

From Grief to Gratitude

James Campbell, LPC, LAC, MAC, AADC

Defining Grief

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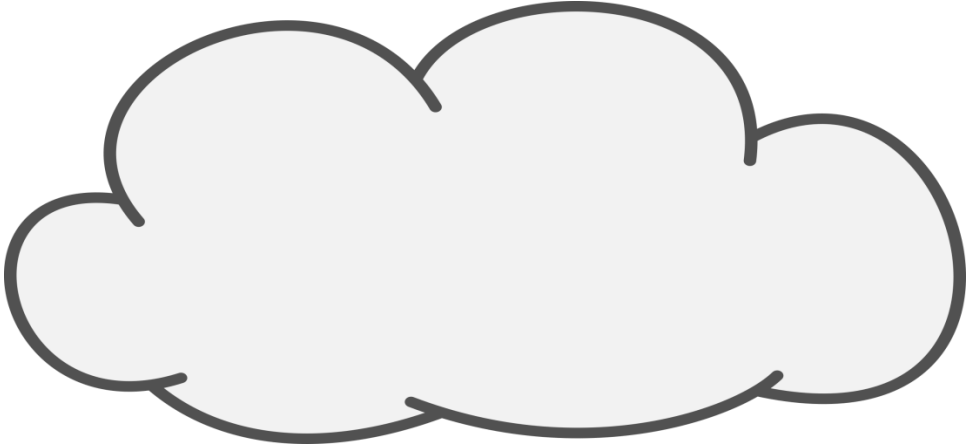
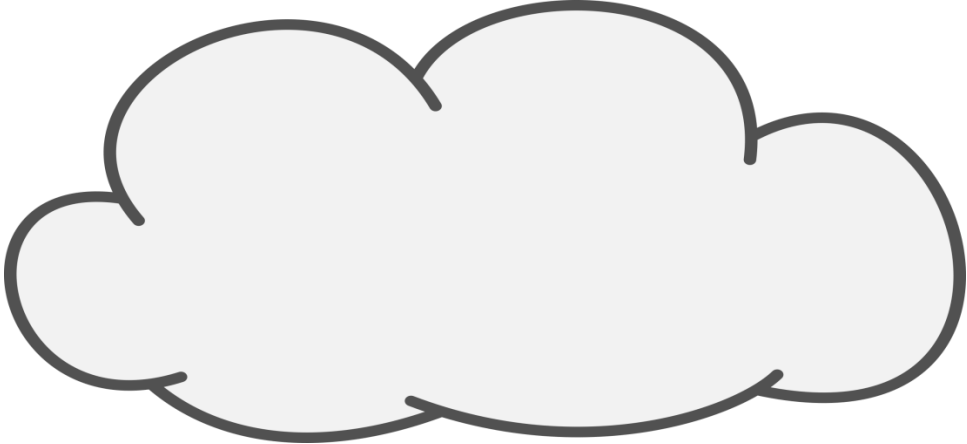
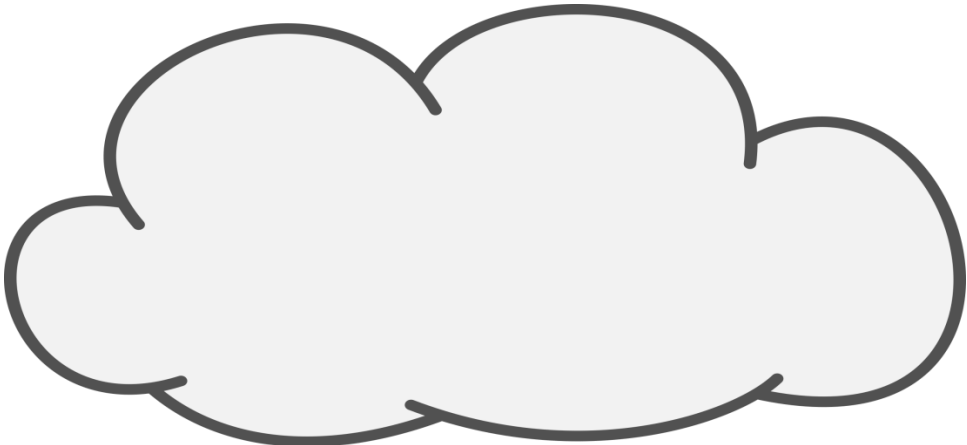
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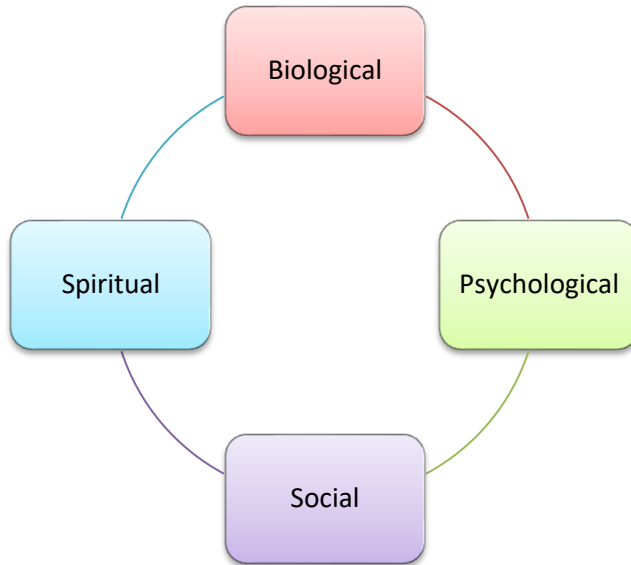
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Types of Losses

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Myths About Grief





Biological:

Psychological:

Social:

Spiritual:

Defining Mourning

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Defining Bereavement

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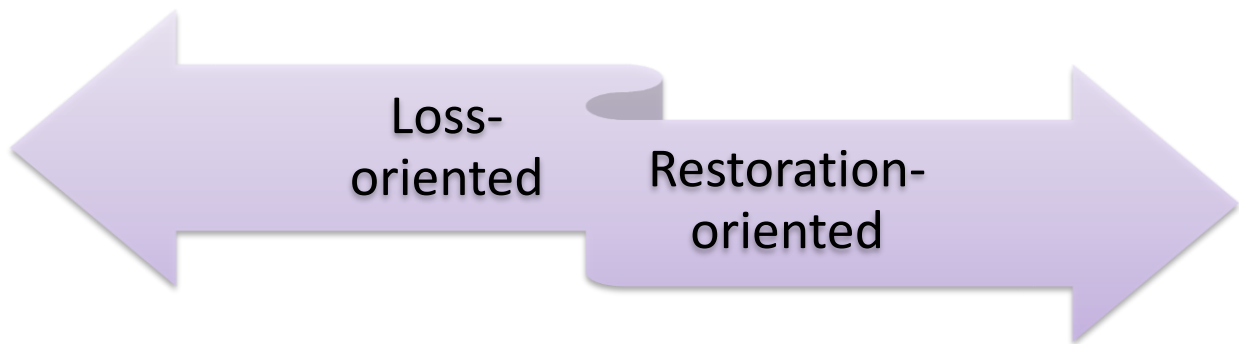
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Kubler-Ross Stages of Grief



Stroebe and Schut Dual Process of Grief



J. William Worden's Four Tasks of Mourning

Accept	Experience	Adjust	Emotionally Relocate
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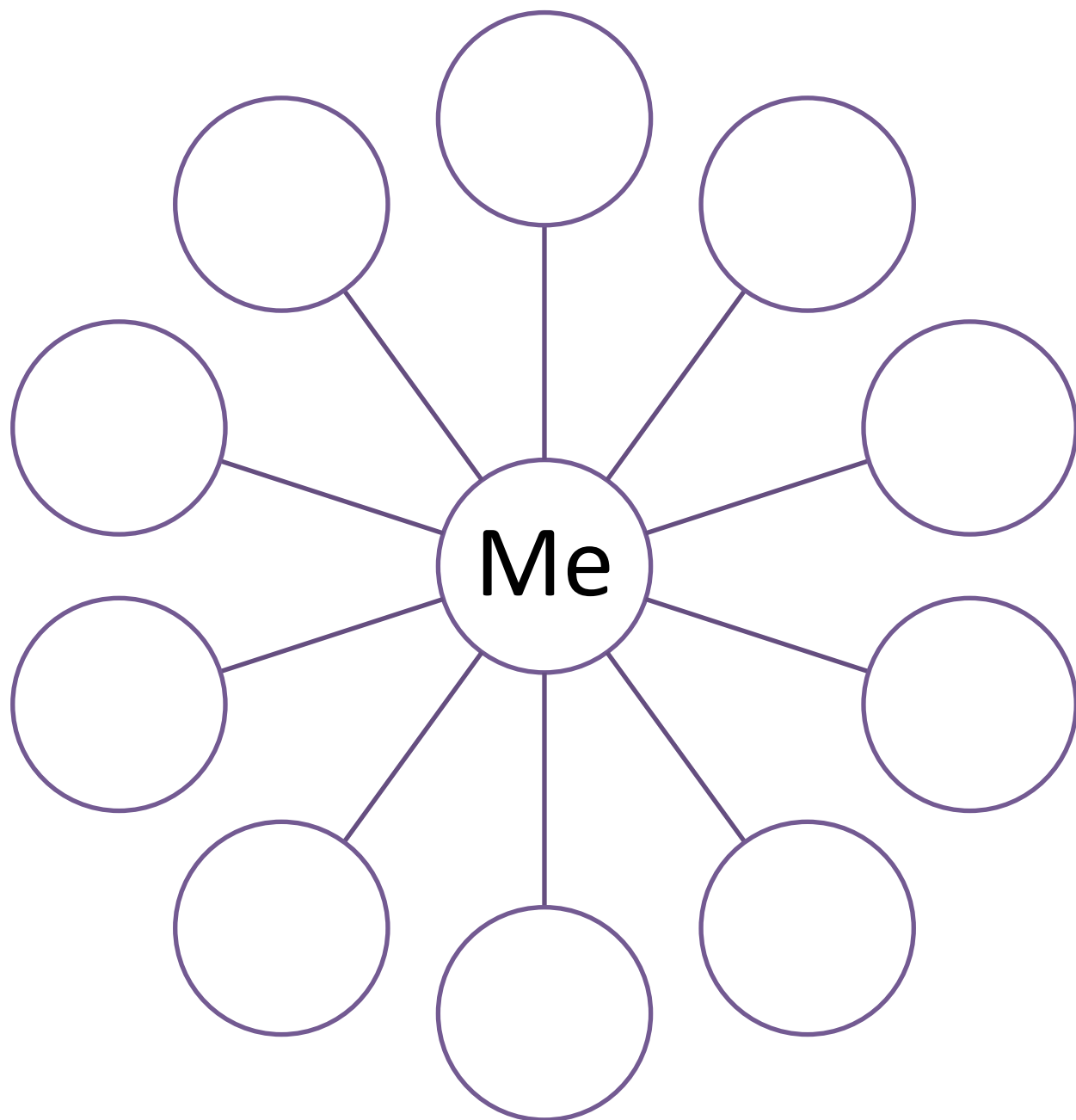
Helping Those in Grief

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12 Helpful Hints for Your Grief Journey

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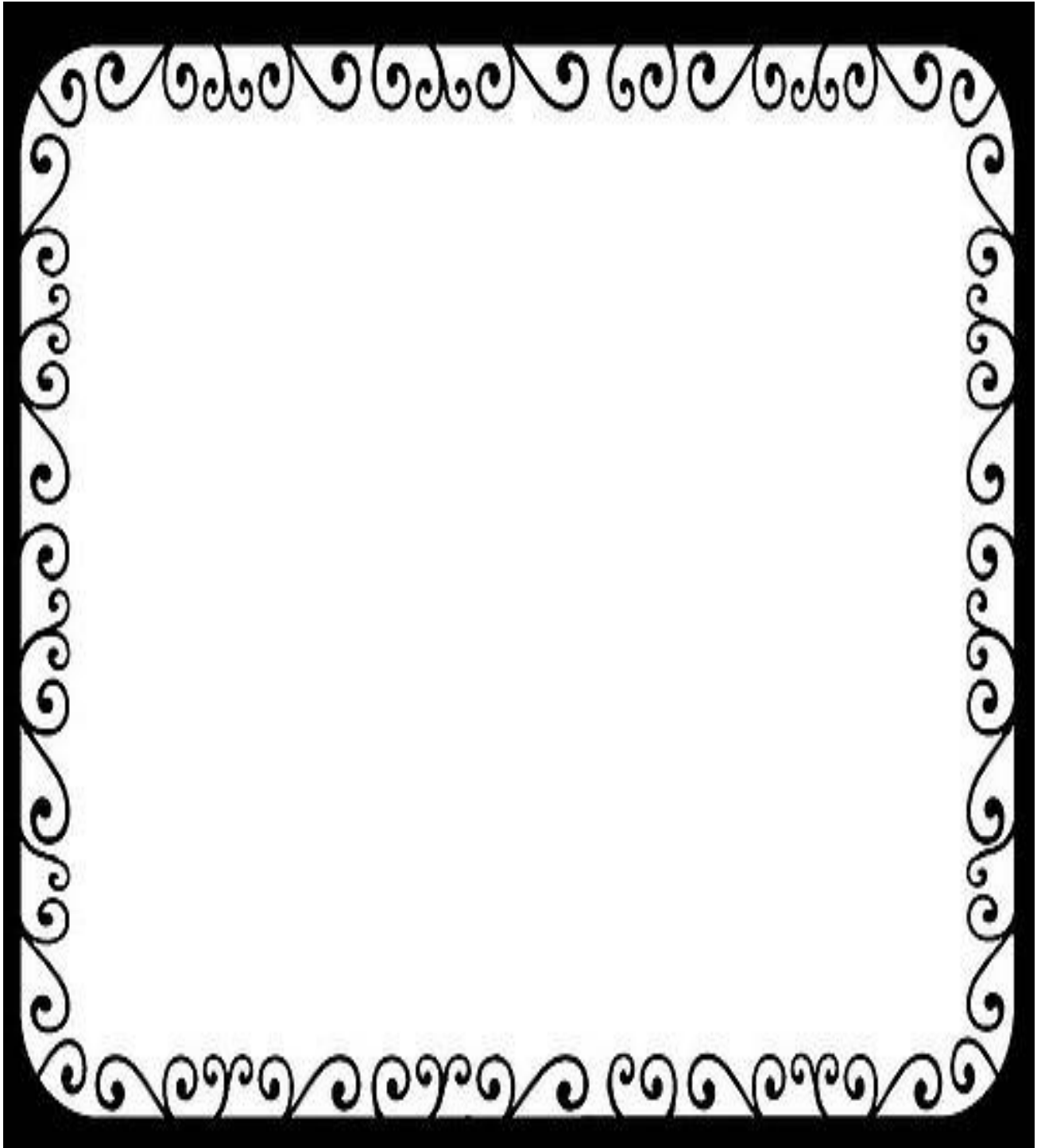
Create a Grief Support System



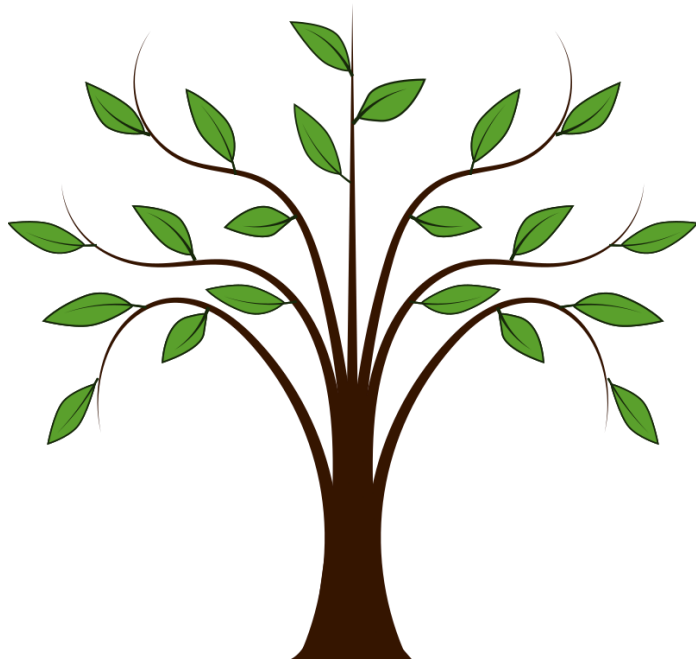
Tasks of Grief



Guidelines



Gratitude



Thoughts from the Session

What is something you already knew?

What is something new you learned?

How can you apply it with Action Steps:

When Someone You Love Dies

"When someone you love dies, part of what you miss is all the things you count on them to know-the inside jokes, the names of the places and people you can't quite recall, old recipes and phone numbers, the names of songs and movies. We miss the ability to revisit those memories and fact check them against one another. We miss the parts of the relationship that no one else would really get. In short, we miss the us that we shared and the parts of it we can't experience without them. When someone we love dies, they always take a part of us with them, and we always keep a piece of them close to our hearts as well."

James Campbell
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The Vale

There is a valley I have seen
Where never stirs a breath.
It holds no hint of shades of green
But yields a scent of death.
I venture there from time to time.
My spirit feels compelled.
I fear no evil for I am Thine
Though I walk through the vale.

James Campbell

04-01-19 8:45 am

A Prayer for Healing

Lord, you are the Creator. You made everything that is beautiful, and without You was no good thing made. You lit the sun and hung the moon, and You know the place of every star in the sky. You know how many grains of sand are on the ocean's floor, and the number of hairs on each of our heads. You hold the oceans in Your hands and breathed life into all that breathes. The earth itself declares Your glory. You change the seasons, but You do not change. You are the same yesterday, today, and forever.

You make everything beautiful in its time.

Knowing your goodness and Your greatness, it sometimes is confusing when things are not yet beautiful. When we come to You with hands full of broken pieces, it makes it hard to fold our hands to pray. Sometimes things are hard. Relationships show their cracks. Hearts are broken. Our bodies grow more fragile and ache with the passing of time. We grow older and our losses weigh heavy on us at times. In that moment we hear you whisper, "Cast your cares on me."

You make everything beautiful in its time.

Lord, you are Healer. You bind up the broken-hearted. You take the beautiful things that were broken, and You make them new. You take the precious things time has tarnished and make them to shine once more. You turn winter to spring and give beauty for ashes. There is no relationship so damaged that You cannot restore it. There is no body so injured that You cannot make it whole. There is no sorrow so deep that it is beyond Your ability to comfort it. When we cannot yet quite see the dawn for the darkness, may we remember

You make everything beautiful in its time.

Lord, You are Creator, Restorer, and Healer. You make everything beautiful in its time. May that time be now, Lord. Amen.

James E. Campbell
Copyright 2015

"That's the thing about grief; it's not just the absence of your loved one that hurts. It's also their presence. You see them everywhere. You hear a song. You pass a favorite place. You smell a scent on the air. You taste a favorite dish. Their favorite show comes on. Their presence is almost palpable. They feel so present that you turn to tell them something, call out to them, or pick up the phone. That's when their absences hits you, all the more startling of a blow for how close they were just a moment before."

James E. Campbell

01-20-19

Mourning

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” Matthew 5:4

This week marked the one-year anniversary of the death of a good friend. With the anniversary of their death came a lot of fond memories and emotions. God’s word actually has a lot to say about the subject of grief and mourning. God’s people also often have a lot to say as well. Unfortunately, what the two have to say sometimes are very different.

Often when a person experiences a loss, believers in Christ rush onto the scene with a strong desire to help. They try to help with reassurances of reunification in eternity, Bible verses about how all things will work to the good of the believer, and frequently some quasi-self-help quotes. I don’t think that it will come as a surprise to many of you to find that good intentions do not always lead to good outcomes. These things are seldom, if ever, a comfort. This is not because God’s word is untrue; it’s because selectively quoting and frequently misapplying verses is seldom beneficial to anyone.

So, what does scripture say about grief and mourning? To write all of that would take a book in and of itself. For now, we will just look at two basic concepts from God’s word.

First, God’s word says that those who mourn are blessed. The key is that the blessing is promised to those who mourn. Often among believers our discomfort about mourning or strong emotion leads us to try to squelch grief. We throw out a Bible verse and offer a tissue as if to say “I know you are hurting, but I’m going to need you to dry that up quickly”. There is no specific timeline for grief. Many “firsts” without the loved one happen the first year, but grieving is certainly not bound to a one-year calendar. In short, grief is a process, not an event. It takes time. The only way to get through grief is to go through grief. Psalm 126 says that those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. Once again, the pattern is that the tears have to be sown for the joy to be harvested. When we experience a loss, it hurts. Let’s be honest enough to admit that and to grieve that which was lost. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Second, God’s word says that we are to mourn with those who mourn. Not only should we not seek to cut off the mourning of others, we should be willing to walk with them through it with the knowledge that pain hurts too much for words to undo. Walking with someone through the pain of loss is less about having the right thing to say than it is coming alongside them in their hurt. The most profound example I have seen of this comes from Christ Himself. When faced with sisters and friends who were mourning the loss of a loved one, a friend Jesus also loved, Jesus did not launch into a five-part exegetical sermon about how to walk with God through grief. Instead, Jesus was moved and wept too. We are to mourn with those who mourn, not seek to minimize or cut short their mourning.

Is there comfort and healing?

Yes.

We must, however, have the grace to allow ourselves and one another the opportunity to mourn if we would see it.

Amen.

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We Cannot March Through Grief

We cannot march through grief. Perhaps on the shallow edges we can keep our stoic face and our disciplined pace, but it will not last. Grief is not a creek to be crossed but an ocean. If we would get to the other side, it won't be by marching. We must wade into the deep until we cannot reach the bottom. We must come to realize that the grief is over our heads. The pageantry that is the march must give way to the less graceful swimming towards a shore that we cannot see. There will be moments when we are bone-weary and our faces shine with the salty residue of tears, and we will question if there is another shore. What if we are swimming in circles? What if there is no other side? When that moment comes I wish the following for you:

A North Star to navigate by,

Friends who will not push you under or mock your struggle but swim with you,

Enough hope to keep swimming,

And enough strength to keep your head up.

When finally you do make it, and you will if you keep moving forward, realize that you have not arrived at what used to be. You are arriving on the fertile foreign soil of the future. Things will not look, feel, or be like they once were. They are alien, changed. When that moment comes, I hope that you will peel off the wet clothes of regret and nostalgia. Stand naked and exposed for a moment and feel the sun on your body. Then walk with the friends who were brave enough and loving enough to swim with you into building a new life-not one that denies the ocean you've crossed but one that does not dwell there and that builds a new life in this strange new land. Dwell with those loved ones who saw you struggle, who struggled with you, and who have seen you vulnerable and exposed in the sun.

James Campbell

12-22-18 9:13 am

Broken

What if I were broken? Could you still hold me close,
Embrace the jagged edges of the things that hurt the most?
Would you feel you have to fix me, or could you leave me be?
Would you love your dream of who I am more than you love me?
What if I were shattered in a thousand little bits,
Broken, beaten, battered by the molds that didn't fit?
Could you leave the pieces lying and accept me as I am
Or would you try to reassemble me into what you understand?
What if the broken parts of me never do get healed?
Would you love the thought of wholeness more than the me that's real?
Could you take these broken pieces and love them separately?
Though scattered, tattered, broken, can you still love me?
What if I were aching and hollowed out inside?
What if I were breaking? What if I had died?
Would you weep for who I really am or for an effigy?
Would you cry me a river? Would you cry at all for me?
What if our broken pieces are the parts that make us whole?
What if touching brokenness is how we touch the soul,
And what if loving brokenness is the only love there is?
To love imperfection—there is no love but this.
So take these jagged edges, and I will take yours, too.
Love me, in my brokenness, just as I love you.
For it is this touching that our hearts need the most.
What if I were broken? Could you still hold me close?

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When Death Comes for Me

When Death comes for me
I might just have to disarm him.
Imagine his alarm when
I break his steely scythe.
When Death come for me
I might just have to kill him.
Won't it be a thrill when
I strike down his infernal pride.

What a day that will be when
I leave him there lying,
Turn my back as he is dying,
And climb upon his horse and ride.
Turn as the setting sun
Casts golden light on his remains
I will hum a soft refrain
As I depart from where he died.

I will hum the soft, sweet tune
Of Peace in the Valley,
And cut my belt to mark the tally
Of he who would not leave me be.
By the light of the waning moon,
I will ride on his pale, gaunt steed
Reminiscing on the deeds
Of when Death comes for me.

When Death comes for me
I might just knock him off his horse.
After all I've I got a score to settle
For those I loved who died.

James Campbell
02-02-20 1:38 pm

The Dead

I will walk among the dead
And sway among their stones.
I will dwell among their ghosts
And call their dwelling home.
I will read their epitaphs
And listen to their groans
Of life and tears and loves and laughs
Among their dusty bones.

I will listen to the dead
To hear what they would tell.
I will let each one confide
Their greetings and farewells.
The living portion yet remains;
Discarded lay the shells,
They've outgrown their earthly chains
And out-rung their own death knell.

I will dance among the dead
In memory of their days.
I will leap among their markers
And twirl, and spin, and sway.
I will join in their reverie,
Thankful for all of the ways
We recall as we dance, enthralled,
In exuberant, grim display.

I will smile upon the dead
And let them know they're seen.
I will learn from their bygone tales
Such wisdom as may be gleaned.
I will listen to their stories
Each time that they convene-
Their sorrows and sighs and glories,
The beauty of what life means.

James Campbell

04-04-19 5:28 pm

"When a Spouse Dies"

When a spouse dies almost everything changes. You feel hollow, surreal. Lost.

Who do you share your inside jokes with?

Who knows all the smallest things you do and don't like? Spaghetti. Your favorite color. How you like to be kissed. What station to leave the radio on.

Who knows your moods and how to read you like they do?

Who else would remember how you met? What you were wearing?

Who knows your favorite song?

Who else would know the late night conversations you've shared or the sunsets you've seen together.

You see, it isn't just the person you lose; it is the ability to share the parts of yourself that you knew they would get with them. When someone you love dies, you really and truly lose a piece of you along with them, the part that made you and them an us.

The places you used to love to go together all feel a little less full. Your favorite restaurant, empty. The places you visited together, haunted. The bad jokes they used to laugh at now just lie dormant behind your lips. The sunrise at the beach is still incredibly beautiful, but who do you share it with?

You find yourself in the grocery store thinking of buying their favorite dish. You are in a retail store and see a shirt that would really bring out their eyes. You catch the scent of their perfume on the air and, even though it is ridiculous, spin around and expect to see them for a split second. Your heart skips a beat and then sinks all over again.

It isn't that you mourn them once, it's that you mourn them daily in a thousand different ways. Your heart bleeds to death from a thousand paper cuts of loss.

How they looked when you first met. Your first date. Your wedding day. While carrying your child. How she looked as she got ready in front of the mirror every morning. The smell of her hairspray. Her warmth beside you when you lay down to sleep each night. Her kicking you because you're snoring too loud...again.

Who will talk you down and tell you that you're overreacting? Who will talk you up, their passion over some point compelling and contagious?

The recipe they used to know. The places they always told you how to get to while you were driving. The phone numbers and birthdays you never remembered because you always assumed you'd just be able to ask them. Anniversaries sneak up on you like emotional assassins to be sure, but how you take your coffee or "what was that thing I ordered that time" cut just as deeply.

Yes. When you lose the one you promised forever to you eventually come to realize that forever is exactly how long it takes.

Life will move forward. The ghosts will become less pronounced. The reminders less frequent and slightly less jarring. But you are changed. Their fingerprints are on your heart, and no amount of scrubbing will wipe them away, even if you were inclined to try.

Then one day they do fade a bit. What was that thing she used to say? And you are left to mourn not only their passing but the passing of the memories as well. After all, when you can't recall the details clearly, who will you be able to ask?

When a spouse dies almost everything changes. You feel hollow, surreal. Lost.

James Campbell

09-30-15 12:40 am

Ashes (Wendy's Song)

She was broken in the ashes,
Broken from the crashes
Watching her dreams go down in flame.
Looking back behind her,
She saw the reminders
Of what it is to live in guilt and shame;
And looking all around her
At the fire that surround her
It seemed as though all hope was gone.
At the time she couldn't see
She was born to be free.
She was never meant to fly alone.

There were others who were burning,
Hungry, hopeful yearning,
With a dream of what it is to be free.
Though they were in ashes,
Still they saw flashes
Of the ones they were meant to be.
And somewhere in their screaming
Sleep gave way to dreaming
And sorrow became a victory song,
And the one who was broken

Found healing in the hoping
And found her heart singing alone.

She was never meant for ashes.
She was made and meant for the sky.
Though it's hard to see past
The fire, the smoke, and ash,
We were born to spread our wings and fly.
Never meant for hell but for heights.
Never meant to fail but for flight.
We were made to rise above it you and I.
Mmmmm. Fly, Phoenix, fly.

You found your voice. You learned to sing.
With hope lifting up your wings,
You flew higher than you ever thought you'd go.
With dreams reborn and your hope renewed
You discovered what was you
Until the fires faded far below.

We were never meant for ashes.
We were made and meant for the sky.
Though it's hard to see past

The fire, the smoke, and ash,
we were born to spread our wings and fly.
Never meant for hell but for heights.
Never meant to fail but for flight.
We were made to rise above it you and I.
Mmmmm. Fly, Phoenix, fly.

Written by James Campbell

Dedicated to Wendy Christine Campbell Boone

(1969-2021)

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