Reflections on Grief

The one year anniversary of the death of Pat’s mother has us in a reflective mood. A feeling often shared among those who are approaching anniversaries. Some anniversaries bring good memories, marriage and birthdays being the first that come to my mind. Some anniversaries bring up sadness, or fear, or longing, for the way things were on or before the date that is looming in our minds. We stop at those year markers, those dates that are forever stuck in our minds, and reflect on how we felt on that date the year before, ten years before, twenty years before...

In Pat’s article, she will share with us her reflections on how she felt on the recent anniversary of her mother’s death, and what she has learned about her relationship with her mother over the past year. John will share his reflections on how to face death with the strength of maintaining hope. We hope that these articles will share a message on how to reflect on anniversary dates, even the hard ones, in a positive and healthy way.

When the Walls Come Down

by Pat Schwiebert, R.N.

My mother has been dead one year. I’ve been waiting for the anniversary day to come wondering how I would feel. That day, Wednesday, August 28, 2013 is seared into my heart. I can remember the tears and the laughter, the sounds and the smells, and the hilarious sidebars that only my mother could have conjured up so I wouldn’t forget this day.

I’ve had anniversary reactions before. Twenty seven years ago when our house was totaled by fire, we thought our son might have perished, only to find out two hours later that he was not in the house when the fire broke out. One year later, I experienced a strong anniversary reaction as I relived those feelings. I remember feeling heat when I touched the walls
of our newly restored house that first anniversary, and when I was returning home from a run at
daybreak I was sure I saw fire coming from the roof but it turned out it was just a street lamp that
had not yet gone out.

Twelve months after my sister died, I remembered the date, but didn’t feel overly emotional. But
the anniversary of my mom’s death was different. From the time I awoke I could feel tears close
to the surface.  Read More…

Featured Books

Heart Works - Heart Works is a beautiful, full-color coffee-table book filled with pictures and writings of the author as he travels through the grief of his daughter’s death. This book was his therapy. He pairs his own photographs with meditations on grief-related words, taking time to explore his journey. Through his experiences, we learn what grief really is.  Shop Here...

Awakening from Grief - Weaves together personal awakening with those of others the author has counseled to create a deeply felt and beautifully expressed primer on dealing with grief. Offers a unique opportunity to develop deeper and fuller life experiences, to embrace pain in order to open the heart to joy. Written for those who have experienced any kind of loss—death, divorce, or disappointment—this book offers reasonable, reassuring thinking on dealing with the death of loved ones, finding the inner gifts that promote healing, and much more.  Shop Here...

Daily Prayers in Times of Grief - As fixed-hour prayer gains in popularity among Christians of all persuasions, it is only natural that they should want to adapt this ancient practice to particular life circumstances. Drawing on her own experience of losing her young husband to cancer, Lisa B. Hamilton accommodates the practice of fixed-hour prayer for those who mourn.  Shop Here…
Grieving, With or Without Hope

by Rev. John T. Schwiebert, ThM

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

--1 Thessalonians 4:13

This past month I have had two occasions to reflect upon these words of the Apostle Paul, which are a part of his first New Testament letter to the church of the Thessalonians.

The first occasion was the death of my youngest sister Nancy who died at the age of 67, several months ago she was discovered to have inoperable cancer throughout her body. Though her death was anticipated, it came suddenly and with little warning while her other brother and I, and our spouses, plus other family members were vacationing together at a mountain lake in our native state of Idaho.

There is no question in my mind that my grief over her loss these past several weeks is tempered by my confidence that her life continues, but in some different way beyond the limits of my comprehension. I cannot explain why I know this to be true except to say that something or someone that I identify as God has revealed this to me and to Nancy and to others in our respective faith communities. Indeed we talked about this together before she died. Like me, Nancy did not have a clear picture, as some persons seem to have, about what her life beyond death would look like. Read More…

Life After Death

The Secret of the Dragonfly - a grandmother finds a beautifully simple way to explain what will happen when she dies to her worried grandchild. By following the journey of a water bug as it fulfills it’s calling to become a dragonfly, the grandmother creates an enduring memory that the grandchild, along with all who read this book, will carry with them throughout their life. Shop Here…
Quote of the Month

Sometimes our walls exist just to see who has the strength to knock them down.

*Darnell Lamont Walker*

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.