



Grief and Loss

Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Covenant Circle Discussion Topic

Welcome and Chalice Lighting: Only people who are capable of loving strongly can also suffer great sorrow, but this same necessity of loving serves to counteract their grief and heals them. ~Leo Tolstoy

Personal Check-In: Briefly share something from your life since we last met and how you are feeling now.

Opening Words:

You will lose someone you can't live without, and your heart will be badly broken, and the bad news is that you never completely get over the loss of your beloved. But this is also the good news. They live forever in your broken heart that doesn't seal back up. And you come through. It's like having a broken leg that never heals perfectly—that still hurts when the weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the limp.

~Anne Lamott, American writer

Questions to Prompt and Guide Discussion:

1. How have you coped with a loss in your life? Who or what was helpful to you at those times?
2. What influence of a religious or spiritual perspective or community has helped you cope with or process your loss?
3. How have you supported another in a time of grief? What were you able to give, what did you receive?
4. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross said, "It is difficult to accept death in this society because it is unfamiliar. In spite of the fact that it happens all the time, we never see it." How is this true for you?

Sitting in Silence (Reflect on questions just posed as you prepare to hear the readings)

Readings – see below.

Sharing: This is a time to speak without interruption and for deep listening. Deep listening means no interrupting, no fixing, no saving, no advising, and no setting each other straight. Please share one or more responses to the session questions.

This is usually a good time to take a break.

Open Discussion: This is a time to respond to something another person said about the topic or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared their thoughts on this topic. Continue to practice Deep Listening.

Closing Reading:

What we have once enjoyed deeply we can never lose. All that we love deeply becomes a part of us.

~Helen Keller

Announcements/Plans

Personal Check Out: As we close this meeting, how are you feeling now?

Extinguish the Chalice

Readings:

There is something you must always remember. You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think. ~Winnie the Pooh

When your fear touches someone's pain, it becomes pity, when your love touches someone's pain, it becomes compassion. ~Stephen Levine, American poet, author and teacher.

Grief is not a disorder, a disease or a sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love. The only cure for grief is to grieve.

~Dr. Earl A. Grollman, Rabbi and author

If I can see pain in your eyes then share with me your tears. If I can see joy in your eyes then share with me your smile. ~Santosh Kalwar, Poet, Writer and Researcher.

A feeling of pleasure or solace can be so hard to find when you are in the depths of your grief. Sometimes it's the little things that help get you through the day. You may think your comforts sound ridiculous to others, but there is nothing ridiculous about finding one little thing to help you feel good in the midst of pain and sorrow!

~Elizabeth Berrien, *Creative Grieving: A Hip Chick's Path from Loss to Hope*

Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary. The people we trust with that important talk can help us know that we are not alone." ~Fred Rogers

The reality is that we don't forget, move on, and have closure, but rather we honor, we remember, and incorporate our deceased children and siblings into our lives in a new way. In fact, keeping memories of your loved one alive in your mind and heart is an important part of your healing journey.

~Harriet Schiff, author of *The Bereaved Parent*

We can endure much more than we think we can; all human experience testifies to that. All we need to do is learn not to be afraid of pain. Grit your teeth and let it hurt. Don't deny it, don't be overwhelmed by it. It will not last forever. One day, the pain will be gone and you will still be there.

~Harold Kushner, author of *When All You've Ever Wanted Isn't Enough*

No one ever told me that grief felt so much like fear.

~C.S. Lewis

The five stages – denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance – are a part of the framework that makes up our learning to live with the one we lost. They are tools to help us frame and identify what we may be feeling. But they are not stops on some linear timeline in grief.

~Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, 1926-2004, Swiss-American psychiatrist, a pioneer in near-death studies and the author of the groundbreaking book *On Death and Dying*.

One cannot get through life without pain...What we can do is choose how to use the pain life presents to us.

~Bernie S. Siegel

You can clutch the past so tightly to your chest that it leaves your arms too full to embrace the present.

~Jan Glidewell, Journalist, Humorist.