

Understanding the Six Needs of Mourning

Date: Tuesday, May 2nd, 2023

Osher: June 6, 13, 20

Time: 10:00-11:30 am

Time: 4:30-6:30

Place: Williamsburg Regional Library Main Building Classroom

515 Scotland Street

Williamsburg, VA 23185

The Six Needs of Mourning

Need #1:

ACCEPT THE REALITY OF THE LOSS

BE OPEN TO THE PRESENCE OF YOUR LOSS

**“IN EVERY HEART THERE IS AN INNER ROOM, WHERE WE CAN HOLD
OUR GREATEST TREASURES AND OUR DEEPEST PAIN.”**

MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

**“To live in the future depends on the reality of what I
am experiencing.”**

**“Temporarily, I need to create insulation from the full force
Of what I am coming to know.**

If I felt it all at once, I might die!

But feel it, I must!

Alan D. Wolfelt, PH. D.

ACCEPTING THE REALITY

- You can know something in your head, but not in your heart.
- There is a natural, normal tendency for us to deny the reality.
(The Wilderness)
- Without taking the time to adjust gradually, we would be too overwhelmed with the loss.

BACK and FORTH

- Whether the loss anticipated or sudden, acknowledging the reality is not a steady process, and it may take weeks or months.
- Periods of procrastinating may alternate with times of encouraging the reality of the loss.
- One moment it may be tolerable, another, it may be unbearable.
- Be patient with yourself!
- As you are able to express your thoughts and feelings outside of yourself, you will gradually begin to move forward.

NEED #2

LET YOURSELF FEEL THE PAIN OF LOSS

- You may try to protect yourself from sadness by not talking about your loss.
- You may, even secretly hope that the situation will change, if you don't talk about and acknowledge it.
- Yet, as difficult as it is, you **must feel it to heal it.**

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION ...

- To be angry with the person who died.
- Anger is another way to get the pain from the inside out.
- To be angry with God and to question your faith as you struggle with the 'meaning of life' issues at this time.
- To be frustrated, overwhelmed and confused for a period of time.

DOSING YOUR PAIN

- Never try to deal with it all at once!
- Allow 'grief bursts' as they present themselves. They can surface over months and, at times, even years later to a lesser frequency.
- This is nature's way of healing and is perfectly natural. You will find with each grief burst, the pain itself will also lessen in intensity more and more over time.
- If you begin to become overwhelmed with grief, deliberately divert your attention to something else. You might call a friend, take a walk, listen to TV or watch a movie. Just stop the ensuing pain and crying.

BE OPEN TO THE PAIN

- We cannot go around the pain that is the wilderness of our grief.
- Grief is a journey, and we must go through it.
- In opening to the pain and being willing to gently embrace it, we honor the pain.

This is the key that opens your heart
and
allows you to begin to heal!

HEALING YOUR PAIN

- While it may sound strange, acknowledging your pain is the first step to healing it.
- Honoring your loss means recognizing the value of it and respecting it.
- The capacity to love requires the necessity to mourn.
- Given a choice would you choose to have never know the person and thereby avoid the pain of the loss you feel now or to mourn the loss as you remember the good times you had in your relationship?

TO HEAL YOUR GRIEF

- Life has changed and will never be the same, but as you integrate your grief into yourself, you will learn to move into a changed life with fulness and meaning.
- Healing occurs gradually when you deliberately engage in the work of mourning which is expressing your thoughts and feelings from the inside out.
- If you normally have a busy schedule, you will benefit from taking some time off to make opportunities to intentionally mourn.

NEED #3

REMEMBER THE PERSON/PET OR SITUATION

- Plan ahead to do something special with others on holidays, birthdays, anniversaries and other special occasions.
- Include family members and friends and ask them to each write one or more special memories of the person you loved using a plain 4 X 6 card. Then have them read the card sharing the memory with everyone there. Once they have finished, you will have the card to put into a memory book which you can refer to from time to time.
- Be creative with ideas like this. It helps you and everyone else.
When Thanksgiving occurred on her anniversary, one of my clients celebrated the first Thanksgiving following the death of her husband by putting her wedding gown on a mannequin in the dining room. Her daughter had never seen it.

COLLECT SPECIAL REMEMBRANCES

- Writing stories of special occasions, you shared with your loved one is a wonderful way to honor them and keep their memory fresh.
- You may want to collect the cards and letters you gave to each other, also the condolence cards you received and little card that you may have gotten with flowers, then you can put them all in your memory book.
- Pictures may be difficult to look at first but do keep them and reflect on the occasions when they were taken as you are able.

SHARE WITH OTHERS

- Stories
- Pictures
- Clothing
- Jewelry, etc. that had belonged to the person who died.

NEED # 4

DEVELOP A NEW SELF-IDENTITY

Don't feel guilty about moving forward!

- You must take action!
- You may need to reach out and make new friends.
- You may want to develop new interests or revisit old ones like: playing tennis and/or golf; reading, painting, writing, singing or playing a musical instrument, sewing, card games, flower arranging, gardening, cooking, baking, exercising, adult education classes, wood-working, photography, etc.

SET YOUR INTENTION TO HEAL

- Know that you are created to be here on earth, and that you have a special purpose here that is all your own!
- Choose between being a 'passive witness' or an 'active participant' in your grief journey.
- Intention is defined as 'being conscious of what you want to experience' and 'making a commitment to positively influence the course of your journey.'

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE

- As you begin to feel stronger, choose to take control of your life by making a commitment to heal using positive thoughts and affirmations to create what you want.
- $E + R = O$ (Event + Response = Outcome!)
- Take 100% Responsibility for your life!
- Remember, there are 'no rewards for speed.'

CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS

“We become whatever we think about all day!”

Brian Tracy

Let go of all thoughts of blame and shame of others and especially of yourself.

Whenever you sense that negative thoughts begin to enter your mind,

replace

them by reframing them in a positive direction.

NEED #5 SEARCH FOR MEANING

As you search for meaning, consider your own past experiences with death

as well as what religious you and your family members hold.

Of great importance is also your unique relationship with your loved one and the circumstances of the death.

Studying Biblical passages and other trusted literature can be most useful. In your search for the meaning of life.

NEED #6

LET OTHERS HELP YOU

- You have gone through a major loss, and your life will never be exactly the same!
- The loss of a loved one always comes as a shock robbing us of our security, likely both physically and certainly emotionally.
- While most people don't know what to say or what to do unless they have gone through a similar experience, we still need their helpful support. You can ask for that but be sure to ask them not to try to fix it, since they can't do that anyway. You may want to ask them to 'just listen' as you work through your own acknowledgement and understanding.

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING THIS PROGRAM TODAY!

- If you would like to look into further opportunities to express your grief and move forward in a safe and healthy manner, please, speak with me following this program.