

At that dreading
phone call between 3
and



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At some point in time, all humans overheard the somber cliché “ here today and gone tomorrow.” Yes, it is true that one could have something (loving member) today and lose it tomorrow causing one heartache and pain. One may also experience all kinds of difficult emotions, and it may feel like the pain and sadness never lets up. Furthermore, there may be times when hurt and suffering feels like a dagger thrown through one’s heart. Each of the previous experiences can be normal feelings after a significant loss; especially, if the loss relates to someone one deeply cares about. Grief can result from those experiences as well.

This paper examines the five stages of grief and bereavement. It also discusses how different cultures deal with grieving or mourning the loss of a loved one. Although there is no right or wrong way for grieving a person’s death, one may find healthier alternatives to cope with an unexpected loss. Research suggested that grieving represents a natural feeling that humans experience after losing someone or something (e. g., death of a pet) to death (Halperin, 2013; Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2014). One may encounter depressive or sad thoughts, or may perhaps have happy or memorable thoughts during a bereavement period, but it is important to understand that grieving is an innate part of human nature (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2014). Before discussing the five stages of grief, one provides an example of a recent real-life situation that relates to mourning the loss of loved ones.

Brief Rundown of a Real-life Grieving Situation Getting that dreading phone call between 3 and 5 a. m. led to many sleepless nights recently. An overwhelming feeling as one tried to embrace oneself with the unimaginable, yet realistic sound of “ your loved one has passed” still resonates today as it

did when one a dear friendearlier this year and my grandmother on three days before this past Christmas. Now, one feltmany emotions when my close friend died. However, losing my grandmother brought out many more feelings andemotions.

All one canthink about right now is that we buried our matriarch, our rock and spiritual- guider, and loved onea couple of days ago. She was a veryinspirational person who loved God, her off-springs, and community. Although one submitted a version of thispaper earlier this year, my grandmother's death resurrected my thoughtsgrieving. One can assume that mourningthe loss of a loved one isdifficult, inclusive, andinevitable.

All humans experience grief, no matterthe cultural backgrounds orreligious beliefs (Lim, 2013; Kübler-Ross , 2014). In closing, everyone grieves differently. Smith, Robinson, and Segal (2012) stated that grief is a natural reaction to losingsomething one cherished (e. g., a pet or family emblems) or a loved one. During mourning, one may also suffer anemotional rollercoaster (i. e., experience a wave of emotions), mood swings, andsometimes depression (Lim, 2013; Smith et al.

, 2012). Each of these areas can be associated withthe five stages of grief. The Five Stages of GriefLim (2013)credited Kübler-Ross for developing the griefstages in the late 1960s. The first phasedenial (this can't behappening to me) refers to the inability to cope or accept losing something (Halperin, 2013; Lim, 2013; Smith et al., 2017). The second phase anger (why would this happen, who must I blame), Smith et al.

(2017) explained may be aimed at certain objects, family, friends, and work colleagues. Smith et al. further implied that one could learn ways to channel the anger to prevent it from becoming uncontrollable. For example, venting (i.

e., sharing the information to another person) or jotting down your thoughts in a journal rather than internalizing the negative or angry thoughts may perhaps make it easier to accept losing a loved one. Bargaining (make this not happen, and in return, I will be more...) is something that is “new” to me. However, I understand this approach. By definition, Lim (2013) explained that bargaining involves trying to negotiate or bargain in an attempt to prolong accepting the reality of the loss. One has to realize that grieving a loss is a no-win situation and bargaining takes away from what is reality (i. e.

, has happened) and move forward. The third phase of grief involves bouts of depression (Lim, 2013; Smith et al., 2017).

Smaldone and Uzzo (2013) stated that the depression phase of grief might lead “to concerns regarding the negative effect that quality reporting might have on autonomy, referral patterns, financial stability, and future litigation risk” (p. 426). One believes that having others as a support system to help get through the depression is a plus.

Lastly, the acceptance stage entails accepting and making peace with the loss (Lim, 2013; Smaldone & Uzzo, 2013). Smith et al. (2017) insinuated that all people do not make it this stage of grieving because they are stuck in other stages (e. g.

, anger or depression). However, one feels it is important to accept losses but appreciate thememorable (or not so) experiences. Personal Experience with Mourning andGrief When grief hits home, it feels like a serious illness. One still feels emotionally and physically drained at times, along with symptoms (e. g., Headache or chest pains).

I am thankful that I am aware of these symptoms and they shall pass with time. Earlier thisyear, I lost a life-long friend toPancreatic Cancer and mygrandmother three days before Christmas 2017. The loss of someone close to uscan quickly turn our world upside down into an unfamiliar place. Adapting to or coping with death can be depressive and somber. It could beassumed that is easier to grieve when one understands the grieving process, butit is not that easy. Somepeople may never tap into certain emotions (e.

g., anger or guilt) until they beginto mourn a loss. However, one may should learnto recognize ways to avoid the angry thoughts or feeling of guilt duringmournful times. Halperin(2013) encourages one to seek professional help when coping with grief, whenneeded. Rapid emotions may be running through one’s head, but one mustremember that taking care of thyself throughout the grief and bereavementprocess is also vital (Halperin, 2013; Smith et al., 2017).

Summary. In alifetime, one witnessed a few people being taking advantage of after the deathof a loved one. One of my neighborsdescribed a situation that took place years ago and it dealt with him feelingleft out of the planning of his grandfather’s funeral. He felt that he was entitled to help becausehe

grandfather was the only positive male role model in his life. Needless to say, he claimed his family took advantage of him because he was 19 years old at time. They did not allow his input in the funeral and they did not share any of the insurance collected after his loved one's death (D. McCoy, personal communication, December 23, 2017). So, one may ask how do we prepare for an unexpected death.

One way is planning ahead. Cultural & Ethnic Burial Rituals Burial ceremonies have been a long standing tradition in human culture (Bahar, Beer, Ersin, K? ssal, & Aydo? du, 2012; Davies & Galloway, 2011; Seiuli, 2017). Bahar et al. (2012) stated that preparing for death, burial practices, and bereavement behaviors represent significant transition periods of life. Although communities experience death and bereavement periods on a regular basis, Seiuli (2017) argued burial rituals vary from by culture. As an example, people in many Samoan communities in New Zealand come together as a community to create a "memorable" event celebrating the life of the deceased (Seiuli, 2017). Years ago, I worked as a makeup artist at a funeral home. One day I overheard the director of the establishment tell a family that pre-burial plans were less expensive than planning for a funeral after an unexpected deceased person has gone to glory (i.e., died). One may know people who left a safety net (e.g., a will or insurance policy) to pay for his/her funeral or final arrangements. A close friend, who grew up in a Baptist household, recently succumbed to cancer. The funeral service was officiated by a pastor who preached about the joy of times and encouraged those in attendance to focus on the life he lived and his return to God. My grandmother also recently passed away.

She was not only a loving mother and an awesome grandmother, but also a pillar of the community she served. My grandmother was a devout Christian who practiced what she preached. For example, she valued education so much that she earned a Bachelor's degree at 75 years old. Her passion for education motivated me to pursue this degree. Similar to Samoan communities (see Seiuli, 2017), people near and far came together as a community to celebrate my grandmother's life.

It was great seeing her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-greatchildren gather with her church family, neighbors, and others honoring her by sharing stories of how she inspired them in some way. Conversely, burial rituals (e. g., funerals) may differ from culture to culture.

Some cultures (e. g., people in Jewish and African American communities) prepare the deceased body by bathing it and burning frankincense to avoid evil spirits (Bahar et al., 2012). Whereas, practicing Buddhists do not have any special way of preparing or burying the lifeless corpse of a loved one (Bahar et al., 2012).

Legal and Political Incentives In 2014, the National Funeral Directors Association (2017) explained that the average cost of a funeral was at least \$8,000, which may be costly to some people. One believes that it is vital to have a legal will and an insurance policy. No one should be able to attest these documents if they are done legally or through the courts. As mentioned earlier, options (e. g., buying pre-paid burial plan) could also make planning the final arrangements much easier as well. In the past, one worked for a funeral home that allowed families to make payments in installments for final

expenses until everything is paid in full. The payment arrangement was an excellent option, especially for people on a fixed income or who just did not have the money.

Another precautionary to have in case of an unexpected death is to have joint accounts and or accounts that are payable upon death (Funeral Wise, 2017).

For people with no children or immediate family members, planning or preparing ahead for a funeral is even more vital. One may authorize an official of the court (e. g.

, a lawyer or a judge) to allocate assets described in the will and last testament or insurance policy. When no will or last testament exist, the court could make an unanimous decision about the fate of the deceased loved one's estate causing problem between some families. Thus, it is crucial to leave a legal 'will and last testament' before something unexpected happens. Normally depending on the circumstances, one may assume that going back to a normal life after a loved one's death is like putting pieces to a broken puzzle back together. Halperin (2013) and Smith et al.

(2017) implied that it may take a while for some people to get back to a normal life after losing something special (e. g., a loved one or a beloved pet).

Understanding how to cope with a death might help determine how soon a person gets back to normal after a loss. Research ("Moving forward," 2017) suggested that energy that one puts into mourning a loss should be redirected to something else (e. g., another family member or pet). Learning how to cope after a death might also give one the strength to help others

grievers during a loss of a loved one. The first step is recognizing the stages and symptoms of the grieving process (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2014; Smith et al., 2017). One aspect of grief involves accepting the fact that the deceased person is no longer here on earth.

Next, take the time to experience or deal with the pain and symptoms of grief (Smith et al., 2017). One must also learn not to bottle up emotions.

Additionally, one should fill the void by channeling that energy into special positive that pay homage to the deceased. Self-reflection: Death and Dying Caring for a sick family member or friend can be full-time job. It could also affect can be one's thoughts, body, and spirit.

At some point while mourning one might hear the old cliché we are “alive today, but our time will come.” These sentiments seem soothing, but accepting them may seem easier said than done. Death is one of the clearest truths of human reality; however, no one truly understands it (Bahar et al., 2012; Halperin, 2013; Smith et al., 2017). Personally, I do not understand why certain cultures have funerals or home-going services? Throughout my life, I attended various funerals and most seems inhumane.

For example, some people not only see the body of the deceased but also take pictures with the deceased person in the casket. I have heard stories and witnessed people trying to get over into the coffin of the deceased, turning the coffin over, and even delay the funeral procession because they could not accept the fact that a person has died. Children can also be traumatized by what they see at the funeral (e. g.

, a mutilated corpse or a fight over who views the body). One has also been to funerals that seem to be going well until someone literally falls out causing a huge scene during the service. Someone I know took an alternative route when it came to his family member's home-going services. He imposed various rules that everyone in attendance had to follow. His unorthodox method encourages me to create the following rules any funeral that I plan. The following statements reflect one proposed rule: 1. No viewing of the body before the burial.

2. No funeral...too costly. It is also too easy for funeral directors to take financial advantage of people who have not planned a funeral by offering other unnecessary services (e. g., 3 for 1 burial plots). 3. A graveside service just long enough for the minister to say Ashes-ashes and dust to dust. It's a dead body; there is nothing more that needs to be done.

4. The cheapest way to bury would be a pine box...\$300-easy on the wallet.

5. No fashionable obituary will be another way to cut cost.

Spread the word via by social media or by mouth. Going through the grieving process is something that we don't have to go through alone. There are support groups that one can reach out to seek help. And now in the era of the internet, there are support and other related groups that one can access online and the good part about it is that you don't have to see anyone face-to-face ("Moving forward," 2017). Cultural and Ethical Tradition Research (Bahar et al., 2012; Brooten et al.

, 2016; Sakakeeny, 2011; Turner, 2009) suggested that every culture has traditions when it comes to grieving and mourning the death of a loved one.

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Baharet al. (2012), in particular, alleged it is tradition for the family of the deceased in Islamic cultures to wear black to a funeral because it shows sorrow. During the bereavement period, Brooten et al. (2016) explained Latino families do not attend social events, watch TV, or listen to the radio during the mourning period.

It is also tradition for African Americans in New Orleans to celebrate a person's death with an infamous "second-line" parade (Sakakeeny, 2011; Turner, 2009). Some Protestants and Jamaicans do not allow pregnant women to attend funerals because it is their belief that the lifeless corpse may release toxins (Bahar et al., 2012). During slavery, it was common for the enslaved African-Americans happily and jubilantly came together to celebrate the life of their deceased loved ones (Woods-Valentine Mortuary, 2017). Slaves hoped to return to their homeland of Africa, but it did not happen. so Death was also seen as a relief from the agony and humiliation of slavery (Woods-Valentine Mortuary, 2017).

Slaves looked forward to leaving their raggedy shacks for their "mansion in the sky." (Woods-Valentine Mortuary, 2017). Conclusion In summation, each death or loss is not the same. When one of my cousins was murdered, I fell into a deep depression because he always supported me. I lost a close friend to Pancreatic Cancer earlier this year and it also took my breathway. Nothing could have prepared me to lose my grandmother three days before Christmas 2017.

She played an integral role in not only my life but also the lives of people around her. Additionally, one of my best friends from childhood passed away

earlier this year. Losing her has been very trying for me because we have been through so many things together. I really miss her. She was my closest ally and strongest supporter outside of my immediate family.

Word cannot describe how I feel right now. To be honest, I do not know how I am going to make it through this program with my best friend's support. Her sweet, kind, and uplifting words brought me through so many situations. I guess I will find the strength to continue with this degree in her memory, may she rest in peace. Considering there is no best way to handle losing someone close, it really is a matter of what resources one has to get through what can be lengthy and drawn out the grieving process. Perhaps the best way to describe it is: It can leave you numb. Having support when it comes to hearing the news that someone has passed away to making burial arrangement to getting through the grieving process is so important for those left behind.

It is some consolation seeing and having the choice of keeping things straightforward and easy when choosing to have a memorial service rather than the old traditional funeral.