



FAITH & HOPE HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE

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# Epilogue

Bereavement Newsletter

November/December 2020

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## Grief and the Holidays

The holidays are generally seen as a joyous time of year. Traditions come to life, family gathers. We measure major milestones – births, coming of age, marriage, and deaths – each reflecting in our holiday traditions in some form.

The ways that holidays are celebrated vary among families and over time. As new families come together, new traditions are formed. Circumstances, like finances, pandemic, illness, work, and deaths, can interrupt traditions and crack the layer of joy that this time of year is expected to hold. Trying to maintain all the traditions and force the joy during the challenges of 2020 might actually rob the season of what joy it might otherwise have. *(continued on p. 4)*

## Book Recommendation

**The Five Invitations: Discovering What Death Can Teach Us About Living Fully**  
by Frank Ostaseski

This is not a book about death. It is truly a book about living, but according to Ostaseski, death cannot be separated from life. Therefore, he encourages the reader to view death as a teacher, informing and motivating the way we live, day to day, year to year. He brings years of experience working with the dying to inform the reader on living fully and with purpose. Ostaseski combines the motivation of Michael Jackson's *Man in the Mirror* with a framework to achieve that idea by way of the Five Invitations— 1. Don't Wait; 2. Welcome Everything, Push Away Nothing; 3. Bring Your Whole Self to the Experience; 4. Find a Place of Rest in the Middle of Things; 5. Cultivate a Don't Know Mind.

Ostaseski and his writings have been praised by Bill Moyers, Oprah Winfrey, Ram Das, Jon Kabat-Zinn, the Dalai Lama, and many others.

Published 2017; ISBN: 978-1250074652

## A Note From Your Bereavement Services Coordinator

In every edition of *Epilogue*, we explore a new way to understand grief. There are seemingly endless ways people grieve and there is not one “right” way. By learning more about grief you can better understand your own grief experience and hopefully understand how you, your friends, and family are coping as well.

We are now in the holiday season. This is usually one of the happiest times of year, but the first year after the death of a loved one can make it difficult to feel the joy of the season. This is normal. It’s also normal to feel joy despite grief.

I hope this edition of *Epilogue* provides some beneficial information that helps you navigate grief and the holidays.

*Reid Jacobs*

Reid Jacobs, APHSW-C, MSW, CT  
Bereavement Services Coordinator



## Recipes from the Heart

This is from my friend, Andrea, who left us far too young from breast cancer that was diagnosed too late in the 1980's. I will always treasure the times my son and I had at the beach house with her family. She was a friend and inspiration. Recipes do bring back fond memories of such special times in our lives. Treasure each day and moment you have and look to the heavens for comfort that comes from knowing there is a better place.

-Esti Underwood, Friend/Family

### French Market Donuts

#### Ingredients

1/2 cup warm water	1/2 cup evaporated milk
2 Tbsp corn oil	1/4 cup warm water
1/3 cup sugar	2 eggs, beaten
1/2 tsp salt	Corn Oil
1 pkg dry yeast	Confectioner's sugar
4 cups flour	

~

1. In a large bowl, mix 1/2 cup warm water, corn oil, sugar, salt and evaporated milk.
2. Sprinkle yeast into 1/4 cup warm water. Stir until dissolved. Add to corn oil mixture.
3. Stir in flour and eggs alternately, beating briskly. Add more flour if needed.
4. Turn dough onto a floured board and knead five minutes or until smooth and elastic.
5. Place dough in a lightly oiled bowl and brush with oil.
6. Cover with a damp cloth and let stand for 30-40 minutes.
7. On floured board, roll out dough to 1/2 inch thickness.
8. Cut into rectangles about 1 1/2" x 2 1/2"; Stretch rectangles until very thin.
9. Fry in 3/4 inch of oil in a skillet heated to 375F. (It's important that the oil is hot.)
10. Cook until lightly browned and turn once.
11. Drain and shake in a bag of confectioner's sugar. (Andrea used a brown paper bag.)

## Grief Explored: Intuitive and Instrumental Grief

Grief comes in many forms. Often, there are tears, feelings of sadness and loss, even feelings of anger or relief. These are all normal. It's also normal for a person to have fewer outward emotions. For them, grief is more physical and mental than emotional. These people may not cry but still have profound feelings of grief. These two styles of grieving are referred to as Intuitive and Instrumental Grief.

For intuitive grievers, feeling and expressing these emotions is how they cope with grief. Their grief tends to come in waves; they cry and engage with others to discuss their feelings. Intuitive grief's focus on emotion has led some to label it as a feminine form of grief.

Instrumental grievers, however, process grief by thinking and doing. They may not show outward signs of grief. They may have more physical symptoms too, like pain or digestive issues. They may release emotion by going for a run or devote their time to specific tasks, for example: planning a funeral or working on a creative project.) The stoic appearance has caused this to be seen as a masculine form of grief.

While intuitive and instrumental grief were initially seen as two separate ways to grieve, it's now seen as a spectrum. Most people, regardless of gender,

have components of both intuitive and instrumental forms of coping. This is now referred to as blended grief. The masculine and feminine labels have also been dropped by professionals. However, some segments of society still expect women to be more emotional and men more stoic.

Here are a few coping ideas for intuitive and instrumental grievers:

### Intuitive:

- Join a support group
- Keep a journal
- Write a letter to the deceased to express your feelings
- Watch a movie that your loved one enjoyed

### Instrumental:

- Make a photo album to share with loved ones
- Meditate
- Make a quilt from the deceased person's clothes
- Volunteer or fundraise for a special non-profit organization like the Make-A-Wish Foundation or the Alzheimer's Association
- Run a 10k or marathon in honor of the loved-one who has died.



## *Light the Night: Patient Memorial*

*We would like to thank everyone who attended this year's virtual patient memorial on November 8th.*

*You can watch a recording of the service on our website:*

[www.faithandhopehospice.com/LightTheNight](http://www.faithandhopehospice.com/LightTheNight)

## Bereavement Services Available

Despite COVID-19, we continue to provide our full range bereavement services, although all in-person support has moved to an online format. In addition to this bereavement newsletter & our periodic mailings, Faith & Hope Hospice also provides:

- Resources via email
- Phone-based support
- Resources
- Referrals
- Annual Patient Memorial
- Web-based counseling for individuals and families

Contact Reid at **818-559-1460** to request these services.

## Grief and the Holidays (*continued from page 1*)

As you celebrate the holidays know that it's okay to make some adjustments. This year traditions for most families will be tweaked due to the constraints of the pandemic. If this is your first holiday season without a loved one, know that it's okay to adjust how you observe the holiday. You have my permission.

The important thing is to honor the traditions important to you. The way you celebrate is less important. Talk with your loved ones about making some adjustments. In the process, you may even stumble into a new tradition to cherish in the years ahead. Years from now, you will remember how you felt and the connection with loved ones more than anything else.

The adjustments will look different for each family. Perhaps the festivities will take place at someone else's home. Maybe it's the year for an adult child to take the lead on hosting the holidays. You may choose to reduce the guest list this year to

avoid feeling overwhelmed or move to a virtual celebration. In fact, social distancing may require us all to make this change.

If you are struggling with the holidays or if they are making you feel anxious, know that that's okay. The holidays can be stressful during the best of times. Yes, this can be the most wonderful time of year, but the stress to force joy can become a burden, especially when grieving a loss. Adding a pandemic will just add to the stress. I encourage you to talk with your family and friends about how you are coping. Let them know if you need help with the holidays. If you are coping well, check on those you care about if you think they might be struggling. The team at Faith and Hope Hospice is available to talk to as well. Feel free to call us at 818-559-1460 or email me at [info@faithandhopehospice.com](mailto:info@faithandhopehospice.com)

*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.*



“Grief is always sudden as winter, no matter how long the autumn.”

— J. Aleksandr Wootton

## Movie Recommendation

### **The Family Stone**

(2005) PG-13 | 1h 43min

*Comedy, Drama, Romance*

Starring: Claire Danes, Diane Keaton, Rachel McAdams, Dermot Mulroney, Craig T. Nelson, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Luke Wilson

Sybil Stone’s newly diagnosed terminal illness takes a backseat as her children and their spouses & significant others return home for Christmas. Sybil and her husband, Kelly, have

chosen not to tell the kids that this will be their mother’s last Christmas for fear of ruining the holiday.

What follows is both the best and worst of what the holidays can hold. Personalities and lifestyles clash. Old hurts are revealed, romance is discovered, and the power of love and family conquers all forms of pain.

The movie closes a year later as we see the family coming back together for the first time without Sybil.

## Salt-Dough Ornaments



Ornaments are a hallmark of the holidays. These objects seem to capture the essence of the holidays with just a glance. Because the same ornaments are typically used, year after year, they become infused with memories.

I have a few of these ornaments from my childhood. My grandmother and I made them together. It's been 15 years since my last Christmas with her, but holding these ornaments transports me back to her kitchen as my 5 year-old-self paints a bright red coat onto a toy soldier cookie ornament. It's a great way to stay connected with her during the holidays.

If social distancing is keeping you apart this year, make a batch of these cookies and mail them, undecorated, to your family. Then have a virtual decorating party via Skype.

### Ingredients

2 cups All Purpose Flour

1 cup Salt

1 cup Water

### Decorating Supplies

Cookie Cutters

Toothpick or Straw

Acrylic Paint

Paint Brushes

Glitter

Ribbon/Twine

Essential Oil

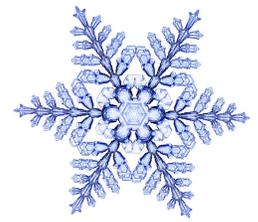
### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 250°
2. Combine flour and salt.
3. Stir in water until fully absorbed.
4. Add more water or flour if needed to get a firm dough.
5. Roll dough to 1/3 inch thickness.
6. Cut into desired shapes or use cookie cutters.
7. Add a hole to the top with a toothpick or straw for hanging ornaments.
8. Bake for 2 ½ hours until dough is hard.
9. Cool and decorate.
10. Add ribbon or twine to hang.
11. Store in a cool dry place, wrapped in tissue or other packing material. Will last for many years.





## Winter Blessing -Reid M. Jacobs



May you have  
peace in your holidays,  
Joy amidst the winter cold, and  
Light in even the darkest of times.

## Stress and Grief

Stress can make everyday worries, including grief, feel worse and harder to manage. Our brains are like computers. There is only so much that we can process at once. When we reach a certain level, things just start to fall apart. For computers, this means it takes longer to process information or to load content. For humans, it can slow us down in other ways, such as reduced short-term memory, trouble finding the right words, misplacing things, increased irritability, etc.

It affects us in other ways too. Unlike computers, people also have to cope with emotions. Feelings of anxiety and stress also build up other emotions like fear, grief,

depression, and anger. We might become short and snippy with others, or perhaps shut down altogether. Feelings of grief may suddenly intensify even if they had subsided for a while.

The opposite may occur too. An overwhelming amount of stress or anxiety may lead to emotional numbing. Instead of feeling all the big, intense emotions, it can suddenly feel like all the emotions get turned off. This may seem like a gift if an individual has been overwhelmed with negative emotions, but it generally means that all the positive emotions get numbed as well.

## Try these tips to keep stress in check:

- Eat a healthy diet
- Sleep: 8-9 hours are ideal
- Mindfulness meditation
- Talk to a friend
- Talk to a professional
- Make your needs known
- If stress is triggering your grief or vice versa, call us at 818-559-1460.
- Find more tips at: <https://faithandhopehospice.com/grief-and-the-holidays/>
- Journal
- Avoid triggers
  - News
  - Social media
  - Unhealthy relationships



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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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