

Along the Way

IU Health Hospice Bereavement Services Newsletter

Fall 2022

Resources

BOOKS:

- *IT'S OK THAT YOU'RE NOT OK*
by Megan Devine
- *Grief's Courageous Journey*
A workbook by Sandi Caplan
& Gordon Lang
- *The Invisible String*
by Patrice Karst

WEBSITES:

- whatsyourgrief.com
- GriefNet.org
- HospiceFoundation.org
- iuhealth.org/patient-family-support/support-care/bereavement

PHONE:

- AARP Friendly Voices –
Connecting people to people,
especially when isolated:
888.281.0145
- Mental Health Crisis Hotline
call 988
- Mental Health America:
800.969.6642
- National Suicide Prevention
Hotline: 800.273.TALK (8255)
(Always available)
- IU Health Hospice:
866.272.5083



Grief, Loss and Recovery

Grieving from loss touches all of us. It seems to intensify for many during the holidays, because there are so many memories of the past that was.

Human beings who experience loss must grieve. We must do that cleansing. The cycle of grieving and recovery from loss is a normal psychological/spiritual human process. We try to interfere with it at our peril.

What I went through in losing my parents as a child and teen was not fundamentally different from the later grieving for the death of my brother and other relatives or grieving the loss of my wife through separation when I was in my thirties. Grieving comes with major loss.

Grieving is not about fixed length mourning periods or wearing black or avoiding new relationships. These are societal/cultural prescriptions which may help the bereaved and the community cope with the loss.

Most of the psychological work of grieving is unconscious. And we all know it takes time. Just how long the grieving process takes to unfold varies widely from person to person and culture to culture. When it comes to grief there is no such thing as one size fits all.

(Cont'd on page 2...)



Call your local IU
Health Hospice
office, or visit:

iuhealth.org/patient-family-support/support-care/bereavement

How does one get through the Fall and Winter holidays this year, especially Thanksgiving and Christmas?

"Remember that our loved ones lived, not just that they died"

- **Be Kind and Gentle with Yourself:** Figure out what you should do, balance it with what you are capable of doing and then compromise.
- **Plan Ahead:** Grieving people often experience a lack of concentration. Make lists. Prioritize everything. Decide what is really important to you.
- **Listen to Yourself:** As you become aware of your needs, tell family members and friends and ask for their support in this.
- **Hold on to Your Wallet and Charge Cards:** You can't buy away grief, but you might be tempted to try.
- **Sleep:** Without adequate restful sleep on a regular basis, one is going about their life in a constant state of sleep deprivation which makes life on the whole more challenging to manage. To improve sleep, follow a regular sleep schedule and establish a relaxing bedtime routine.
- **Take Time for Self-Care:** Give yourself permission to take breaks from the stress to engage in a healthy activity. Eating a balanced diet and exercising can help you approach life with more energy. Self-care isn't selfish—it's necessary maintenance and self-preservation.
- **Light a Special Candle:** Not in memory of a death, but in celebration of a life.
- **Live through your Hurt...** This is a Season of Light... for it is the season we remember that once we loved and were loved is the best memory of all!

(Cont'd from page 1...)

When you experience a sudden major loss, you will probably feel yourself plunge into grief and other low-level emotions like anxiety and fear. As the cycle of loss, grief and recovery continues to unfold over time, these emotions will give way to resentment and anger towards anyone and anything.

You might direct the anger towards others suffering from the same loss, because they are moving on too fast or not fast enough. It might even be directed towards the one you lost. That's okay. It's perfectly normal. In fact, I call it "good grief."

Wherever your anger is directed, celebrate it! It is a really good sign that the recovery cycle is nearly complete. Anger, although negative, is a higher-level emotion than grief or anxiety or resentment. The anger is a sign you are recovering normally and are in a later stage of grief. It will pass as you gradually return to the positive emotional levels where you lived before your loss. The worst thing you could do when the anger arises would be to try to stop it.

"If someone judges you for the way you grieve, they are truly misguided."

If someone judges you for the way you grieve, they are truly misguided. Most of the grieving process is unconscious. As for the conscious part of grieving, human beings are masters at concealing conscious emotion when they need to. Anyone who sees you could not possibly be aware of more than a tiny fraction of what you are dealing with after a major loss.

The human need to grieve for the loss of a loved one doesn't diminish throughout life. It comes with the territory of living. As you come to understand the twists and turns grieving can take, you can better accept the process as normal.

Sometimes a loved one's death is not a total surprise—bad heart, cancer, extreme risk taker, heavy drinker, or simply very old. You may have completed much of the grieving process before the actual death, thereby shortening the apparent grieving period after the death.

Age can be a factor in how long a grieving period is needed. It turns out that one thing the very old have in common with one another is that they have all learned how to recover from loss quickly. The ones who didn't learn how didn't make it into their nineties.

Before my uncle died in his late nineties, he told me that everyone he ever knew—friends, fellow veterans, business associates and his generation of family—were all gone. He was the last. And that's a lot of loss to recover from!

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Wild Geese

By Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees for a hundred
miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain

are moving across the landscapes, over the prairies
and the deep trees, the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world
offers itself to your imagination, calls to you like the
wild geese, harsh and exciting - over and over
announcing your place in the family of things.

We Remember Them

At the rising of the sun and it's going down, we remember them.
At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we remember them.
At the opening of the buds and the rebirth of spring, we remember them.
At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer, we remember them.
When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them.
When we have decisions that are difficult to make, we remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us, as we remember them.

~Rabbi Simcha Kling

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Indiana University Health

IU Health Hospice Bereavement Service

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