

**EMBRACING**

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**GRIEF**

# QUESTIONS

1. Have you experienced a death of someone you have loved deeply?
  2. When you think of the person do you feel a sense of emptiness because he/she is no longer physically present?
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3. After the death of your loved one, did you feel people understood what you were experiencing?

4. Did you feel alone in your grief?

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GRIEF is UNIQUE

GRIEF is a PROCESS

GRIEF is PERSONAL

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SCRIPTURES – MIXED MESSAGES?

WHY?!!!!

GRIEF HAS NO TIMELINE

GRIEF CAN HIT US AT ANY TIME

OUR LIVES ARE FOREVER CHANGED

WE ARE NEVER THE SAME

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# THERE IS MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF LOSS

- DIVORCE
- CHRONIC ILLNESS
- DEATH OF A PET
- THE INABILITY TO CONCEIVE A CHILD
- LOSS OF A JOB
- AN UNWANTED MOVE
- .....

DEATH IS A UNIVERSAL SUFFERING



REMEMBER:

WHEN SOMEONE WE LOVE DIES

OUR LIVES ARE

FOREVER CHANGED!

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SOCIETY VIEWS

INJURY,  
ILLNESS

VS.

DEATH


OLE SAYINGS

DEATH AND TAXES

DEATH AND GRIEF



GRIEF WILL NOT BE  
DENIED



# WAYS WE ATTEMPT TO DENY GRIEF

- KEEP BUSY
- AVOID EVERYTHING THAT REMINDS YOU OF THE PERSON WHO DIED – I.E MUSIC, MOVIES, ETC....
- AVOID TALKING ABOUT THE PERSON WHO DIED
- ANESTHETIZE OURSELVES TO BLOCK THE PAIN
- BECOME BITTER TOWARDS LIFE
- MINIMILIZE THE LOSS
- .....

# EFFECTS OF DENYING GRIEF

- Angry outbursts
  - Depression
  - Fatigue
  - Insomnia
  - High blood pressure
  - Headaches
  - Drug and/or alcohol abuse/addiction
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# DISGUISED GRIEF

- THIS IS WHERE OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS BEGIN TO HURT BECAUSE WE HAVE UNEXPLAINED MOOD SWINGS, AND/OR OUR HEALTH BEGINS TO PAY THE PRICE

# PERSONAL RESULT OF DENYING GRIEF





# HOW ONE DEATH COMPOUNDS OTHER LOSSES IN LIFE

- Sometimes a death of a person, even if the person wasn't close, can open up wounds from past losses that were not dealt with.
  - Sometimes a death can lead a person to grieve again previous losses.
  - This is normal! You are not going crazy!
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# GRIEF TRIGGERS

- A song on the radio
  - T.V. show
  - A drive alone
  - Anniversaries, holidays, birthdays
  - Triggers can happen at any time
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# GRIEF TRIGGERS (CONT.)

- The pain will not be the same as before but it is still real.
  - It is no longer paralyzing
  - Give your permission to experience the feeling
  - You might need to put the grief aside for the moment. Plan a time to sit with your grief.
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# HOW PEOPLE GRIEVE

- No one grieves the same way
  - How we grieve is determined by the type of relationship we had with the deceased.
  - Closer the relationship can sometimes make the grief more intense
  - Grief has nothing to do with how much time we knew someone
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- It doesn't matter how close we were to a person
  - When someone we know dies, we experience loss/grief.
  - Grief has not timeline
  - Some move on quicker than others
  - Be compassionate to others and to yourself
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# SYMPTOMS YOU MIGHT EXPERIENCE WHILE GRIEVING

- PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS: HEADACHES, FATIGUE, ACHY MUSCLES, NAUSEA
  - EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS: SADNESS, ANGER, DISBELIEF, DESPAIR, GUILT, LONELINESS
  - MENTAL SYMPTOMS: FORGETFULNESS, LACK OF CONCENTRATION, CONFUSION, POOR MEMORY
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- BEHAVIORAL: CHANGES IN SLEEP PATTERNS OR APPETITE, DREAMS/NIGHTMARES, LACKING INTEREST IN FAMILY/FRIENDS, CRYING – DON'T WORRY YOU WILL BE ABLE TO STOP CRYING.
  - SOCIAL: AVOIDING FRIENDS, OR THEY MAY AVOID YOU BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY OR HOW TO HELP
  - SPIRITUAL: BELIEFS MAY BE CHALLENGED
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MANAGING GRIEF IS HARD.

**GRIEF IS WORK**

**GRIEF IS A PROCESS**

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# SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO MANAGE GRIEF

- **ACCEPT YOUR FEELINGS:** There is no right or wrong way to feel after the death of someone you care about. Accepting the feelings you have and acknowledging you are going through a stressful time can help you manage your reactions.
  - Sometimes you might feel overwhelmed with thoughts and feelings which make you feel you're going crazy. Don't worry. Many others have experienced this.
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- **ALLOW YOURSELF TO CRY:** It's okay to cry. If you feel uncomfortable crying in front of others, you might want to make a plan to leave and cry in a private place. Many people have said the shower has been the place where they can let their tears flow.
- **SMILE:** Many times we focus on the sadness following the death of a loved one. It may be helpful to talk about the memories – the good times you had with the person. It's okay to enjoy those memories and laugh. This isn't a sign that you miss the person any less. It honors the relationship you had and continue to have with him/her.

- SAYING GOODBYE: Part of the grieving process is letting go of the person who died. It's important to say goodbye in your own way in your own time. There is no wrong or right way to do this. As people of faith, we know goodbye is not forever. We can always call to mind the person. The spirit of our loved one lives and is a part of us.
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# SUGGESTIONS TO HELP SAY GOODBYE

Write a letter

Go to the funeral or wake

Have a memorial service by yourself in your own way

Honor the memory of the person

-set up a fund to help others in his/her name

Share stories about the person who died

.....do what works for you!

**FIVE STAGES  
OF  
GRIEF**

**DR. KUBLER-ROSS**

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- Denial – initial response to the news someone who is dying or has died
  - Anger- as denial begins to wear, the reality of what has happened emerges. The intense emotion is deflected from your vulnerable core, redirected and expressed as anger – at others, strangers, family, friends, one who is dying, the deceased.
  - Bargaining- example of this is when you make a deal with God in an attempt to prevent the inevitable
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- Depression –

Practical implications: sadness & regret

Private implications: it is the quiet preparation to separate and bid farewell of your loved one

Acceptance- this stage is not afforded to everyone.

This stage is marked by withdrawal and calm. It is not a period of happiness and must be distinguished from depression.

# ALTERNATIVE TO STAGES - GOALS

No one goes through the stages necessarily in a neat order.

Sometimes stages are meshed together

Sometimes one returns to one of the stages

The key is to find a way to get to acceptance. This can only be done when one has achieved facing the pain and the sadness of grief.

- There is an alternative way to help with understanding and working through grief – setting goals.



# 6 GOALS OF GRIEF

1. ACCEPTANCE
  2. TURN TO GOD
  3. EXPRESS YOUR EMOTIONS
  4. ESTABLISH A NEW IDENTITY
  5. SELF-CARE
  6. FACE THE PAIN
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## 1. ACCEPTANCE:

- **DOES NOT MEAN YOU ARE “OVER YOUR GRIEF”. IT IS THE REALIZATION THAT THE PERSON IS NOT COMING BACK – YOUR HEAD AND YOUR HEART KNOW IT. BUT, IT DOES NOT MEAN YOU DON’T CONTINUE TO GRIEVE**

## 2. TURNING TO GOD:

- **TURN TO HIS WORD TO HELP BRING YOU COMFORT.**
  - **Ps.63 – “O GOD, YOU ARE MY GOD; I SHALL SEEK YOU EARNESTLY; MY SOUL THIRSTS FOR YOU; AS IN A DRY AND WEARY LAND WHERE THERE IS NO WATER.**
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### 3. EXPRESS YOUR EMOTIONS

- **REMEMBER – IF YOU TRY TO SUPPRESS YOUR EMOTIONS WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS NUMBING YOURSELF. WHEN YOU SUPPRESS ONE EMOTION YOU NUMB ALL EMOTIONS.**
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  - **“IF I RUN FROM ALLOWING MYSELF TO FEEL SORROW – IF I DENY MY GRIEF, I RUN AWAY AND DENY MY FEELINGS OF JOY. I DENY HEALING.”**
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## 4. ESTABLISH A NEW IDENTITY

- **LIFE HAS CHANGED AFTER THE DEATH OF SOMEONE YOU HAVE LOVED. YOU HAVE CHANGED. LIFE DOES NOT END – IT HAS ONLY CHANGED.**
- **ESTABLISHING A NEW IDENTITY MEANS LEARNING TO LIVE WITHOUT THE PHYSICAL PRESENCE OF YOUR LOVED ONE.**

## 4. CONT.

- **THE WAY YOU CHOOSE TO MOVE FORWARD IN ESTABLISHING A NEW IDENTITY IS BY HONORING YOUR SADNESS AND HONORING THE LIFE THAT TOUCHED YOU.**
  - **IT DOES NOT MEAN YOU FORGET YOUR LOVED ONE!**
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## 5. SELF-CARE

- **GRIEF TAKES A PHYSICAL TOLL. IT IS IMPORTANT TO PREPARE YOURSELF AS BEST AS POSSIBLE.**
- **THE WAY TO CARE FOR YOURSELF IS TO REMEMBER THE ACRONYM “D.E.E.R.**

# D.E.E.R.

- **D : DRINK PLENTY OF FLUIDS (AVOID : CAFFEINE, ALCOHOL, SODAS)**
  - **E : EAT HEALTHY FOODS**
  - **E : EXERCISE**
  - **R : REST**
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## 6. FACE THE PAIN

- **SHARE HOW YOU FEEL. SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES YOU HAD WITH THE DECEASED. WHEN A LOVED ONE HAS DIED – ALL ARE HURTING. WHEN YOU SHARE YOUR SADNESS AND MEMORIES THERE IS NO NEED TO FEAR OF MAKING OTHERS SAD. EVERYONE IS ALREADY SAD. IN FACING THE PAIN TOGETHER HEALING CAN TAKE PLACE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY.**

As long as there is life,  
there is hope.

As long as there is hope,  
there is life.

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Grieving is a personal  
process that has no time  
limit, nor one "right" way  
to do it.

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Grief

Is hard work.

Denying grief  
is even more  
exhausting.

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Grief will not be  
denied!



FACE  
THE  
PAIN

You must

Hurt

Before You Can

Heal



# PRAYER AND GRIEF

My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far away when I groan for help?



# GRIEF IS PART OF THE JOURNEY

It is a trip we will take sooner or later in life

Factors to consider for the

1. Take intentional steps to point yourself in a healthy, healing direction.
2. Put on your hiking boots (so to speak)
3. Get out your compass – your bible
4. Allow God and others to help you avoid getting lost in the deep woods of grief.

# CLOSING PRAYER



# STEPS FOR PRAYER EXPERIENCE

- Close your eyes
  - Take 5 slow and deep breaths. Allow yourself to feel the air – THE BREATH OF GOD – enter your lungs
  - Slowly exhale imagining love flowing out of you
  - Continue to keep your eyes closed throughout the prayer until told to open again
  - Picture what is being prayed in your mind's eye and heart
  - Allow the words of the Psalmist to be your words.
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# EMBRACE YOUR GRIEF

- Recognize it is a part of life
  - Grief is a part of loving
  - We don't need to ever "get over" the death of our loved one
  - Accept life has changed
  - Embrace the love you received from the one who died. Embrace that God is always forever with you.
  - Give thanks for the love you received. This love has changed you for the good. AMEN!
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