



NTSAD FAMILY CONNECTIONS

For Newly Bereaved Families | Month Ten

Getting Stuck in Your Grief

FROM LIVING WITH LOSS FOR SAN DIEGO HOSPICE SURVIVORS

"As you know, grief is a process that leads from the pain of loss to hope for the future and the capacity to reinvest in life and meaningful living. In this process there is a sense of movement and progress even though you may still be experiencing pain. Although the sense that one is not making progress is common in the early stages of grief, when this feeling persists and becomes uncomfortable, it can be viewed as a warning sign that you have reached an impasse. This obstacle will block further progress and warrants your attention. You will need to figure out what the particular obstacle is and what it means to you before you can overcome it.

Our experience has shown us that there are some common places and ways in which people often get stuck. At this point, you have probably experienced the pain of loss in its many variations and may be struggling with adjusting to a new environment in which your loved one is missing.

You may have noticed that adjusting to your new circumstances often involves learning new tasks or adopting new ways of dealing with living alone, raising/relating to children, facing your home without that person, or managing finances and business affairs, to name just a few. You are essentially faced with filling new, unfamiliar roles. Successful adaptation involves mustering your courage to try new things and experiment with new roles. Satisfaction comes from mastering new tasks and recognizing that you have grown as a result of the experience.

People sometimes work against themselves by promoting their own helplessness, not developing necessary skills, withdrawing from the world, and not facing up to the requirements of the changed environment. Adult "temper tantrums" are common. You may catch yourself saying "It's not fair; this isn't how it was supposed to be. This isn't my job, and I absolutely refuse to do this." It's as though you are sitting in a corner holding your breath waiting for someone to suspend reality and rescue you from your plight.

While adult "temper tantrums" and the anger that accompanies this part of the adjustment process are normal and legitimate, to remain in such a place is to hinder your own progress.

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"My scars remind me that I did survive my deepest wounds. That in itself is an accomplishment." -

Steve Goodier

Resources:

Embree's Legacy, A Spirit That Lives On

NTSAD mom, Caitrin Alexander spoke to Grey Genetics about remembering her daughter Embree's life and furthering her legacy.

Listen to the podcast, [here](#).



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The final task in the grieving process involves the reinvestment of the individual in life and living. Although the successful completion of this task is a sign of healing and the natural end of acute grief, many people find it difficult to make this transition. The misconception that to reinvest means to forget your loved one can prevent you from taking this necessary step. It may be helpful to consider that to recover means to integrate the past into your present experience. Therefore, you will never forget, for, like the scar that remains after an injury, you have a reminder of that pain. And while that scar does not necessarily interfere with your overall functioning, there will be times when the scar will throb. At these times you will have to use the strategies you have learned to cope with the pain until it subsides.

Some people hesitate to reinvest for fear that new relationships and endeavors will end in yet another loss. They find themselves holding back from life in an attempt to buffer themselves from pain. If this sounds familiar to you, you may want to consider if it is worth trading off meaning and joy for temporary safety.

The poet Gibran reminds us that joy and sorrow are but two sides of the same coin. We cannot have one without the other. He contends that our sorrow carves out room for our joy. If you have had to withstand the pain of your loss, are you not also entitled to the joy of a new beginning?"

Choosing Resiliency in the Face of Adversity

NTSAD WEBINAR HOSTED BY BECKY BENSON, MISS ELLIOTT'S MOM

Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook COO, founder of Lean In, and co-author of *Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy*, joined Blyth Lord, Founder of Courageous Parents Network, in a conversation about the challenges they faced and what they learned following unexpected, life-altering situations. Sheryl and Blyth along with Becky Benson, NTSAD's Family Services and Conference Coordinator and mom to Miss Elliott, discussed anticipatory grief, the importance of being mindful of things that bring you joy even during hard times, and leveraging post-traumatic growth.

View the webinar [here](#).

NTSAD Family Connection: A Special Webinar Event
Community and Connection for Families and Individuals

Choosing Resiliency in the Face of Adversity

A conversation with Sheryl Sandberg, Chief Operating Officer at Facebook and co-author of *Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy*, and Courageous Parents Network Founder, and NTSAD's own Blyth Taylor Lord.

Moderated by Becky Benson, NTSAD Family Services and Conference Coordinator, and mom to Miss Elliott, Skylar and Justin.

"I can be changed by what happens to me. But I refuse to be reduced by it." - Maya Angelou