Growing up in my family, my grandma always made us all stop before the big Thanksgiving meal to go around the table and say something that we were thankful for. When I was young, I remember always thinking that it had to be some big, important thing that I was thankful for. I’d worry as it got closer to my turn that whatever I picked would be too small or insignificant.

As I got older, however, I started to realize that it wasn’t just the big things that deserved recognition. It wasn’t the big things that always needed to be focused on. Sometimes it was a whole lot of little things that meant the most to me. The little reminders of people I cared about that were in my life, or had passed through it, meant just as much to me.

This month Pat is going to talk about little reminders that help a father to remember his daughter, and how embracing these reminders can help us to grieve in a positive and healthy way. John is going to discuss finding a way to be thankful for a life that has been completed, and God’s perspective on the death of his beloved creations. Hopefully these articles will help you to look for things in your life to be thankful for too.

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**Olive**

**by Pat Schwiebert, R.N.**

A father in our infant loss support group spoke of his baby’s name and how glad he was that they had named her Olive. It was a name that was connected with the past in their family, but it became more than that for him in his grief journey. He found great pleasure in being reminded of his daughter as he cooked with olive oil, or saw a bowl of olives on the Thanksgiving table, or ordered olives on his pizza. Seeing the Olive Garden restaurant sign as he drove past it every day on the way to work caused him to smile. He wondered if an olive tree would grow in this climate.

Often, in deep grief we tend to protect ourselves from reminders of the pain and suffering we
bear, as though we could pretend that it is not there. But we cannot. The pain lies within us waiting for the opportunity to be exposed to the light, waiting to be noticed and acknowledged by us at least, if not others.

Instead of pushing away thoughts about his daughter because remembering was too hard to bear, this father took her in to himself and delighted in her being all around him. Some of us take years to get this wise. We do the “ain’t it awful” dance instead of seeing that it’s all good, even the hard stuff. We look at what we have lost rather than what we have received.

I looked around my house and realized that I have reminders everywhere of those I have lost to death. I have a crystal bowl that belonged to my mother. I use it often, not just on special occasions. I have beautiful pottery that my dear friend Jo made and a chair that belonged to Midge. A glass box in my bathroom came from Jay’s relics. To other people who see them, they’re just a pretty bowl, a nice piece of pottery, an interesting box and a comfortable chair.

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Death-from God’s Perspective

by Rev. John T. Schwiebert, ThM

“Precious in the sight of GOD is the death of his saints.”
--Psalm 116:15

Somewhere in the midst of that deep pain we feel when a loved one dies, perhaps someday after we have begun to get used to the harsh
reality of our loss, we may want to remember and repeat the above words from the book of Psalms. For even after the writer tells about his great personal suffering (“the snares of death encompassed me” and “I suffered distress and anguish” and “I am greatly afflicted”) he is able to see death from God’s perspective and thus to say, “Precious in the sight of GOD is the death of his saints.”

But how can anyone speak of the death of anyone as “precious”? And how could I possibly think of the death of my spouse, or my child, or my best friend, as something anyone could treasure?

I can only answer out of my own experience: I have found it possible to appreciate the death of a person I care about because I have learned to think of her/his death like the punctuation mark that completes a sentence. Although I may have wished that the loved one could remain with me longer, I nevertheless find joy in the fact that her/his life has come to completion and I can see and appreciate it now as a finished creation. Read More...

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Books That Make Thoughtful Gifts

When a friend or family member is grieving, it can be hard to pick out a fitting gift to let them know that they are in your thoughts. One of these books that might be your answer.

**Tear Soup, A Recipe For Healing After Loss** - Beautiful, full-color illustrations and a thoughtfully written story make this gift book fitting for those of all ages. The “tips” section at the back of the book is rich with wisdom and concrete recommendations. Better than a casserole! Shop Here...

**Heart Works, A Father’s Grief** - This powerful coffee-table book is filled with pictures taken by the author as he travels through the grief of his daughter’s death. He pairs his own photographs with meditations on grief-related words, sharing with us an intimate view of his grief journey. Shop Here...

**If I could be sick for you for Just One Day** - A heartwarming story about the desire to give the gift we cannot give--to take away pain and illness from those we love. This precious story is a gift book that the recipient will never forget. Full-color, water illustrations used throughout. Shop Here...
Quote of the Month

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.  

_John F Kennedy_

Mission Statement

MISSION: The Grief Watch mission is to offer spiritual, emotional and other support to persons who are grieving and the professional caregivers who assist them. Grief Watch is a non-profit 501(C)3 organization. For more information about us please visit our [info page](mailto:info@griefwatch.com).