

GRIEVING

IT'S THE MOST PROFOUND EMOTIONAL PAIN WE'LL EVER EXPERIENCE

- a) It can strike suddenly.
- b) It grips like a vice for months, even years.
- c) It can wreck havoc with our immune system.
- d) It can leave us vulnerable to a variety of physical ailments including cancer and arthritis.
- e) It is not an illness. It is a normal lifetime experience, a process that needs to be dealt with. The process of accommodation is different for every one.
- f) It is the process of healing from the pain of loss. The process is as natural and predictable as the formation of a scab on a cut and the subsequent itching that signals healing.

THE DENIAL OR SUPPRESSION CAN GIVE RISE TO SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES

Things that block the natural grieving process:

- a) Well-meaning relatives and friends may tell us to be strong, think positive, and don't cry.
- b) The clergy may paint a reassuring picture of life after death. Explaining that, "There is no reason to mourn, since the deceased is in a better place."
- c) Prescribed tranquilizer's and antidepressant drugs may block the natural grieving process.

TO FULLY RECOVER, WE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE OUR FEELINGS

Sorrow, guilt, anger, depression, loneliness, fear, anxiety, and shame - All of these are normal emotions associated with bereavement.

BEREAVEMENT NEEDS TO BE VOICED OPENLY AND HONESTLY

- a) Don't think of yourself as a burden and that nobody is willing to listen to you.
- b) Only through telling our story, over and over again, do we clarify in our own minds what has happened and how we really feel about it.

- c) Through that, we come to accept the reality of the loss so we can go on living.
- d) Crying can also provide a healthy outlet. Crying removes toxins that are produced by emotional shock.

AVERAGE RECOVERY TIME

- a) 18 to 24 months (violent death can take 3-5 years)
- b) Tradition holds that when a person is bereaved, he/she is relieved of responsibility. That is how the ritual of taking food to the mourners originated.
- c) As a society, we need to be more understanding. As individuals, we need to be more patient. Grieving takes time. There's no way to shorten its duration; but if you take care of yourself, you may be able to reduce its intensity.

SIX FACTORS OF SUCCESSFUL GRIEVING

- 1) A nurturing social network - Mourners who have the support of family and friends fare better than those who don't. Women recover faster than men do because they feel free to discuss feelings.
- 2) A balanced diet.
- 3) Healthy fluid intake - Non-caffeine beverages should be taken in adequate amounts. Dehydration can take place during bereavement; caffeine and alcohol act as diuretics.
- 4) Regular exercise.
- 5) Turn to your faith. Those who trust God during a crisis fair much better in recovery then those who don't.
- 6) Regular routines of rest - People that maintain a normal sleeping pattern are more effective than those who push themselves or try to keep busy and preoccupied at all times. Grief isn't something we can run away from.

WORKING TOWARD A HEALTHY MIND SET

- a) The courage to let go, the will to go on living. The courage to let go, the faith that you will heal and the willingness to rejoin life fully.
- b) Everyone has a 100 percent chance of dying. None of us is exempt from death.

- c) Our exit from life is as important as our entrance.
- d) Death is a confusing word in our society. Dad's battery is dead, the next day it's OK; TV cowboys shot dead on one program, then they reappear alive on another. What is real and what is fake death? We ship our terminally ill off to hospitals to die, etc.
- e) Each cell is in the birth/growth/death cycle.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT GRIEF

Isaiah 53:3-4 Jesus was acquainted with grief and he carried our sorrows.

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever.

Matthew 5:4 Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.

Isaiah 61: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted and comfort all who mourn.

Jesus mourned. John the Baptist's death and then went out and preached.

- a) Death is biological necessity, but men do not die simply as animals die.
- b) The Bible speaks of death as a result of sin. God said to Adam, "in that day that you eat of the fruit you will die."
- c) Man doesn't die as a body. He dies as a man, in the totality of his being. He dies as a spiritual and physical being.
- d) We have the victory over death through the death and resurrection of Christ. Hebrews 2:14 "and He defeated Satan."

It will help us to heal when we can reach out to others who are grieving.

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