

Support with grief

By Nancy Everson

Published on the Life Directory 16th February, 2022

As a coach supporting people experiencing grief, I provide a safe space for people to be with their grief, to be with their feelings and to support them in adapting to their changed life. Just as no two people are the same, no two experiences of grief are the same.



There is a quote by Jamie Anderson which I feel describes grief so beautifully:

“Grief, I’ve learned, is really just love. It’s all the love you want to give, but cannot. All that unspent love gathers up in the corners of your eyes, the lump in your throat, and in that hollow part of your chest. Grief is just love with no place to go”.

My first real experience of grief was when I was 11 years old. Both my dad, who had leukaemia, and my grandad, died in the Easter holidays. The word ‘lost’ is the word that resonates with me most with my own grief, and this feeling, along with so many others, stayed with me for a long time. At times it felt like my heart was held together by paperclips and bits of string; fragile and insufficient, but it was all I had at the time.

It has been more than 30 years since my dad died and there still isn’t a week that goes by when I don’t think of him, or I hear my mum talk about dad, or I look at my own 13-year-old and 12-year-old children and reflect on that time in my own childhood. There will always be a hole in my heart for dad, as there is for all the people in my life who have died. Grief left deep scars, which are still tender at times. I have however found peace and I have gained strength and purpose from these experiences and, for that, I am ever grateful.

I was fortunate to have a family who supported each other in a gentle and loving way and together as a family we navigated our way through our grief, each in our own way. In a society that struggles with death, struggles with supporting people around grief, I want to be there to support others with their own experience of grief.

In my role as a coach and in my role as an in-memory fundraiser for a health charity, I speak to people experiencing grief regularly. What I have learnt from others and my own grief is that, while people might experience similar feelings and face similar challenges, we can never really know what someone else is going through. But that doesn’t mean that we can’t support them, we can appreciate the enormity of someone’s loss,

we can listen and give people the time they need, and we can acknowledge and validate how someone feels.

Learning to live with grief

If you or someone you know is experiencing grief it might be helpful to know: We learn to live with grief.

People don't 'get over' or 'get better' from grief, it isn't something you can fix. Our lives can grow around our grief, at times grief might feel manageable and other times it might feel all-consuming. Over time we learn to live with the grief of a loved one who has died.

Whatever you or others are feeling is OK

Some people might tell you you'll feel a different way soon, or you might read about the stages of grief or how others felt. Some of this might feel relevant to you and some might not. Whatever you are feeling is OK. Whatever someone else is feeling is OK. Acknowledge how you or others are feeling and allow them to be where they need emotionally to be at that time.

You live by your own clock

People might expect you to be 'back to your old self' after a few weeks. You might read about the average time it takes a person to move through the stages of grief and feel like you or others should be in a different place. But we all live by our own clock, we are all different. Take the time you need, and let others take the time they need, to manage grief in their own way.

The person who died will never be replaced

Just as the love for one child does not limit the love for another, the people we love who have died will not be replaced. We might feel emotions such as guilt when finding a new partner, or as we move forward in life, and that is OK to feel that way. But remember each human is unique and special and will live on through us.

People live in on our memories

Creating touchpoints to remember the people in our lives can be a meaningful way to keep their memories alive. This could be by sharing memories with friends and family, creating a memory box, fundraising in their memory, or keeping their favourite routines or possessions in your life. Whatever works for you. Don't be afraid to speak their name, to talk about them and keep them in your heart, and in your life – they will live on in you and in others, and there can be comfort in that.

If you would like to find out more about grief coaching, please get in touch, it would be lovely to hear from you.

Originally published on **The Life Coach Directory**, February 2022

www.lifecoach-directory.org.uk

<https://www.lifecoach-directory.org.uk/memberarticles/support-with-grief>