



Bereavement Café Newsletter

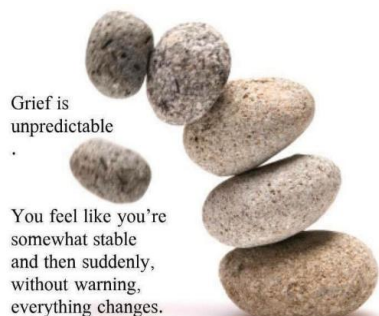
A safe space to talk and listen

Written and compiled by
Edna Thomas

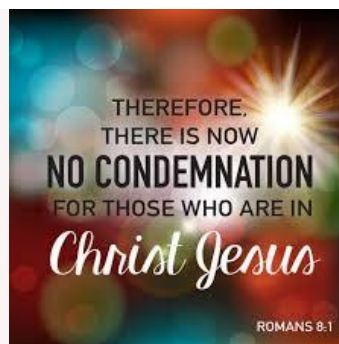
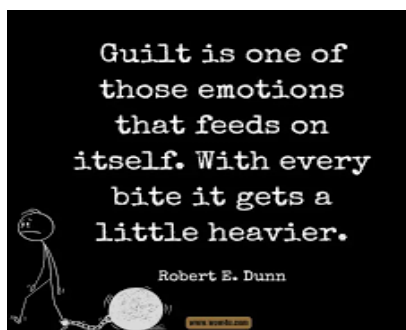
JOURNEY THROUGH GRIEF: FACTORS THAT MAY HINDER THE GRIEVING PROCESS

“Death ends a life, but not a relationship; what you shared does not vanish as apart of you”

Many factors that can affect our grief. These include the relationship we had with the person who died, our previous experience of grief, and the support we have around us (Mind).



*One of the challenges you may be facing in your grief journey is that you're not able to express your 'real' thoughts and feelings to those around you for fear of judgement and condemnation. This in itself can hinder the grieving process.



The Nature of Grief

“Grief can be described as a storm within our soul. It is not just one emotion, but a mix of many emotions –sadness, anger, guilt, longing confusion– all blending together, sometimes unpredictably. It is not something you “get” over, but rather something we learn to live with”.

- You don't get over it—you get through it. Like a tree struck by lightning, the loss forever changes us. The best we can do is integrate the loss into our lives and honour the loved one in our memories and actions as we live on.



- “Grief doesn't end at a certain time and never leaves us completely—it's like a house guest who comes out of his/her room to visit less and less over time. There isn't a predictable schedule for someone to heal, and expecting one to do so isn't helpful or realistic”.

Factors that may Hinder the Grieving Process

On your roadblocks to the recovery of grief, you may come up against certain obstacles that might get in the way of the grieving process. For example:

Socially Unspeakable or Negated Loss:

- Unexpected or traumatic deaths, such as those resulting from accidents, violence, suicide, or miscarriage, can be particularly difficult to process and can be particularly isolating and difficult to process.

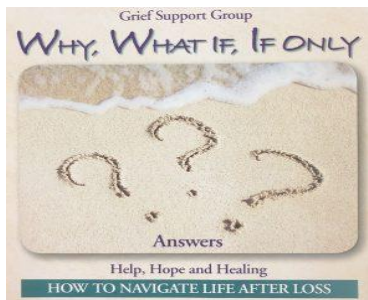


Self-blame and

Guilt

- One writer said that “Isn't it interesting how we tend to hook into guilt and end up pointing the finger back at ourselves? Self-blame is usually unrealistic and harsher than the blame we place on others. Our imagination takes the event and magnifies our sense of responsibility. We tell ourselves things like, “If only....” Or “I should have....”

- Another writer put like this, when a death occurs, we feel a sense of helplessness. We would have done anything to stop it happening, but sadly it is a reality, and we feel overwhelmed. So where does guilt come in? Usually, guilt comes as we look back over events surrounding the death of our loved one and we imagine how things might have unfolded differently.



Grief can bring about feelings of...
Wangechi...the_therapist

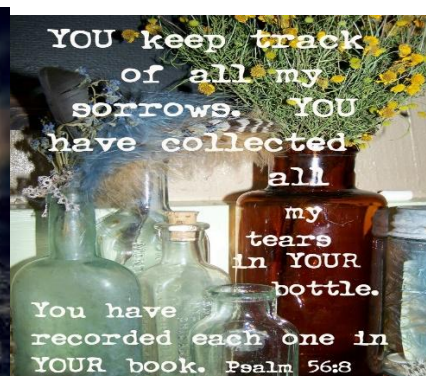
Anger	Guilt	Hopelessness
Sadness	Fear	Anxiety
Loneliness	Confusion	Betrayal
Depression	Regret	Despair
Inadequacy	Shame	Shock
Denial	Helplessness	

- Feeling guilty could also stem from unresolved business and it leads to regret that turns into guilt.
- The death of your loved one is not your fault, and you cannot change the past by feeling guilty. This can only hinder the grieving process and prolong the grief.

Remember that God's mercy is lavish, overflowing, and plenteous; it is more than enough to forgive any guilt we've been feeling (Dr David Jeremiah).

Cultural and Religious Beliefs:

- Cultural and religious beliefs can shape how grief is expressed and processed. Discrepancies between personal beliefs and cultural norms can create challenges.



Yea, I have *loved you* with an *everlasting* love: therefore with *loving kindness* have I drawn you.
Jeremiah 31:3

Anger and Fear

According to one writer, anger is another distracting emotion that can accompany grief and hinder your ability to cope with loss. Feeling guilty about a loss, blaming yourself or others might lead to feelings of anger and fear”.

- Anger may result from feeling abandoned, occurring in cases of loss through death.
- Feelings of resentment may occur toward God or toward life in general for the injustice of this loss



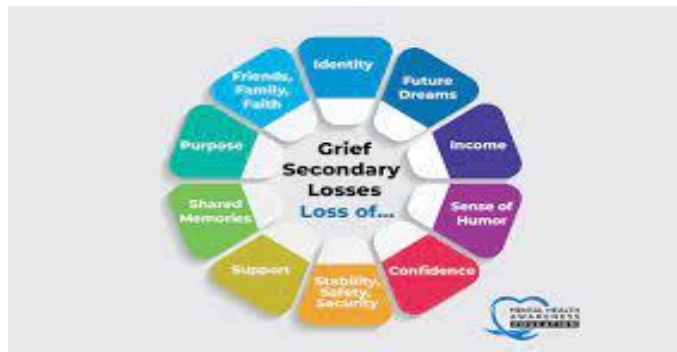
- You may also feel fearful that to let go of the person means that you have stopped loving him/her.
- You may be concerned with the fear of being alone, fear of the future, fear of additional loss, fear of abandonment.

Grief, despite its challenges and the fears that come along with it, is an essential part of the human experience. By acknowledging and understanding our fear of grief, we can work towards embracing this natural response to loss – for ourselves, and for each other.

Loss of Identity

It is said that, the death of your loved one created an abrupt change in your identity, much of which was defined by marriage. The death of that relationship frequently shatters your world in a different way.

Two questions are important here: Who am I? And what do I want to become? The search of and development of a new identity is a large part of moving on. When you think of identity, you think of roles that you have had for a lifetime such as a mother, a father, a sibling, and a spouse.

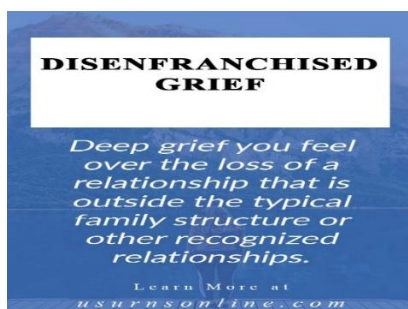


As you process your grief, you are taken on a journey to realise potential new roles in your lives and the loss of previous positions. These changes can intensify the grieving process and cause you to question your existence in the world. (Norman Wright).

- “Death is a painful psychological wound. As with any injury to the physical body, healing requires tender loving care, gentleness and time”. Seeking support is not only normal but it is essential in the grieving process.

Other Factors:

- Whether or not you were able to say goodbye to your loved one.
- Cultural and religious background
- Your financial situation
- Unresolved Feelings
- Relationship with the person who died.



PLEASE NOTE!

*Sometimes coping with the death of a loved one can feel like too much to handle. If you are having suicidal thoughts or struggling to move forward due to emotional challenges of self-blame, guilt and fear, loss of identity, or loneliness, and isolation, please do not sit in silence, seek support by talking to a trusted friend, your Pastor, GP or a counsellor (see information below).



The Quality of your Support Network, Family and Friends.

- Quality not quantity of support makes a difference. Having someone who listens to you can be very comforting. Letting people know that they provide you with comfort can be as helpful to them as it is to you. You may need to be the one to educate others about your needs.

Guidelines That May Help Resolve Grief

Acknowledge and Accept the Loss:

- Recognize and accept that the loss has occurred.
- Understand that grief is a natural response to loss.
- Be patient with yourself and allow yourself time to process.

Allow Yourself to Feel:

- Don't suppress your emotions; allow yourself to feel sadness, anger, confusion, or any other feelings that arise.
- Journaling, creative expression, or talking about your feelings can be helpful.
- It's okay to cry and express your grief

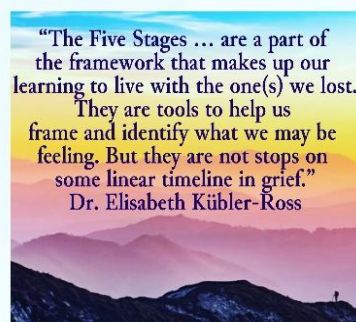


Additional Tips:

- Be patient with yourself: There's no set timeline for grieving.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help: Seek professional support if needed.
- Remember that everyone grieves differently: Be kind to yourself and respect your own unique process.

The Stages of Grief

- Denial: "This can't be happening to me."
- Anger: "*Why* is this happening? Who is to blame?"
- Bargaining: "Make this not happen, and in return I will ____."
- Depression: "I'm too sad to do anything."
- Acceptance: "I'm at peace with what happened."



Remember that through it all, God is faithful. There are many Scriptures that remind us of God's faithfulness in times of mourning. He is with us even in the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23:4). When David sorrowed, he prayed this in Psalm 56:8: "You have kept track of my sorrows; put my tears in your bottle".

The touching image of God catching our tears is full of meaning. He sees our grief and does not disregard it. Like Jesus entered into the grief of the mourners in Bethany, God enters into our grief. At the same time, He reassures us that all is not lost. Psalm 46:10 reminds us to "be still" and rest in the knowledge that He is God. He is our refuge (Psalm 91:1-2).



The Bereavement Café Support Group

Our support group is here to help you on your grief journey. We provide a safe environment for those who are living with grief either through the loss of a loved one or any other significant loss. We believe that sharing can help you feel connected with others who are going through a similar experience, and benefit those who are new to the experience of grief to feel understood.

Our Next Bereavement Support Group will be on the Saturday 19th July 10am–1pm in the Lewinson Centre. ALL ARE WELCOME!



- ✚ Resources used in this Newsletter are taken from Books on “Grief” and various websites .
- ❖ Our prayer is that you will find this month’s Newsletter helpful in your grief journey.

DON'T FORGET TO PRACTICE SELF-COMPASSION

HOW TO PRACTICE COMPASSION (for yourself)



Blessings-The Bereavement Support Team

