still have some trouble making sense out of what happened. But it has given me time to think of all the possibilities and believe that Chad's death was a surprise to both of us.

Accepting the reality of my own story has made me more compassionate and understanding to others facing all kinds of life's tragedies. I don't have to completely "walk in their shoes" to know their sorrow. I can follow in their shadow and absorb the incapacitation of their loss.

Telling the story and living with "why?"

Chad's story has helped me live without the answer to why. When we have been hurt by life, it is normal and natural to want to know why. I once wrote, "I can live without the answer to "why" now. It doesn't matter what occurred or how terrible the event that took place because I remind myself, I can't change a thing. My spirituality comforts me in the quiet moments by knowing "Chad is okay." And my intuitive self whispers, "If I really knew "why" would it make me any happier?"

Stories help us survive life's challenges

Some of the stories I told or wrote were on good days when I was full of hope. In all grief experiences, there are good days and bad days. We want to believe that eventually the "good days" outweigh the "bad days." This is called "hope."

When we tell our story after great life challenges, we begin to rewrite history. We turn our turbulent grief, our self-pity,

our broken hearts, and our indecision into action. We take control over the events that consumed us and create a chapter of survival.

Telling our story is a witness to our growing spirit

Moving through grief, our lives unfold. We are changed by our experiences. If we can see beyond the pain and grasp the foundations of faith, our journey is cushioned with God's promises. I once wrote: "Chad has given me a valuable gift—the gift of Easter every day. Because I am a Christian, the Easter message has special significance to me. If you are a Christian, I respect that your faith in God offers you similar assurance. It is the assurance that there is "life after death." And such a hope guides my life's plan. I know that Chad dwells with our Heavenly Father who is fair and loving. I know that we will meet again someday. It is this Easter message that lives with me everyday and gives me purpose."

Stories may not bring closure. Our stories go on.

Once the story of our loved one's death is told, the story continues. Over the months and years that follow, we repeat our experiences to an interested listener. And the story never ends. Though our loved one's life is stopped in time, the stories are timeless.

People look for a cue from us that we have found closure. What truly is "closure"? Is it a time when we no longer grieve outwardly? Is it a time when we quit telling the stories and speaking our loved one's name? Others may assume that we have "accepted", found peace, and have left this event behind us as we

move forward in our lives. The truth is: we never leave grief behind. We never forget. Our loved one becomes a part of who we are today. And our stories are nestled in our heart safe and secure in the knowledge that life and love are eternal.

My story will go on.

Mine is a story of love. Not just the love of a parent for a child, but the love of every dream a parent has for a child. Mine is a story of survival when it would have been easier to succumb. Mine is a story of cherished memories that never will die. We all have a story. Chad's life and death story have taught me so many things. They have bound me to him heart and soul. Every fiber of my being remembers.

If you are bereaved, gather your stories. Find opportunities to open your heart and let the memories pour out. Allow others into your lives to explore the forests and find the remnants of a beautiful life that once was. Chuckle over the good times. Say a silent prayer when painful memories surface. Rekindle joy by igniting the flame of faith, and hope. And, believe that the stories of love are stronger than death.



5 MAJOR WAYS...

Continued from page 2

stressful, painful, uncomfortable and often unexpressed emotions experienced by mourners.

Headaches, backaches, stomach aches and other physical complaints are common among mourners. During the first year of grief, mourners are at the greatest risks for physical problems, illnesses and accidents. The stressor of grief and its overwhelming emotions and thoughts can compromise the immune system, impair the thought processes (including judgment) and slow down response times (including during conversation, working and driving). Sometimes the results of all this impairment brought on by grief can be minor inconveniences,

sometimes the results can be life-threatening. Mourners need to keep this in mind in their daily activities. Allow yourself more time and space for physical activities. Advise others that you may not always be 100% present and capable of performing physical activities as usual. Exercise precaution in everything you do without using it as an excuse for getting special attention. When you feel a pain persistently, go to a physician to check it out. It is a good idea for all mourners to get a full physical within six months to a year of the loss. Grief takes a lot of energy. Whether you are consciously thinking about the loss or not, it can “be on your mind” twenty four hours

a day, seven days a week...especially in the overwhelming first part of grief. You are going to tire easily. Don't think you have to stay at the same schedule you did before the loss. Give yourself at least short breaks, and don't overextend yourself or your calendar. Explain to others who care about you that you may need their help, support, encouragement, indulgence and patience during your grief journey. You will need their help and support. For those with the mourner, the rule is still be there physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually for the person grieving. Don't just offer to help. Put yourself in their shoes and

Continued on page 8

ARTICLES FROM THE ARCHIVES

GROW WHERE YOU ARE PLANTED:

<https://centering.org/magazine-articles/article-library.html/article/2016/08/18/grow-where-you-are-planted>

IS LINGERING IN GRIEF RIGHT OR WRONG?

<https://ezinearticles.com/?Is-Lingering-in-Grief-Right-or-Wrong?&id=9941695>

STOP THE SILENCE:

<https://www.opentohope.com/suicide-stopping-the-silence/>

SORROW WALKS WITH ME:

<https://ezinearticles.com/?Sorrow-Walks-With-Me&id=8971910>

WALK BESIDE ME AND BE MY FRIEND

<https://www.opentohope.com/walk-beside-me-and-be-my-friend/>

ON A WING AND A PRAYER

From the Archives – 2001

The Cab Ride by Dr. Kent Nerburn

Twenty years ago, I drove a cab for a living. It was a cowboy's life, a life for someone who wanted no boss. What I didn't realize was that it was also a ministry. Because I drove the night shift, my cab became a moving confessional. Passengers climbed in, sat behind me in total anonymity, and told me about their lives. I encountered people whose lives amazed me, ennobled me, and made me laugh and weep.

But none touched me more than a woman I picked up late one August night. I was responding to a call from a small brick fourplex in a quiet part of town. I assumed I was being sent to pick up some partiers, or someone who had just had a fight with a lover, or a worker heading to an early shift at some factory for the industrial part of town.

When I arrived at 2:30 a.m., the building was dark except for a single light in a ground floor window.

Under these circumstances, many drivers would just honk once or twice, wait a minute, then drive away.

But I had seen too many impoverished people who depended on taxis as their only means of transportation.

Unless a situation smelled of danger, I always went to the door. This passenger might be someone who needs my assistance, I reasoned to myself.

So I walked to the door and knocked. "Just a minute," answered a frail, elderly voice. I could hear something being dragged across the floor.



After a long pause, the door opened. A small woman in her 80s stood before me. She was wearing a print dress and a pillbox hat with a veil pinned on it, like somebody out of a 1940s movie. By her side was a small nylon suitcase. The apartment looked as if no one had lived in it for years. All the furniture was covered with sheets. There were no clocks on the walls, no knick-knacks or utensils on the counters. In the corner was a cardboard box filled with photos and glassware.

"Would you carry my bag out to the car?" she said. I took the suitcase to the cab, then returned to assist the woman. She took my arm and we walked slowly toward the curb. She kept thanking me for my kindness.

"It's nothing," I told her. "I just try to treat my passengers the way I would want my mother treated."

"Oh, you're such a good boy," she said. When we got in the cab, she gave me an

address, then asked, "Could you drive through downtown?"

"It's not the shortest way," I answered quickly.

"Oh, I don't mind," she said. "I'm in no hurry. I'm on my way to a hospice."

I looked in the rear view mirror. Her eyes were glistening.

"I don't have any family left," she continued. "The doctor says I don't have very long."

I quietly reached over and shut off the meter. "What route would you like me to take?" I asked.

For the next two hours, we drove through the city. She showed me the building where she had once worked as an elevator operator. We drove through the neighborhood where she and her husband had lived when they were newlyweds. She had me pull up in front of a furniture warehouse that had once been a ballroom where she had gone dancing as a girl.

Continued on page 7

THE CAB RIDE

Continued from page 6

Sometimes she'd ask me to slow in front of a particular building or corner and would sit staring into the darkness, saying nothing.

As the first hint of sun was creasing the horizon, she suddenly said, "I'm tired. Let's go now."

We drove in silence to the address she had given me. It was a low building, like a small convalescent home, with a driveway that passed under a portico. Two orderlies came out to the cab as soon as we pulled up. They were solicitous and intent, watching her every move. They must have been expecting her. I opened the trunk and took the small suitcase to the door. The woman was already seated in a wheelchair.

"How much do I owe you?" she asked, reaching into her purse.

"Nothing," I said.

"You have to make a living," she answered.

"There are other passengers."

Almost without thinking, I bent and gave her a hug. She held onto me tightly.

"You gave an old woman a little moment of joy," she said. "Thank you."

I squeezed her hand, then walked into the dim morning light. Behind me, a door shut. It was the sound of the closing of a life.

I didn't pick up any more passengers that shift. I drove aimlessly, lost in thought. For the rest of that day, I could hardly talk. What if that woman had gotten an angry driver, or one who was impatient to end his shift? What if I had refused to take the run, or had honked once, then driven away?

On a quick review, I don't think that I have done anything more important in my life.

We're conditioned to think that our lives revolve around great moments. But great moments often catch us unaware – beautifully wrapped in what others may consider a small one.

On the Lighter Side...

Good News Bad News

An artist asked the gallery owner if there had been any interest in his paintings on display at that time.

"I have good news and bad news," the owner of the gallery replied. "The good news is that a gentlemen inquired about your work and wondered if it would appreciate in value after your death. When I told him it would, he bought all 15 of your paintings."

"That's wonderful!" the artist exclaimed.

"What's the bad news?"

"The buyer was your doctor."

Stand By Your Man

Sadie's husband, Jake, was slipping in and out of a coma for several months. Yet his faithful wife stayed by his bedside day and night. One night, Jake comes to and motions for her to come closer.

He said "My Sadie you have been with me through all the bad times. When I got fired, you were there to support me. When my business failed, you were there to support me. When I got shot, you were by my side. When we lost the house, you understood. When my health started failing, you were still by my side. You know what, Sadie?"

"What dear," she said gently, her eyes walling with tears.

"I think you are bad luck."

ask what you would need from others. Mow their lawn, clean their house, go shopping with them or for them, babysit their children, help them reorganize their garage or storage shed, etc. etc. The worst thing that you could do for a mourner person is nothing at all. Be present and be active in their lives without intruding or crossing personal boundaries in their lives.

Socially

When we are in grief or any life crisis, we can have a tendency to isolate when we need people and support the most. When grief takes over the mourner's life, he or she may not feel very sociable. In fact, the mourner can feel not only tired, but irritable and frustrated with the "normal niceties" expected of them socially. When a loved one dies, the mourner's priorities have changed and being involved with others socially can seem less important, an unwanted additional task or maybe even anxiety-producing. Mourners can feel they are "under the microscope" being observed and judged by others as to how well or how badly they are handling their grief. Mourners, time spent in solitude and thought can be productive in your grief journey. It is perfectly healthy to go off alone to take care of your emotional wounds. BUT mourners were never meant to deal with the struggles and the work of grief alone. God has put others in your life for you to share good times and bad. Scripture says for a good reason that we are to mourn with those who mourn (Romans 12:5) and to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). We need people in our lives, but we need people especially during bad times of our lives including grief. Don't worry what others think or say about your grief. To be safe though, mourn only with people and in places that make you feel safe, cared for and sup-

ported. Those with mourners shouldn't forget how important their physical presence in the mourner's life is. Be there at the funeral and the few weeks after. And continue to be there in the weeks and months and years to come... again without being intrusive. Don't judge or give unsolicited advice. Invite the person to take part in activities with you and with groups, especially church activities. Be patient, understanding and lovingly persistent if the person is reluctant. Don't take their reactions personally if they lash out in their grief emotions. Understand that they aren't angry with you. They are angry about the loss and their new reality. They need your and others' support, encouragement and comfort.

Spiritually

When major life events take place (including grief) we human beings can remember, review and sometimes revise our deepest-held beliefs. The death of a loved one brings into focus how we view life, death and what comes after. Sometimes we find out our beliefs, even core beliefs of our faith and religion, don't seem to work with the new life realities we face after the loss of someone significant in our lives. Reviewing and revising our beliefs doesn't necessarily mean we are losing our faith. It means that we have the opportunity to confirm our beliefs and make our faith stronger or change our beliefs and make our faith stronger. Faith tested and questioned can become stronger. Many times in Scripture men and women of faith expressed displeasure with God and how He appeared to be working or not working according to their plans for their lives or the lives of others. When most mourners express anger or displeasure with God and what He appears to be doing or not doing, they are not necessarily losing their beliefs in the Almighty.

You can't struggle or be displeased with a Heavenly Father you don't believe in. Being angry is simply not liking how things are. And when you have lost a loved one to death, you are going to be displeased and possibly express that displeasure in the protest of anger. Mourners angry at God need to speak their minds and their hearts honestly to God within respectful and non-blasphe-mous boundaries. Keep in mind that if you're angry with God, He already knows...and He understands why. He made you with all the emotions you experience. He has given you the choice to express those emotions in ways that are healthy or unhealthy, appropriate or inappropriate or constructive or destructive.

Those with mourners are wise not to go immediately to Scripture quotations and other inspirational sayings when trying to comfort them. Many times mourners cannot hear the comfort in what others say simply because it is drowned out by the deafening pain they are experiencing. Their lack of response to inspirational quotes doesn't mean that they no longer believe the truth in them—they just can't hear it. Remember to simply be there, listen, and reflect back to the person what you hear, support them and show you care. Often what we immediately say to a grieving person is just meant to fill the uneasy silence between us or to make ourselves feel better.

Listen and speak little without giving judgment or unsolicited advice.

Written by Larry M. Barber, LPC-S, CT author of the grief survival guide "Love Never Dies: Embracing Grief with Hope and Promise" available online at Amazon (<http://www.amazon.com/Love-Never-LPC-S-Larry-Barber/dp/1613796005>), Barnes & Noble (<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/love-never-dies-lpc-s-ct-larry-m-barber-ct-larry-m/1104364890?ean=9781613796016>).



Notification to our Facebook Friends

Wings-a Grief Education Ministry

now has a public group page on Facebook which is primarily for posting the quarterly ELetter, Education Events, Support Group dates, and public speaking events. We recommend you join this group for appropriate announcements to stay in touch. Additionally, our regular Wings-a Grief Education FB page continues.

Look for Wings-Grief Education Events & Eletter on Facebook—and join the group!

Would you like to share your story or poem?

If you would like to submit a short story, poem, or article, we welcome it. The material does not need to be original, but if it isn't, please include the author or credits that can be printed along with the material. We are looking for articles that inspire the bereaved, teach, and offer hope which is the focus of our ministry of Wings-a Grief Education Ministry. Poems or material may be submitted In memory of your special loved one.

May – December 2018 Program Schedule *Wings—a Grief Education Ministry*

Finding The Other Side Of Sadness | Living The New Normal After Loss - Part 2 (Education/Support Group)

This four-week series is a follow-up to Part 1 and is also designed for those who have done some grief work and are ready to move forward. You may find that your old life doesn't fit you anymore because you are a different person now. Learn how to begin a new chapter in your life by remembering the past and moving forward without regrets.

**Tuesdays, May 22, 29, June 5, 12
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.**

Conference Room A-1, Quality Services
Department, Aspirus Wausau Hospital
Call 715.845.4159 to register.

Give Sorrow Words—Finding Hope For Your Journey (Education/Support Group)

This group is NEW this fall. Grief is something we consider private and personal, as though only we can own it. However, understanding grief and the impact it has on your life allows you to process your grief, accept the loss, express your feelings, and integrate this experience into your changed life. Understand the five ways we grieve and the shudda, wudda, cudda responses. This is a journey you need not walk alone.

**Thursdays, Sept. 13, 20, 27, Oct. 4, 11, 18
6:00 - 7:30 p.m.**

Conference Room A-1, Quality Services
Department, Aspirus Wausau Hospital
Call 715.845.4159 to register.

Living River Concert—“Lean On Me”

**Saturday, December 1
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.**

The Plaza Hotel & Suites, 201 N. 17th Ave,
Wausau

All I Want For Christmas... Is The Right To Grieve

Tips for helping your friends and family understand that the holidays may be different this year; and how they can honor your needs.

**Tuesday, December 4
6:00-7:30 p.m.**

Aspirus Wausau Hospital, Medallion Room

All programs are free and open to the public.
Programs facilitated by Nan & Gary Zastrow,
Certified Grief Educators

Wings—a Grief Education Ministry –
providing grief education and support since 1993.
www.wingsgrief.org 715.845.4159



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Reader Feedback



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WHAT VALUES OR MEMORY DO YOU THINK A DECEASED PARENT(S) PASSED ON TO YOU THAT MEANS THE MOST IN HOW YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE TODAY?

WE'VE JUST PASSED TWO IMPORTANT OCCASIONS MOTHER'S DAY AND FATHER'S DAY. IT'S COMMON AS WE BECOME ADULTS AND LIFE BECOMES MORE REALISTIC TO US, WE VALUE OUR MOTHERS AND FATHERS IN A DIFFERENT WAY THAN WE DID WHEN WE WERE YOUNGER LIVING UNDER THEIR ROOF. THIS IS STRONGLY CONFIRMED FROM THE HUNDREDS OF FACEBOOK POSTS THAT HONOR AND REMEMBER A PARENT WHO HAS DIED.

My parents were Frank and Evelyn Dennis from Bracebridge, Ontario, Canada. They "set the mold" for me in several different ways during my formative years. They made sure I was at Sunday School and then afterward they took me to the church service--I followed suit with my wife and children. Dad played the fiddle and Mom played the guitar and piano. They introduced me to music early and then had me to take piano lessons--I play the piano for our church services every Sunday. Mom taught me to help with cleaning chores around the house--and now I vacuum half the house when needed and help my wife wash the dishes every day. Dad was a carpenter and taught me the value of being accurate (measure twice, cut once!!) and not to cut corners in any task, financial or otherwise--we built a new house in 1976 and had it paid for within five years. My Dad was a great proponent of common sense and my Mom taught me that you reap what you sow--today, I pay all my bills, treat people fairly and try to be an encouragement to all whom I meet. We did not have an extravagant life, but our family name is held in respect around our community. For these, and a lot more, I am truly grateful to my parents.

Gary
Ontario, Canada

The value of love, family, friends, home, education, faith, humor, hygiene & nutrition.

Marguerite
Glenville, IL

My mother always told me when I was young, "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride." I never quite understood that, but I never forgot it either. I think my interpretation of that was if something is important to you, you must take responsibility for making it happen. Nothing in this world would be handed to me. To me, "hard work" and responsibility were values she gave me.

Nan
Wausau, WI

My Father, Ruperto Mendoza, 91 years old taught me about being responsible. My Mother Tomasa Mendoza who lived 100 years, losing 6 children taught me about Faith, and Love.

Romi
Deming, NM

Today is the 8th anniversary of my mother's death. I think often of the wonderful values my parents bestowed upon me and my siblings... My father taught me to be gentle to others and nature, to listen and to be fully present when someone is talking, especially someone who is ill or going through a hardship, and to always rely on humor to get through dark times. My mother taught me to be independent, to fight for what you believe in, to do the things you don't want to do first thing in the day, and to be myself no matter how different I am from other people.

Gretchen
Oshkosh, WI

My parents were a great influence on me. My mother (Geneva Friedel) was a woman of faith in her God, in her children and in life. I do not recall ever hearing her judge someone. Just the opposite, she found good in every person. A great mentor who loved me as unconditionally as a human being could. My father (August) was also a giver. If someone needed something fixed...he was there. Neighbors called upon him because they knew he could fix anything and did. One story that we cherished was that someone

Continued on page 11

WHAT DO YOU THINK...

Continued from page 10

placed a KKK cross on the state capital grounds. It was on fire. He saw it, put the fire out with his bare hands and removed the cross. In our house all people were equal.

Mary
Madison, WI

Dad - Harold Fitzsimmons

Dad was a very hard worker and very, very frugal. I didn't like his being a tightwad while growing up, but I find myself today carrying his same very sensible, wise spending, conservative values. I appreciate him more today!

Mom - Mary Fitzsimmons

Mom had a huge load raising 12 of us and I thought of us kids as slaves. But, as years passed and responsibilities increased, I realized what a gigantic load she carried. She worked so hard, cared for all of us, and cared deeply for those outside our home too. I find that I have a lot of those same attributes as mom had, and I love that I could carry on her ability to empathize and care for other people. I sure miss my mom!

Betty
Wausau, WI

My mother taught me to give to others freely – not expecting anything in return. But she also taught me to not let people take advantage of your free will to help them.

When I was younger, I did not pay much attention to her cooking skills or her love of gardening, flowers, and birds. But somehow I am a pretty good cook – so without knowing it I did learn from her when I was younger. And I now take the time out of my busy hectic life to watch a bird as it flutters by my feeders, and to keep my bird feeders full because she

always made sure to do this, to look up at the stars and wonder how she is, and to look at the beauty of the flowers blossoming.

Mom was also very thrifty yet creative on a budget and would make the cutest things just to give them to other people. I genuinely enjoy doing the same.

Mother: Dianne Christine Klosinski,
DOD: 08-02-16 we are approaching two years without her.

Paula
Schofield, WI

As far back as I can remember my parents both were committed Christians and instilled in me and my siblings a strong faith in God. After faith came a strong influence in love and respect for family. This family context went beyond immediate family and included aunts, uncles, and numerous cousins. Family activities included holidays, birthdays, and marriages. To this day I relish this upbringing knowing that the loss of loved ones will bring us back to reunite through grace from our Lord and Savior.

Today, after suffering loss of loved family members I am able to install in my grandchildren an abiding faith that will see us through all challenges.

David
Wausau, WI

Be Good to Yourself

SELF CARE TIP

When you feel like running away, allow yourself to feel scared for one moment. It's normal to feel overwhelmed after loss. Know that the solution is not to move to another city, another job, or another relationship. First you must heal the inner self...or your problems will just move with you. Seek help in the present from someone you can trust and begin putting your fears to rest.

