Gifts of Mourning

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Gifts of Mourning
Objectives

• To define the mourning process.
• To explore “normal” or typical ways of mourning
• To identify the ways that our families are mourning during their bereave-ing
• To explore additional, more creative and personal ways to mourn.

Gifts of Mourning

• G – Grieving, Bereave-ing and Mourning
• I – Individual and Intentional
• F – Forged and Focused
• T – Tempered and Thoughtful
• S – Shaped, Specific and Special
Theories of Grieving and Mourning

• Kubler-Ross – 1969
  – Stages of Death and Dying
  – “Pattern of Adjustment”
    • Denial
    • Anger
    • Bargaining
    • Depression
    • Acceptance

Theories

• William Worden - 1991
  – 4 Tasks of Greif
    • To accept the reality of the loss
    • Work through the pain of grief
    • To adjust to an environment in which the deceased is missing
    • To emotionally relocate the deceased and move on with life
Theories

• Therese Rando – 1993
  – 6 R’s of the Mourning Process
    • Recognize the loss
    • React to the separation
    • Recollect and re-experience the deceased and the relationship
    • Relinquish the old attachments to the deceased and the old assumptive world
    • Readjust to move adaptively in the new world without forgetting the old
    • Reinvest in life

Theories

• Alan Wolfelt – 1996 updated in 2003
  – 10 Essential Touchstones of Healing Grief
    • Be open to the presence of your loss
    • Dispel the misconceptions about grief
    • Embrace the uniqueness of your grief
    • Explore your feelings of loss
    • Recognize you are not crazy
    • Understand the 6 needs of mourning
    • Nurture yourself
    • Reach out for help
    • Seek reconciliation, not resolution
    • Appreciate your transformation

Alan Wolfelt continued

• 6 Needs of Mourning
  – Accept the reality of the death
  – Let yourself feel the pain of the loss
  – Remember the person who died
  – Develop a new self-identity
  – Search for meaning
  – Let others help you – now and always
Theories

• Susan A. Berg - 2009
  – 5 Grief Identity Types
    • Nomads
    • Memorialists
    • Normalizers
    • Activists
    • Seekers

• Nomads
  – All are nomads immediately after a loss
  – Sense of unreality, running on autopilot
  – Appear to be sleep walking through life
  – Unsure of faith in God
  – Unsure of meaning of their life
  – Lost in transition
  – Find ways to avoid pain

• Memorialists
  – Main goal is to honor their loved one
  – Creating tangible memories, rituals, foundations
  – Not only preserving memories but creating new memories
• Normalizers
  – Primary goal is to create or re-create the family life they lost when their loved one died
  – Reconcile with other family
  – Value relationships with others
  – Focus on making the most of their time on earth
  – Have learned that life is finite, unpredictable and precious

• Activists
  – Choose an activist path in response to their loss
  – Feel a sense of social justice, compassion, and empathy to others In the same situation
  – Want to make a difference; social activist, writing, artist, business leaders, scientists, politician
  – Possess drive and dedication
  – Turn their experience into a catalyst for influencing change

• Seekers
  – Death is a catalyst for exploring spiritual questions about life and meaning of life
  – Search to understand self and relationship to the universe
  – Focus on exploring the spiritual, the sacred and the divine
Exercise

• Discuss and list the ways we **OBSERVE** our families grieve and mourn
  – **SEE / OBSERVE / HEAR**

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• Activities of mourning are…
• Individual
  – Personality
    • Culture, gender, age
  – Personal history
    • Loss history
  – Family status, and history

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• Activities of mourning are…
• Intentional
  – done on purpose!
• Activities of mourning are...

• Forged
  – To form by heating and hammering; beat into shape.

• Focused
  – To concentrate
  – To direct toward a particular point or purpose

• Activities of mourning are...

• Tempered
  – To impart strength or toughness to by heating and cooling. (Metallurgy-steel or cast iron)

• Thoughtful
  – given to thought

• Activities of mourning are...

• Shaped
  – something used to give form, as a mold or a pattern

• Specific
  – precise, or particular

• Special
  – particular kind
Exercise

• Think outside the box

• Create a list of new ideas for mourning

New Ideas For Mourning

• Using all the senses:
  – Sight
  – Smell
  – Taste
  – Hearing
  – Touch

• Understand and Incorporate special dates
  – Death day of the week, date of the month
  – Birthday, Wedding anniversary, holidays
  – Death anniversary; day, month, year
  – Other???
• Personality types
New Ideas for Mourning

Final Gifts of Mourning

• G – Growth
• I – Insight and Inspired
• F – Fulfilled
• T – Triumphant / Transformed
• S - Strengthened

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Bibliography

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- Treatment of Complicated Mourning; Therese A. Rando
- Understanding Your Grief; Alan Wolfelt