

Taos News Article

## **Other Important Types of Grief: Important and Rarely Mentioned or Recognized**

*The Taos News has committed to implement a weekly column to help educate our community about emotional healing through grief. People may write questions to Golden Willow Retreat and they will be answered privately to you and possibly as a future article for others. Please list a first name that grants permission for printing.*

February 18, 2016

**Dear Ted,**

I heard you speak a long time ago and I remember you talking about other types of grief. I found it interesting but, to be honest, I didn't remember much about that until recently, because now I find myself reeling from a family loss. As this loss has hit my family I find it hard to have time to even think about myself as other family members seem to be in more pain than me. I also get really worried about my family members as their health does not seem strong and then I feel selfish for not stepping up and caring for them. That might not make sense but could you please talk about other types of grief after a primary loss?

Thanks, Yolanda

Dear Yolanda,

First of all, you do make sense and what you are feeling and going through right now is very common and needs to be discussed more often so that you and others know that the feelings you are moving through are not strange or "crazy." Whatever your family loss is, I hope your healing process continues to move forward and communication and healthy expression of emotions can happen which will help decrease the potential of unhealthy isolation and disconnect.

There are many types of loss and with that comes many different levels and types of grief. There are secondary losses resulting from a primary loss. These losses are all the transitions that are made to reintegrate into the world after a loss. Finances, home, security, dreams, companionship, routines and rituals, and the "way it used to be" all adjust which can have enormous losses that are very real even if they are called "secondary."

Disenfranchised grief is very real and can come in many forms. Disenfranchised grief can happen to others or to yourself. This type of grief is when you have a loss and instead of recognizing, feeling, and dealing with the emotions, they are disregarded and pushed deeper into the psyche, only to return later on with maybe more power and pain. Society is quick to say "buck up" or "that didn't hurt." Sometimes you may feel someone else's pain must be more than your own so you don't have the right to grieve. All of these different ways that you negate your feelings cause dis-ease in the body to the cellular level in which there can be new health problems, mentally and physically.

Vicarious grief is another type of emotional loss in which you hurt for someone else and feel their pain. This happens all the time and can result from what is portrayed on television, what happens to family members, or any time you see someone in pain and feel deeply for that person.

Often it can be excruciating especially because you are unable to take the pain away and this can contribute to a feeling of helplessness. Being aware that grief can be caused by witnessing someone else's tribulations can allow you to realize your own grief and become conscious that it is normal. It is wise to find safe and healthy places to share your grief as it may not be appropriate to share with the person who is in their own process and yet, at times, that may be the perfect place.

In order to navigate these hard times and this painful grief, it is important to recognize and acknowledge your emotions and take care of yourself so you can help care for others in a healthy way. Selfish is thought of as a bad thing, but in recognizing your emotional state, getting help in difficult times, and taking care of yourself, you will find more serenity and more consciousness and be able to make decisions about how to be of service to yourself and others with more clarity. I wish you well.

Until next week, take care.

Golden Willow Retreat is a nonprofit organization focused on emotional healing and recovery from any type of loss. Direct any questions to Ted Wiard, LPCC, CGC, Founder of Golden Willow Retreat at (575) 776-2024 or [GWR@newmex.com](mailto:GWR@newmex.com)