

CHAPTER 15 GRIEF

WE MUST DISCOVER WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR INSIDE NOT OUTSIDE OF OURSELVES

We all have an inner peace we can learn to consciously access.

External rational thought creates external feelings.

Internal conscious thought accesses internal feelings.

SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE INVENTORY

1. Some people will always feel hurt because of a the loss of a loved one. True or False?
2. Some people will always have to feel hurt when they think of their loss. True or False?
3. It is not good to feel angry over a tragic loss. True or False?
4. People should not feel guilty over the loss of a loved one. True or False?
5. It is possible to grieve and still be at peace. True or False?
6. Being let down can make some people feel hurt. True or False?

DEALING WITH GRIEF

After Value Jet and Flight 800 went down, the families of the victims were seen at different times gathered around a microphone saying, "We will have to bear the pain of this loss the rest of our lives".

In a similar way, families come on the Oprah Winfrey show who are dealing with all kind of loss: loss of a limb, loss of property, loss of loved ones. On a regular basis they say, "We will always have to live with this pain the rest of our lives". The audience seems to agree with them, "Yes, you are right". They may very well deal with this pain the rest of their lives, but the truth is -- they do not have to.

Our aim must be to move from grief to gratitude. It is a process that will start with more grief and move to more gratitude as we begin to raise our perspective of the event. We do not try to solve the problem to get the peace, we get the peace to solve the problem.

The first premise I always start with is the premise of life after death.

Dr. Kubla Ross is a medical doctor, researcher, and therapist who has studied hundreds of people who had an out of body experience. (She documents these in her book "The Seven Stages of Death and Dying";) in all cases they were pronounced dead, but in a short time were resuscitated to life. They generally see a brilliant light and sometimes hear music. There is a greeting with loved ones and an encounter with what is described as the "experience of wisdom". The common thread among their stories is "being known and

knowing".

Some people think these stories are planted in people's subconscious. They have heard them before and expected it to happen. However, very young children who have never heard the stories relate the same experience, which seems to disprove this way of thinking.

The most dramatic story I have heard is of a woman who was pronounced dead on the operating table. When she was resuscitated, she told of having an out-of-body experience. She described the doctors and nurses in the room along with a detailed description of the set-up and various colors such as the uniforms. It was all very exact. The amazing thing about it is the woman was blind and could not have possibly seen anything she was describing.

THE HEALING IS IN THE FEELING

There is a 180-degree turn between the external and the internal. Physical healing starts with the healing to get the peace. Spiritual healing starts with the peace to get the healing. People who hurt when they think of some past loss is trying to get the healing to get closure or peace. This can take years if ever.

When we get into the inner peace first and then look at the event, we will see, feel, and act differently than when we are feeling insecure, unloved, and unhappy. In my early days of counseling, I would spend forty minutes gathering data on the person's background and then in the last ten minutes try to have them feel good enough to come back the next week. Because the person went through pain, suffering, and tears, they saw what we did as "real work".

However, after I understood the meaning of the healing is in the feeling, I reversed the process. Now when I have the person start with the inner feeling and then look at the loss, they see it differently. This not only heals the hurt, it cuts the time of treatment by more than half.

How do we deal with the difficulties of the loss of a loved one? My counseling experience has shown me that there are four basic feelings that must be dealt with, hurt, anger, guilt and depression.

DEALING WITH HURT

For dealing with their grief, I encourage people to set aside twenty to forty minutes each day. Some are morning, others night people, but it should be at a time when people are feeling their strongest.

Many people do not want to face this kind of grief and pain. The problem is that if they don't, it will just build up inside and burst forth at the most inappropriate times. Dealing with it on a daily basis is like facing the bull and grabbing its horns before it blindsides you.

Start by using your conscious faculties to get in touch with your inner peace. Become

conscious of things around you, sensing their presence. Next, focus on the peace that comes from within. Instead of trying to deal with your pain as a problem, see it as a sample or opportunity to practice staying in the peace. As you bring out letters or pictures and feel the grief, stay in the peace. You know it is possible to stay in the peace and still grieve. And this will be a healing time.

As you practice, gradually you will find you will need only three or four grieving days a week, then three or four days a month, then gradually your grief will begin to move towards gratitude.

When you grieve outside of the peace, it is like tearing out the stitches that have been placed to hold your life together.

As you approach significant dates such as birthdays or anniversaries, start celebrating them at least a month before. Do not wait for the final day. Christians might start playing Christmas carols in September so that they do not miss the celebration when it comes. It has been stated that the average person takes seven years to work through the death of a loved one. This is not necessarily bad news, and it can be good news.

The world is afraid of death and is generally impatient with people who are grieving because they are threatened by it. They might say "It's been five years, why are you still grieving?" Let me tell you, it's OK. There is nothing wrong with you. It is OK to still have grief even after many years.

DEALING WITH ANGER

Anger is another mark of the grieving process. People will get angry with others or even with the person who died, thinking, "Why did you do this?" or "Why don't you do that?" They may even be angry with God, thinking, "Why didn't You stop it? This was one of the good guys!" Most of the times the anger comes from the unanswered questions, such as, "Why did it have to happen this way?"

My suggestion is to write down all the questions and the anger. When you are through writing, put it away on a shelf. When you get up there you can ask the questions and will get all the answers you want. The point is we should not let our pain and anger stop us from living out the life our loved ones would want us to.

Once you have written it down do not rewrite what has already been written.

DEALING WITH GUILT

I have heard people say in all honesty after the loss of a loved one, "We have no regrets." That may be true, but generally there is always something we could have done for the person. It is a fact of life we can always do something more.

Feeling guilty can haunt people their whole life. My hint is whenever guilt comes on the scene, do something in gratitude for people that they would want done. Don't make it overwhelming, just keep it simple: send a letter, make a phone call, do "one" for them.

If the Notre Dame football team can "Win one for the Gipper," we can certainly "Do one for our loved one." "This one's on me."

DEALING WITH DEPRESSION

We need to know the mood we are in will make a difference when we are in grief. If we only grieve when we are in a low mood, we can become overwhelmed with a surge of differing feelings. By grieving on a daily basis we will begin to realize sometimes we feel more grief than at other times.

It's the perspective - not the event - that creates the feeling. If the event created the feeling we would have the same feeling every time, but we don't. We will gradually begin to realize we do not have to feel the hurt every time we think of what happened.

Grief is a difficult pain to overcome. Some people will carry the grief with them throughout their life because of the way they are thinking. They have become reactive to much of their life. Grief begins to take over. They cannot go places they want to go or celebrate events they used to celebrate. Their grief can make them do things they didn't want to do and not do things they always enjoyed doing.

If they were willing to reflect on the grief on a daily basis, they would begin to realize certain truths. Gradually there would be a realization it is possible to be at peace when they thought of their loss. Upon reaching this truth, they would begin the change from being reactive to events to becoming more proactive. Finally, their grief would begin to be turned into gratitude.

DEALING WITH THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE.

Mother, father, brother, sister, a close friend, a good person, finances, physical loss, a pet, leaving home, leaving a community.

When people grieve without a sense of peace it is like ripping the stitches out of past times of healing. It's the understanding of the possibility of grieving in the Peace that starts one on the road to experiencing the meaning of closure.

During your grief time, you should ponder these truths so that you can take them to heart and experience the truth of each statement:

When I think about my loss reaction...

I feel grief reflection

1. To regain control....

I feel more grief one time than another

2. To regain power...

The mood that I am in makes a difference.

3. To not be a victim...

I do not always have to feel grief.

4. To be proactive...

It would be possible to be at peace when I grieve.

Now check your answers and see if you have any change of heart.

RESPONSES TO SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE INVENTORY

1. Some people will always feel hurt because of a the loss of a loved one.

False. The perspective or thought creates the feeling not the event.

2. Some people will always have to feel hurt when they think of their loss.

False. Some people may feel hurt their whole but they do not have to feel hurt.

3. It is not good to feel angry over a tragic loss.

False. Anger is a common feeling.

4. People should not feel guilty over the loss of a loved one.

False. No one ever does enough for a loved one.

5. It is possible to grieve and still be at peace.

True. The key to healing is to grieve in the peace.

6. Being let down can make some people feel hurt.

False. People do not have to feel hurt every time they are let down. It all depends on how they are thinking.