

Taos News Article

*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.*

### **There is Grief during Life Transitions**

**Dear Ted,**

I am in the midst of some changes in my life. They feel healthy and I'm excited and grateful that they are happening. Although I'm not experiencing these as sad times or as loss, I can still feel many emotions bubbling up. Is this grief? Can grief happen during happy times? Thanks, Lawrence

**Dear Lawrence,**

Your questions are wonderful and thank you for asking. Grief is a funny little animal that can show up in many forms and ways in our life. I see grief as the healing from a certain loss that gives us the emotional path to step into our new life situation.

Our society tends to think of loss only when there is something sad that has happened. Loss happens any time the definition of who we perceive and define ourselves to be has changed. Grief is the process of leaning into the new and re-defined self. We think of situations such as having a baby, getting married, and graduating from school as very happy and wonderful times; and most of the time, they are! In these rites of passages in our life, the old "me" is lost and the new "me" gleans from the old while also transforming into a new self-definition of "me".

As these happy events happen, there are many emotions that may show up including sadness, happiness, fear, excitement, doubt, insecurity or confidence. This is your psyche being blended to make the new you while letting go of the old you. This is a form of grief. Allowing yourself to be aware and conscious of feelings that arise will help heal historical losses while helping you step into your new life.

To answer your question, yes, grief can appear during happy and sad events in your life.

We are in a grief process when emotions arise during a time of transition. As emotions appear, our brain usually does a certain level of reminiscence. Quite often, at a wedding or other major transition in someone's life, we may hear people commenting about how cute the person was as a child, or how quickly the person has grown up. This is how a person is recognized as moving into a new phase of their life and shedding parts of his/her past.

The grief process honors all changes in our life. The more you can be aware of these transitions and transformations in your life, the more opportunities you have to heal historical events while stepping through the gateway of your new and re-defined life.

Identifying, seeing, hearing, and valuing your emotions as change and life happens, will allow you to have higher levels of emotional maturity, mindfulness, and serenity. 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)