

Grief & Loss Can Impact Health

The Taos News has committed to implement a bi-weekly column to help educate our community about emotional healing through grief. You may write questions to Golden Willow Retreat and they will be answered privately to you and possibly as a future article for others. Please list a first name that grants permission for printing.

Dear Ted,

I lost my husband three years ago. It's been extremely hard for me to adjust. We were married 55 years. Sometimes I even feel as though I'm losing my mind. I hurt all over and I was wondering if this might really be a physical illness. I have many physical pains. I used to love wearing pretty clothes and looking nice. Now that doesn't matter anymore. I am beginning to consider that my kids think that I am pretending so that I can get attention. This isn't so. I'd love to be back to a normal lifestyle, like going to lunch and to the movies with my lady friends. What's wrong with me? Sometimes I think I'm worse now than last year. Thanks, Aching

Dear Aching,

I hear understand your feelings of loss and the pain after the death of a partner. Having been married for 55 years, you have experienced much of that time with your partner in ways that were normalized, now without your partner, you are forced to discover yourself within the grief process and this can lead to "complicated grief" that takes time to heal to allow a new life to seep in. I'm sorry to say that the new "normal" is often not the old way. Joys and experiences are different and redefining yourself into the present is a large part of the grief process in redefining you as well as your interactions with those around you. A lot of people will not understand just how difficult this process is and will wonder if you're "faking" or "trying too hard". I believe you when you say you're not and just want it to be different. Writing this question is a good sign that you are taking action to be more in the present while aware of your grief and loss.

As for your medical issues, it is common that after a loss the body may have medical issues, not only your emotional world, but your entire system is shaken to its core,. Systems within your body may respond slowly, hormones and adrenals can be out of balance as your system tries to reset itself. Whenever you have concerns about a medical issue, it is worthwhile to consult with your doctor to be safe and see how he or she can be of support for any medical issues that may be from your grief process or due to something new that may be going on with your physical health.

There is no need to be embarrassed or worried of what someone may think when it comes to making sure you are safe and healthy. With your doctor, you can also discuss issues that may be related to your loss such as depression, sleep issues, muscle fatigue, exhaustion or another physical ailments that may be bothering you. Grief and loss impacts physical health, so finding a balance to heal with proper supports is the key to wellness, mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. I wish you well as you allow new seeds to sprout into your world allowing you to enjoy your life with friends and family. Until next time, take care.

Golden Willow Retreat is a nonprofit organization focused on emotional healing and recovery from any type of loss. Direct any questions to Ted Wiard, LPCC, CGC and Founder of Golden Willow Retreat at (575) 776-2024 or GWR@newmex.com.