

Living Through Mourning

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VOLUME ONE

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LIFE TRANSITION 
(973) 635-2428



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We are here to help...

The death of someone we love is one of the most difficult experiences for us to face. Even so, most of us are not prepared for the journey of mourning. This journey is often bewildering, painful, overwhelming, and lonely.

We understand that the road ahead may be difficult for you. During the next year, you will receive ten volumes of our Living Through Mourning newsletter. We hope you find them supportive and educational. Our bereavement specialists have taken current research, as well as the insights of many mourners, to help you better understand the thoughts and feelings that may confound you and cause pain.

If you find these newsletters helpful, feel free to pass them on. If you would like us to send them to other family members, please contact your funeral director. We are here to help.

What is the difference between bereavement, grief, and mourning?

By Scott W. Bradley, MSW, CT, NCPsyA

While many people use these three words interchangeably, they are not the same, and you may find it useful to differentiate between them. As you are forced to cope with a painful loss, it can be helpful to put meaning to your experiences through words.

Bereavement (n)

To be bereaved is to be deprived of a beloved person or a treasured thing, especially through death.

Grief (n)

Grief, or intense sorrow, is the constellation of feelings and physical sensations that inundates our body when we are bereaved.

Mourning (n)

Mourning is the manifestation of our grief. It is the process and action in which we express our sorrow—such as wearing special clothing or engaging in rituals that reflect our suffering.

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What is the difference between bereavement, grief, and mourning? *cont'd*

Grief is the emotion and mourning is the process.

As the nationally renowned bereavement expert, Alan D. Wolfelt,* put it, "We have learned that people move toward healing not just by grieving, but through mourning." Grief, according to Wolfelt, is a term for thoughts and feelings that we experience within ourselves upon the death of a loved one. Mourning is taking that internal experience of grief and expressing it outwardly. Put simply, grief is the emotion and mourning is the process.

Many more people grieve rather than mourn. Grieving is unavoidable (to a large

extent), but society has made mourning an option—something to schedule into a predetermined timeframe. Our communities and workplaces only allow short periods of time to publicly mourn. We are expected to return to work without loss of productivity. Friends may be wondering why you are not "over it" yet, especially after the first anniversary of the death. The easy path may be to avoid mourning—just skip it!—but experience and research have repeatedly shown that avoiding expression of grief results in more complications later on.

Our goal through these newsletters is to help you prevent such complications throughout your mourning period and hopefully increase your wisdom as you learn about bereavement and grief. Following, you'll find areas we'll touch upon in future issues, but as always, if you have a question or comment please call us at (973) 665-1782.

Future Touchpoints

- Your mental and physical health and how they are affected by grief.
- Comparing different coping styles and avoiding stereotyped expectations of grief and mourning.
- Understanding how to support a grieving child by Mary Robinson, MA, a specialist in children's loss.
- Resources that you may find valuable as you search for meaning.

* RESOURCES

Find Dr. Wolfelt's article, *I Want to Help Someone Who's Grieving*, at www.centerforloss.com/who-are-you/i-want-to-help-someone-who's-grieving/

We Understand. We Care. Join Us.



The Center for Life Transition (CFLT) was established in 1999 with the goal of using innovative and caring treatment to "transform trauma into resilience." The Center was to be a safe place for people to say everything they had experienced, relieve stress from a dramatically changed life, reduce isolation, and gain an understanding of one's coping style to help foster positive choices.

People who have suffered the death of a loved one, experienced a difficult divorce, been devastated by a job loss, begun fighting cancer, or faced other major life changes have benefited from the unique counseling services offered at CFLT.

Free Support Groups

Sometimes it's helpful to share thoughts

and feelings about our experiences with others. Being connected with other people who have had similar experiences can be comforting. Support groups are also a place where difficult issues can be dealt with in an environment of caring and understanding. We offer free bereavement support groups that are open to adults who have lost a loved one. Facilitated by professionally trained grief and bereavement experts, our groups provide members with an opportunity to share their experiences in a caring setting.

Individual Counseling

Many people prefer a more individualized experience instead of or in addition to a group environment. The therapists at CFLT will meet with couples, individuals, or several members of the same family

to assist them through their mourning process. Children and adults of all ages are welcome; our professionals work with you and your family to tailor a treatment program that meets your unique needs and goals.

CFLT provides quality individual service at an affordable fee. Please call us at 973.635.2428 for more information and with any questions concerning our participation in managed care networks.

Visit Us

CFLT is located at 19 Washington Avenue in Chatham Borough, just a short walk from the Chatham train station and minutes from the Garden State Parkway. Our location is welcoming, private, and easily accessible. Ample parking is available.

Meet Our Grief Specialists



SCOTT W. BRADLEY, MSW, CT, NCPsyA is a practicing psychotherapist as well as owner of Bradley & Son Funeral Homes. Mr. Bradley has been a licensed funeral director for 27 years, and he founded The Center for Life Transition in 1999. His five funeral homes serve over 500 families a year in Morris and Union Counties.

Mr. Bradley's interest in psychotherapy was an outgrowth of his work in funeral service. After receiving his MSW from New York University, he has treated patients with a full range of diagnoses, from schizophrenia to generalized anxiety, at various community mental healthcare centers in northern New Jersey and The Center for Life Transition located in Chatham, NJ. Mr. Bradley continued his clinical training and graduated in 2013 from the Academy of Clinical and Applied Psychoanalysis (ACAP) in Livingston, NJ.



DOREEN HALL is from the North East of England and has relocated to NJ with her husband. For the past 20 years she has met the needs of individuals and their families in the challenges of illness and loss through working as a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Palliative Care, loss and grief counsellor and lecturer. Doreen set up a bereavement service which was a unique model, incorporating professional leadership with harnessing the skills of volunteers to embed the service at the heart of the local community.

This service was acknowledged as a beacon service in the Department of Health's End of Life Strategy.



MANDI ZUCKER is the Program Director at Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss located in Mountainside. She earned a Master's degree in Social Work from New York University and has a Certificate in Grief Recovery and a Certificate in Thanatology. She has worked extensively in hospice and in school settings and serves as a Lead Responder for the Traumatic Loss Coalition in Union County. Mandi facilitates our Wednesday evening support group.

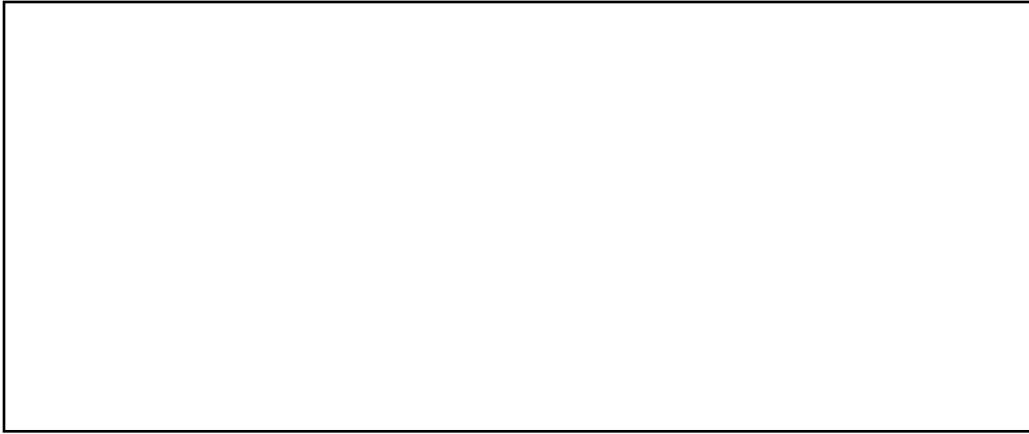
Q&A about Grief, Mourning, and Bereavement

My wife says that I'm not grieving because I don't talk about the death of our son. I would rather exercise or build furniture in my workshop to deal with my grief. Is my way just as effective as talking?

Exercise is important for the health of your body. Keeping active is encouraged especially during bereavement, and the process of making furniture in your workshop sounds like a wonderful outlet for you. Words, though, hold a powerful connection to our emotions and therefore we strongly recommend that you find a way to verbally express your grief. There is no way to go around or to side-step the pain that your son's death causes you. In order to continue to move forward in the grieving process, you must express your pain. Initially, it may feel like the emotions overwhelm you when you start to share your thoughts about your son. With practice, you will discover that each story you tell and each memory that you share will ease the pain a little. There is also a strong likelihood that sharing your grief with your wife will make your relationship closer.

I am so sad my body aches. I can't think clearly or concentrate. My 20 year old son was killed in a car accident six months ago. I was hoping I would feel better by now, but it seems to be getting worse. I have had thoughts that living is too hard and I would rather be with my son. I don't want to die, but I don't want to live either. Is this normal? Will I ever feel better enough so I can enjoy living again?

The loss of a child is one of the most difficult experiences that one can have in a lifetime. Your body aches from grief and your mind has difficulty concentrating because you are grieving for your son. It is very natural that you have thoughts of wanting to be with your son, but it is also important that you have someone to tell about those feelings. Six months is a relatively short time to grieve for the loss of your child and yet it is a long enough time to suffer as intensely as you describe. Many people begin to expect that you will be "over" most of your feelings and give you cues that they want you to move on and be happier. That is why you might want to consider joining a bereavement support group or seeing a professional counselor individually. It sounds as though you will benefit from a safe place to express all of your feelings without concern for how they are perceived.



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Newsletter Feedback "A wonderful idea for all those who have suffered a loss—an immense help to me, especially knowing that I am not alone and that others have felt the same way. Thank you." **RL, Chatham NJ**

Upcoming Issues

- VOL. 2** Seeing Grief and Mourning as Though Through the Lens of a Camera
- VOL. 3** The Camera Lens is Completely Out of Focus: Shock and Numbness
- VOL. 4** His and Her Grief: What's Acceptable?
- VOL. 5** Focused for an Extreme Close Up: Rage, Hopelessness, Despair, Depression
- VOL. 6** How Can We Help Bereaved Children?
- VOL. 7** A Wider View: Finding a More Life Affirming Outlook
- VOL. 8** Am I Mourning or Am I Depressed?
- VOL. 9** The Complete Picture: It's Still You, But You're Different Now
- VOL. 10** Bereavement and Your Physical Health

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