

Makenzie Marwitz

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Professor Taylor-Brickey

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Grief is a process that individuals undergo that follows a personal loss, whether it is due to death, loss of a job, or the end of a friendship. Reflecting on my life's timeline, I have encountered various losses that occurred throughout middle school, high school, college, and the initial stages of adulthood. Recalling these events has been a challenging task. Constructing my timeline has enabled me to assess the impact on both individuals and aspects of my life. For instance, the passing of my grandmother in October 2022 resulted in the loss of various traditions, events, and connections with family members. It was interesting to recognize the repercussions of death. Despite facing numerous symbolic and ambiguous losses, each one has served as a reminder of the progress I have made navigating through my grief.

While creating my timeline, I was faced with underlying emotions that have been suppressed since these losses have affected my life. There were a few events that I could not recall that involved distant relatives who died when I was in middle school. During this period of loss, I was dealing with family separation due to my parents' divorce. Since then, there were several incidents that I have experienced in college that were difficult to accept. Some might argue that the passing of my first cat is not a significant loss to include in the timeline, but it was one of the most challenging experiences for me. I was by myself in college when she was passing away, and I had never had to euthanize an animal on my own before. It was a traumatic moment for me as I had to make quick decisions impulsively, it felt like I lost consciousness and then regained it afterward.

Throughout the grieving process, I encountered unexpected concerns that I had not previously acknowledged. Specifically, I struggled with the impact of my parents' divorce, an event that occurred many years ago but continues to subconsciously affect me. Reuniting during my college years brought a sense of normalcy back into my life. The death of my grandmother

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evoked intense emotions as I reflected on her death while creating my timeline. It was difficult to journal the steps of my grandmother's death and relive it. Everything happened so fast, and I was not prepared. Recalling her words before being admitted into hospice care, and expressing her fear of dying, was particularly challenging. She said, "I don't want to go here, this is where people go to die...I don't want to die." This was difficult for me to hear as a granddaughter who doesn't want her to go through these tragic emotions. It was the beginning of the last month before she died when she said this. The last time I saw her she was minimally responsive, I was not expecting a reply back after saying, "Bye Nana I love you!" She has not been responding to any of my family members all day, and she pops her head up to say "Bye boo, I love you" with her last few breaths. Witnessing her final moments, where she mustered the strength to bid me farewell, left a lasting impact. This experience motivated me to delve deeper into the study of grief and inspired me to pursue a career in hospice care as a child life specialist. Reflecting on the legacy-making activities my family unknowingly engaged in during her time in hospice, we would often do crafts next to her while she was asleep. Her favorite items were gnomes, so I painted them and put them on her nightstand. This highlighted the importance of providing comfort and support to individuals in their final stages.

Given that there is a theory suggesting that children adopt their parent's styles of coping with loss based on their upbringing, culture, and religion, it is evident that each family handles loss in their own unique way. Although my family is not religious, we do incorporate Christian funeral traditions into our grieving process, such as including bible verses and holding the service in a church. Drawing from my parents' approaches to dealing with grief, we each have our distinct methods of coping. My father tends to deny the existence of grief, often resorting to dark humor or displaying no emotion at all. On the other hand, my mom finds peace in staying

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busy and upholding traditions that were once carried out by the dead family member. For instance, after my nana died, we continued the annual tradition of baking cookies, displaying gnomes, and cherishing cardinals as a way to honor her memory. With my parents embodying contrasting coping styles, I would describe my approach as a combination of dark humor and staying occupied. While this may not be the most effective coping mechanism, I sometimes find myself pretending that the loss is not real. However, I acknowledge that this coping style may lead to emotional outbursts when reflecting on the deaths of loved ones. As I mentioned earlier, I hold onto the belief that my grandmother is always present in my life, symbolized by the presence of cardinals. It is important to note that my coping strategies for dealing with death differ from those I employ when facing non-death loss. In instances of non-death losses, I tended to search for underlying reasons behind the occurrence. Most of the time, I maintain an optimistic outlook, believing that there is an alternate path I am meant to follow. The affirmation that I frequently repeat to myself is that “everything is always working out for me.”

Based on the scenarios and videos given in this class, I would note that I lack extensive experience in dealing with grief situations. I have faced the loss of four significant individuals and animals who held importance in my life. My comfort levels vary depending on the circumstances surrounding death. To be candid, I am not the most comfortable with the topic of grief. Currently, I am enrolled in a course focused on grief and bereavement, yet I have not encountered a situation where either my grief or that of others has been presented to me. The first instance where I consoled a friend due to a family member's death was when her father tragically fell while putting up Christmas lights after Thanksgiving. He was left brain-dead and passed away at a nearby hospital. I recall feeling uneasy during this time, as I was concerned about being too intrusive while also wanting to comfort my friend during this tragic accident.

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Eventually, I mustered the courage to ask my friend how I could best support her at that moment. She expressed the need for silence but desired the presence of a friend. This experience with my friend has inspired me to assist those navigating grief and to be a dependable source of support during challenging times.

Considering my personal values and ethical dilemmas, there are certain situations in healthcare where I anticipate that my ethics and values may be tested. One scenario could involve parents withholding necessary medical care from their children based solely on religious beliefs. While the child may be requesting treatment that could save their life, the parents may refuse due to religious convictions. This raises the ethical question of whether minors should have a say in their healthcare decisions.

In conclusion, grief and bereavement are universally shared experiences that impact individuals and contribute to their personal growth. The losses, whether ambiguous or symbolic, can vary from the end of a friendship to the death of a family member. While reflecting on my timeline, I considered the losses I encountered throughout middle school, high school, and the recent college years that shaped me into who I am today. While this reflective process paper brought suppressed emotions to the surface, it also highlighted the importance of acknowledging and processing these feelings. Being present during someone's final moments can leave a profound impact on their loved ones. This realization has motivated me to explore legacy-building strategies and pursue a career in a hospice care setting, particularly with children facing limited time. This reflection paper has brought me a range of emotions, including tears and joy, allowing me to mourn unexpected stories and ultimately find healing.