



FAITH & HOPE HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE

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Epilogue

Bereavement Newsletter

January/February 2020

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Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy is an ancient art that uses fragrances to provide comfort, reduce stress, and improve sleep. Aromatherapy is often used as a complementary therapy, and many hospice patients find these helpful in managing symptoms. People who are grieving can make use of them as well.

Grief often brings overwhelming emotions, difficulty sleeping, and loads of stress. Aromatherapy has been found to be helpful in addressing all of these. Lavender is one of the most well-known of all the fragrances used in aromatherapy. It is great for reducing stress and helping with sleep, but there are literally hundreds of other options when choosing what fragrances to use. *(Continued on page 3)*

Book Recommendation

The Year of Magical Thinking

by Joan Didion

The amount of time we spend with those close to us can be but a hidden afterthought. We would spend time with them, and wrap up with a smile and a "See you later." But then life unexpectedly takes them away from us. Our heads suddenly fill with timesheets and the afterthought of time becomes the focus of attention. Questions form. Did we spend the best time as we could with them? Did we make the time we spent with them worthwhile? Was it enough? What happens now? Sometimes, our minds are too caught up and we blank out. Many times, we hold on to things hoping they'll come back. It can all be confusing.

This is all thoroughly explored in Joan Didion's *The Year of Magical Thinking*. A book full of raw emotion, *The Year of Magical Thinking* is a biographical account of Didion's experiences with grief and the struggles of handling her emotions & confusion.

(Continued on page 5)

Review by Theodore Huynh

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Published 2007; ISBN: 1400078431

A Note From Your Bereavement Services Coordinator

We've made it through the holiday season. Parties, presents, plays, and performances have passed. Now we return to life as normal...well, as normal as life can be. Grief doesn't reset or go away with the excitement of the holidays. The journey with grief continues. Many people do try New Year's resolutions or use this time to start life anew. While re-entering everyday life is a milestone in the grief process, a new year doesn't necessarily make a person ready for it.

In this issue of *Epilogue*, we'll learn about the "6R's of Mourning," one of which is "reentering daily life." We'll also see that this occurs well into the grief process for many people. This issue also looks at the role aromatherapy can play in coping with grief and resources on the topic. One of our hospice volunteers, Theodore Huynh, also contributed a great review of the book *The Year of Magical Thinking* for this edition of the newsletter. So, a special thanks to him for his contribution.

As you enter the new year, I wish you well, and know that you are not alone in your grief.

Reid Jacobs

Reid Jacobs, APHSW-C, MSW
Bereavement Services Coordinator



"She was no longer wrestling with the grief, but could sit down with it as a lasting companion and make it a sharer in her thoughts."

-George Eliot

Common Experiences of Grief

Grief comes in many forms and is unique to each individual. However, there are some experiences that are common. If you are experiencing any of these after a loss, know that it is normal & likely part of your grief process. If these become extreme or concerning, please give us a call, 818-559-1460. We're happy to talk.

- Withdrawing
- Restlessness
- Anxiety
- Questioning Beliefs
- Insomnia
- Over-sleeping
- Nightmares
- Waves of Sadness
- Irritable
- Guilt
- Relief
- Fatigue
- Crying
- Feeling Numb
- Foggy Thinking
- Change in Appetite

The Fundamentals of Caring

(2016) TV-MA | 1h 37min

Comedy, Drama

Starring: Craig Roberts, Paul Rudd, Selena Gomez

“You can’t fix me. My son died!” Ben (Paul Rudd) shouts during a heated argument, summing up the brokenness he’s experiencing. This movie explores how Ben copes with the death of his son and the collapse of his marriage and career. He tries to reset by taking a class to become a professional caregiver. (Though, this is something I advise against for people coping with a recent loss.)

Ben’s first patient, Trevor (Craig Roberts) is a young man with a terminal illness which leaves him chair-bound and dependent on twenty-four-hour care. His illness and life circumstances have left him jaded and bitter. Ben sees

past this and connects with the person behind the harsh façade. For the first time, there is someone who can engage Trevor on his own terms.

Ben and Trevor go on a road trip and on the journey, the two learn to cope with their struggles and eventually how to thrive. Ben helps Trevor engage with life instead of being trapped by his illness. Trevor teaches Ben how to grow through his grief and move forward with his life, without forgetting his son in the process.

This movie captures the profound impact of grief on individuals, families, and people we’ve yet to meet. We see how grief comes in waves, often triggered by a sight or sound, or seemingly out of nowhere.

(Note: This movie contains harsh language and crude comedy. It is not suitable for all audiences.)

Aromatherapy *(continued from page 1)*

Aromatherapy comes in many forms. Essential oils are used most often. These highly concentrated oils are derived from plants and are used through three main methods: inhalation, topical, and diffusion. Scents can be inhaled by applying a few drops of essential oil to a cloth or tissue which is then held at the nose. Topical applications are made by adding essential oils to lotions or other “carrier” oils which are then rubbed onto the skin. Diffusers use thin wooden reeds to absorb and redistribute oils into the air. Sometimes, diffusers use the heat of a candle and others are electronic. Oils can also be used in a spray bottle. Aromas can also be obtained from scented candles, cooking, and heating aromatics in a sauce pan with water. In fact, the scent of

apple pie, freshly baked bread or cookies, can bring a sense of comfort and safety. Other fragrances, like a loved-one’s perfume or favorite meal can make them feel close.

There is mixed scientific research supporting the use of aromatherapy in clinical applications. The general consensus is that more research needs to be done. However, most studies suggest that there is some benefit with few risks or side-effects. The main risks include allergic reaction, infections (from applying oils to cut or broken skin), and risk of fire when using candles or other heat-generating devices. Generally, aromatherapy is worth trying at least once.

Grief Explored: Rando's Six R Processes of Mourning

To say that grief is complicated is an understatement. People, relationships, emotions, identity, faith... these all get wrapped up in grief and called into question when facing death. Dr. Therese Rando's "6R Processes of Mourning" can help us understand and process this thing called grief.

To begin, Dr. Rando breaks the mourning process into three phases: Avoidance, Confrontation, and Accommodation. Each phase has one or more processes (that begin with the letter "R") to go with it. During the *Avoidance Phase*, it's difficult or impossible for a person to accept or recognize that there has been a death. The process required in this phase is to "**Recognize the Loss.**" This can seem straightforward, and for many people it is. However, the nature of some deaths makes them more difficult to accept. For example, during a natural disaster or war a person may be killed, but their body never recovered. This can leave survivors to question if the person actually died. This process can also become complicated if the survivor truly expected a miraculous healing that never came.

Once the loss is recognized, the *Confrontation Phase* can begin. The focus of this phase is where the heavy work of grief takes place. This is where a person processes their grief, which seems vague. Dr. Rando explains the process through the next three R processes to make it more concrete. **Reacting to the Separation** requires a person to experience the emotions attached to grief. According to Rando, this early process is important because pushing down or ignoring emotions will make it difficult (if not impossible) to move forward with the remaining grief processes. The pain of grief may be unpleasant, but it is necessary.

Next, Rando says that a griever must **Recollect and Re-experience** their relationship with the deceased. This process is where we remember the good times and the bad, what life was like with the person who died. This could happen informally, just reflecting on memories. It can be a more structured process, looking through photo albums, scrolling through old Facebook posts, or visiting a place that holds a lot of memories.

Following that comes the process to **Relinquish Old Attachments**, which sounds harsh. It also seems to fly in the face of other grief concepts like Continuing Bonds (We covered that in the May/June 2019 edition of *Epilogue*.) In simple terms, this grief process requires a person to acknowledge that life won't be the same, and that the changes caused by the death are permanent.

Then comes the final phase of *Accommodation*. Here the griever can reconnect with life and find new meaning or purpose. This is done through the **Readjustment** process. At this point, the bereaved person is able to establish a "new normal." Rando points out that a person "moves on with life without forgetting the past." Loss starts to feel less severe around this time as well.

This brings us to the final process of **Reinvesting**. At this point, people are able to find the joy in life again. Day-to-day functioning is possible and a person can put energy into new activities, goals, and people.

You'll see that there are no timelines on these phases or processes. Some are completed quickly. Some may never be finished. Some may even be revisited long after we thought they were done. The 6R Processes of Mourning are more linear and structured than other models of grief, but they fit many people's experiences with grief. Perhaps they will help you in your own grief process as well.

Book Review

(Continued from page 1)

Didion takes the reader on a year journey of the aftermath of the passing of her husband, essentially her “Year of Magical Thinking”. In her grief, thoughts that haven’t occurred to her sprout from her mind and feelings untouched all culminate into this “magical thinking” throughout her process. The reader is able to connect with Didion on a deep level as she invites the reader into her own experience with the process of grief that perhaps may help us navigate our thoughts and confusion as well. Of course, grief is not a linear experience, and Didion’s story is as unique as our own. And although unique, this powerfully written story reminds us how difficult the process of grief can be and the challenges that arise. The Year of Magical Thinking is not only just her story, but also it is her analysis, her memories, and her emotions.

Review by Theodore Huynh

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Published 2007; ISBN: 1400078431

Faith & Hope Hospice Community Cookbook



Recipes hold a special place in the heart. They can be family heirlooms, passed down for generations or something whipped-up on a whim that remind us of someone we love. A recipe can recall memories of special occasions, or comfort food for rotten days. Now, we’re creating a cookbook that will give us a place to celebrate our own families and the special stories behind our favorite recipes. This idea grew out the recipe section of *Epilogue*, and the positive response it’s received. Now, we’re inviting members of the community to contribute recipes and stories of foods that hold special significance. Together, we will build a cookbook with more than just recipes.

There are three ways to submit your contribution: Call Reid Jacobs at the main office number 818-559-1460, email it to reid@faithandhopehospice.com or download the form www.faithandhopehospice.com/cookbook



Recipes from the Heart

I am not a good cook at all, with little interest or talent in the kitchen. Recognizing my limits, but wanting to encourage my ability to feed myself and represent well at get-togethers, my mother shared this simple, quick and vegetarian recipe that's become a favorite of mine, family and friends.

Thomas Walker, Family Member

Santa Fe Stew

Ingredients

1 can each:

- pinto beans
- kidney beans
- black beans
- northern beans
- diced tomatoes

- Rotel tomatoes (spice level, your choice)

2 cans white shoepeg corn

1 pkg, dry taco seasoning (spice level, your choice)

1 pkg, dry Ranch dressing mix

Directions

1. Empty all cans into large stew pot; do NOT drain any before adding.
2. Mix in dry seasonings.
3. Stir well as you bring to a boil.
4. Simmer for 2 hours.

**For soupier stew, add 1-2 cups of water. For thicker, drain beans and corn before adding. Serve hot (stew) or warm (dip) on rice, with chips for dipping and/or with condiments (grated cheese, diced onion, sour cream, etc).*

Aromatherapy Resources

Here are a few resources with more information about aromatherapy, how & why it works, and guidance on what essential oils or fragrances might be a good fit for you. There is a lot of information about aromatherapy online, but a lot is from unreliable sources. I'm only including resources from trusted organizations and qualified professionals. For more details or direct links to these websites, visit our blog at:

<https://faithandhopehospice.com/aromatherapy/>

- What are the benefits of aromatherapy? Brent A. Bauer, MD, Mayo Clinic: **www.mayoclinic.org**
- Aromatherapy: Do Essential Oils Really Work? Harpreet Gujral, DNP, FNP-BC, Johns Hopkins Medicine: **www.hopkinsmedicine.org**
- What Is Aromatherapy? Nayana Ambardekar, MD, WebMD: **www.webmd.com**
- Aromatherapy Uses and Benefits. Debra Rose Wilson, PhD & Emily Cronkleton Healthline: **www.healthline.com**
- Aromatherapy for Self-Care. Sarah Swanberg, MS, LAc, ISBN: 1646112210
- The Family Guide to Aromatherapy. Erika Galentin MNIMH RH (AHG) ISBN: 1641525118



Nothing Gold Can Stay

by Robert Frost

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
The leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.



Bereavement Services Available

In addition to this bereavement newsletter and our periodic mailings, Faith & Hope Hospice can also provide:

- Resources via email
- Workshops
- Support groups
- Phone-based support
- Resources
- Referrals
- Annual Patient Memorial
- In-person counseling for individuals and families

Contact Reid at **818-559-1460** or email him at ***reid@faithandhopehospice.com*** to request these additional services.

The Bereavement Newsletter is free resource made available for 12 months to the family and friends our hospice patients, and to the community at large.

If you would prefer to no longer receive this newsletter or if you would like to receive it beyond 12 months, please contact us at 818-559-1460 to update your preferences.

All articles in Epilogue are written by Reid Jacobs, unless otherwise noted.



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Epilogue

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Faith & Hope Hospice and Palliative Care seeks to be the premier provider of hospice, palliative, and bereavement care in Los Angeles County and the surrounding areas.

Our goal is to improve the quality of life for people facing life-limiting and terminal illness, the people important to them, and our community at large by utilizing an interdisciplinary, holistic approach.



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