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Seasons of our grief and the
next generation

Dr. Ray Mitsch

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“It is the denial of death that is partially responsible for people living empty, purposeless lives; for when you live as if you’ll live forever, it becomes too easy to postpone things you know that you must do.”

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

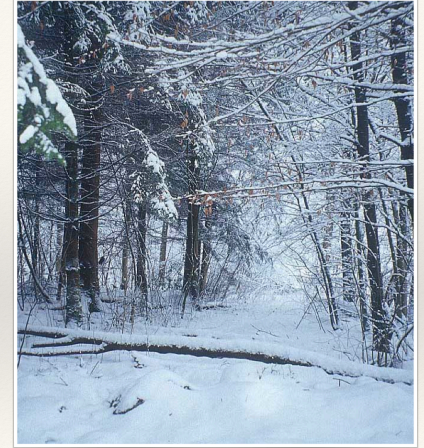
“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; ...”

Ecclesiastes 3:1

Describing the indescribable?

Winter

Task: accept reality

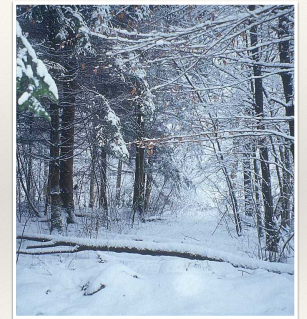


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Remember “acceptance” ≠ “it’s okay”

Threat to acceptance: Denial

❖ II Sam 18:33 And the king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus he said as he walked, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"



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Threat to acceptance: Denial

We can do this in three different ways:

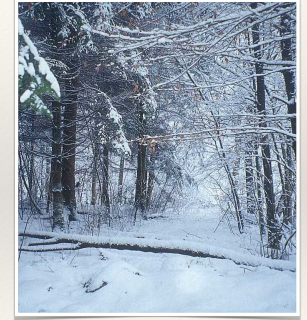
- We can deny the facts of the loss
- Tend to mummify
- Keep things intact until the person returns



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Threat to acceptance: Denial

- Deny the meaning of the loss
 - Diminish it's significance
 - Selectively forget
 - Rids self/environment of all evidence of person's existence

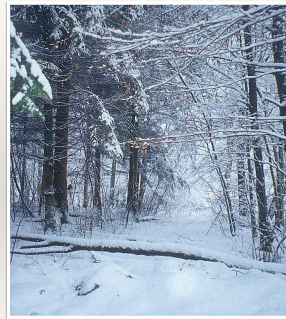


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Threat to acceptance: Denial

Deny that death is irreversible

- Spiritualism
 - Saul a good example with the loss of Samuel
- Existence of an afterlife



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Threat to acceptance: Denial

1 Sam. 28:5 When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. 6 And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets. 7 Then Saul said to his servants, "Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a medium at Endor."



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Winter -- Tools

- Journaling
- Visiting the grave
- Look at old pictures
- Listening to music you shared
- Re-visiting places you shared
- Self-caring activities
- Joining grief support groups



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Spring

Task: Acknowledge & work through pain.



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Features

- Anger turned outward/inward
- Physical pain and symptoms
- Emotional pain and symptoms
- Avoidance Strategies
 - Avoidance of painful thoughts and situations
 - Idealizes the deceased
 - Geographical cures



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Tools of Spring

- Continue to journal
- Sort through belongings
- Allow others to talk about deceased



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Tools of Spring

- Deal with guilt through forgiveness and confronting faulty thinking patterns
- Counseling
- Support groups



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Tools of Spring

- Seek verification of healthy grief process from others
- Allow emotional purging
- Meet miniature challenges
- Confront victim-thinking patterns



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Summer



Task: Adjust to life without the loved one.

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Features

- Become aware of the roles the other person played for us
- Develop new skills
- May decide to withdraw from the world
- Way to abort is to not adapt
- Promoting helplessness



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Tools of Summer

- Taking courses to develop new skills
- Encouragement from others who have lost loved ones
- Reshape home environment
- Writing letter to loved one to explain changes



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Fall

Task: Remember the Deceased While Embarking on the Rest of Life



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Features

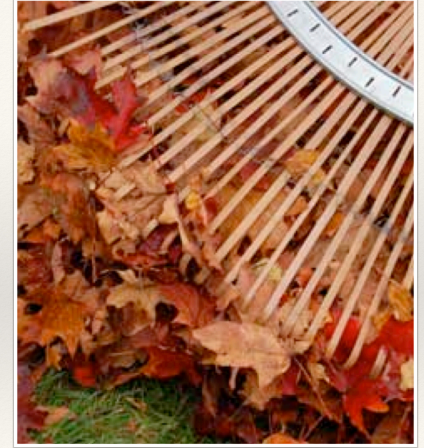
- Feelings of dishonoring and disloyal
- Frightened by prospect of reinvesting of emotions elsewhere
- May choose to never love again
- Hangs on to past attachment



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Tools for Fall

- Writing letter of good-bye
- Continue to journal about new experiences
- Allow new relationships
- Use counseling, if necessary
- Develop healthy spiritual perspective regarding loss



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So what about Gen Z?

5 things to keep in mind...

- ❖ Research tells us that Gen Z is less likely to read the Bible than previous generations. They're also more likely to go to college, believe the government should do more to solve problems, and have a TikTok account.

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#1 - Is Atheist(sort of...)

- ❖ Less religious
- ❖ Their faith connection
- ❖ More agnostic
- ❖ Familiarity with the Bible
- ❖ Conceptions/conclusions about religion

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#2 - Looking for community

- ❖ The loneliest generation on record.
- ❖ Idealistic portrayal of a relationship
- ❖ Desire for relationships but don't know how

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#3 - Anxiously Digital

- ❖ "The level of panic is high
- ❖ Everything is out there all the time on social media. . . .
- ❖ Living a double bind... adds to the anxiety
 - ❖ disengage from it, they feel like they're missing out.
 - ❖ Lean into it - more anxiety
 - ❖ Results in deleting and reinstalling their social media.

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#4 - Fervently Principled

- ❖ Gen Z feels strongly about some principles (welcoming diversity; not challenging someone else's beliefs) and less strongly about others (lying; that moral principles don't change with society).
- ❖ Value: Actions and words match
- ❖ Sensitive to making a difference in the world
- ❖ Standards are idealistic

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#5 - Living a curated life

- ❖ Bending life experience to happiness and comfort
- ❖ Committed to controlling life rather than living it

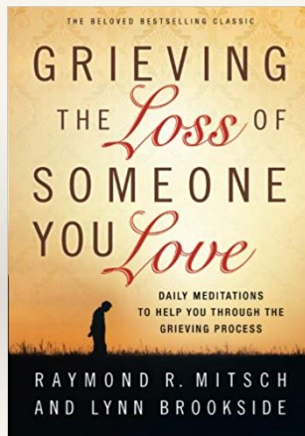
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The window of opportunity

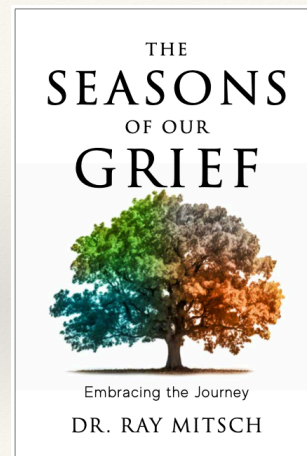
- The role of grief/loss
- Stained Glass International
 - Retreats
 - Outpost Groups
 - Relationship Resources



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