

Good Grief

Presentation by (OIIM)
Open International Interfaith Ministry



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Good Grief – Stages

State of Shock

- Feelings of being overwhelmed
- May become numb
- Protection
- Temporary shock is healthy and constructive
- Long term shock can be counter-productive





Good Grief – Stages

Expression of Emotions

- Uncontrollable urge to express our grief and our emotions
- Some people will feel embarrassed about uncontrollable emotional expression – others will be comfortable with this



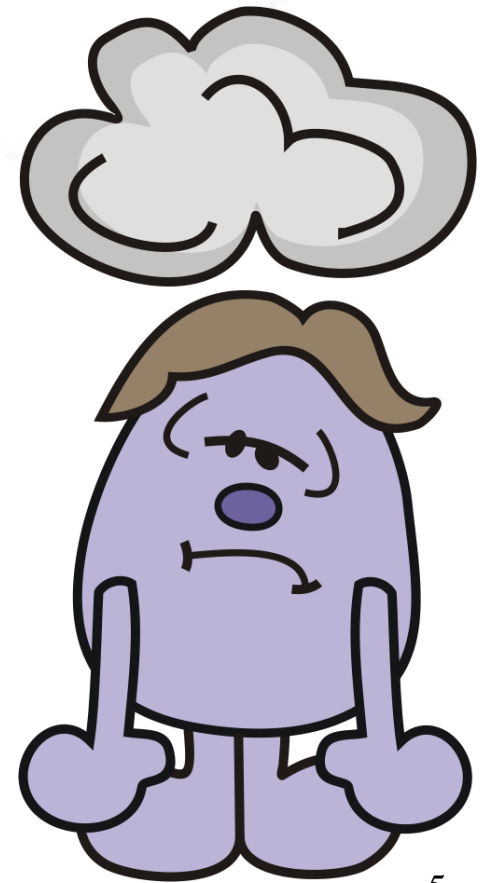
Good Grief – Stages *Depression and Loneliness*

- Feelings of depression are a normal part of healthy grief
- Feelings of isolation are also normal
- Length of depression may last weeks or months – depending on the person
- In good grief – depression eventually passes

Good Grief – Stages

Physical Symptoms of Distress

- Unresolved grief can lead to physical symptoms
- Medical treatment will not help in isolation
- Help is needed to move through the grieving process





Good Grief – Stages

Panic



- If not aware of the grieving process, we may become afraid and panic
- The panic needs to be worked through





Good Grief – Stages

Sense of Guilt

- ‘Normal’ vs ‘Neurotic’ guilt - intertwined
- Guilt RE: our interaction with the deceased while alive
- Normal guilt
 - May present a need to make amends
 - Solace in prayer and expressing sorrow to a higher power



Good Grief – Stages

Sense of Guilt – cont'd

- Neurotic guilt
 - May be out of proportion with reality
 - Needs help to resolve
- ***Unresolved guilt of any type can lead to:***
 - Emotional distress
 - Physical symptoms of distress



Good Grief – Stages

Anger and Resentment

- Anger and resentment are normal and healthy feelings of the grief process
 - Something precious has been taken away
 - We may look for someone to blame
 - We may look to our Higher Power to blame



Good Grief – Stages

Resistance to Returning



- Returning to everyday life activities may be resisted
 - Feelings of keeping the memory alive
 - Keeping our tragedy alive
 - Not wanting to be rushed
 - It may be easier to continue grieving than to return to life with new coping strategies



Good Grief – Stages

Hope

- Hope can return after time
- The dark cloud can lift
- We arrive at this stage:
 - In our own time
 - When we are ready





Good Grief – Stages

Affirmation of Reality

- The final stage is returning to everyday activities
- This can be with a stronger spirit or with a weaker spirit



Good Grief – Issues

Complicated Grief

- Grief can be complicated:
 - When stuck is one stage
 - Feelings of no future
 - Becoming detached and distant to living loved ones
 - Becoming angry and bitter





Good Grief - Issues *With Children*

- Listen
 - Follow the lead of the child
 - Do not direct the grief process
- Children at different developmental stages have different concepts of death
 - Until 3, the concern is separation
 - Fear of mutilation
 - Death is not permanent



Good Grief - Issues *With Children – cont'd*

- After 5, can be viewed as boogey man taking people away
- They will envision a return just as flowers return every spring
- At 9 – 10, children begin to see death as a permanent biological state





Good Grief - Issues *With Children – cont'd*

- Children, like adults will react individually
- Children's grieving can be interrupted when:
 - those around them are too upset to listen to them
 - They feel misunderstood or reprimanded for their grieving



Good Grief - Issues *With Children – cont'd*

- Adolescents grieve much like adults
- However, adolescence is already a stressful time and a loss may be too much
- They need opportunities to vent and to be listened to

Good Grief

What Is Hope?



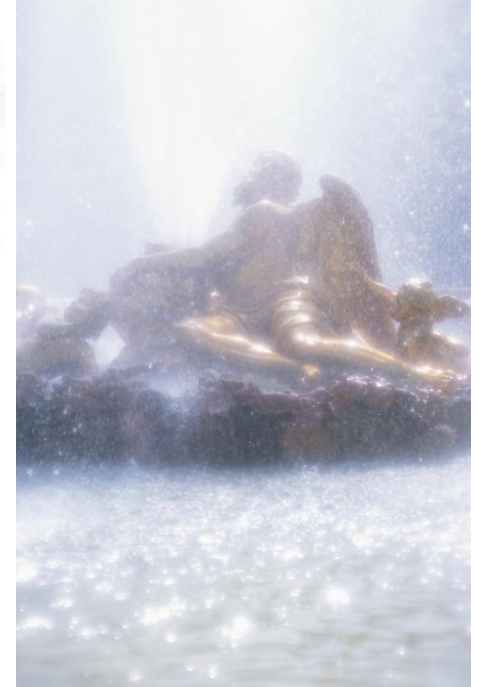
- A reason to carry on
- Confirmation that death is a doorway into a new life form
- Validation of mystical experiences that often happen around deaths
- Insights into the concept ‘we are souls’



Good Grief

On Death and Dying

- Fear of death is pervasive in our society
- We need to feel comfortable talking about death and dying
- Science's dominance has eroded our comfort zone with death
- People used to die in homes



Good Grief

On Death and Dying – cont'd

- We need coping strategies for dealing with:
 - Denial and isolation
 - Anger
 - Bargaining
 - Depression
 - Acceptance





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On Death and Dying – cont'd

- Listening to the bereaved is the most valuable support one can offer
- Let the bereaved be your guide – do not direct them
- Reflect an understanding and insight of the person's faith journey





Good Grief

On Death and Dying – cont'd

- From our perspective it is a universal truth that there is no death
- Researchers such as Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and Raymond Moody support this
- Death is identical to the caterpillar transforming to the butterfly





Good Grief

On Death and Dying – cont'd

- At the moment of death the soul or butterfly is released into a new mansion
- The physical body remains
- The silver cord connects the caterpillar to the butterfly until death arrives
- No one dies alone





Good Grief

On Death and Dying

– cont'd

- We all have spirit guides or guardian angels or loved ones escort us to the other side





Good Grief

On Death and Dying – cont'd

- 3 stages to death
(*Kubler-Ross*)
 - 1 – caterpillar – life
 - 2 – cocoon – dying
 - 3 – butterfly – death





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On Death and Dying – cont'd

- Help the bereaved find the blessing in dying
- It is a privilege and a blessing to be with the dying
- One learns a lot about creating paradise here on earth from listening to the dying





Good Grief

Moving Beyond Loss

- Grief is a neglected / misunderstood process
 - Conflicting feelings
 - Forced change in life activities
 - Fear surrounds grieving
- Compounding grief
 - Confusion about the stages
 - Anger does not always accompany grief



Good Grief

Moving Beyond Loss – cont'd



- Common grief responses
 - Reduced concentration
 - Sense of numbness
 - Disrupted sleep patterns
 - Change in eating habits
 - Roller coaster of emotions





Good Grief

Moving Beyond Loss – cont'd

- Grieve is getting complete – not getting over it
- There is no time line to recover
- Tragic circumstances - suicide, murder, aids
 - Would you miss them any less if death occurred less tragically?
 - Have you dealt with your unresolved grief? As well as getting closure to the tragic circumstances?



Good Grief - References

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Good Grief - References



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- *Healing Your Grieving Heart for Teens - 100 Practical Ideas*, Alan D. Wolfelt
- *Healing Your Grieving Heart for Kids - 100 Practical Ideas*, Alan D. Wolfelt
- *Healing a Child's Heart - 100 Practical Ideas for families, Friends and Care-givers*, Alan D. Wolfelt



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