

Theme: How to Recover from Sudden and Tragic Loss

Sub Topic: I Was Robbed from Saying Good-bye

**Reference: *Grief, Dying, and Death: Clinical Interventions for Caregivers*
Author: *Therese A. Rando***

A. Theological Inner Struggles

- I thought God was going to heal my Pastor/ Mother/ Father/ Family Member. What kind of God would let something like this happen?
- My faith was dismantled

B. The Grief, The Process. Now What Do I Do?

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross -Author

Identifies 5 stages of grief that most people deal with

1. **Denial** - Shock, Avoidance, Confusion, The Sudden and Unexpected Loss
Denial is the stage that can initially help you survive the loss. You might think life makes no sense, has no meaning and is too overwhelming. You are in shock because life as you once knew it has changed in an instant.
2. **Anger**- Frustration, Irritation, Anxiety
3. **Bargaining**- Struggling to find meaning, Reaching out to others, Telling one's Stories, If I prayed more it would not have happened
4. **Depression**- Overwhelmed, Helplessness, Hostility, Flight
5. **Acceptance** - Exploring options, New plans in place, Moving on

This unanticipated sudden grief renders the family

- Feelings of bewilderment
- Confusion, anxiety, depression
- Try to make sense of their loss
- Family roles have changed
- Family rituals have changed
- Family cohesiveness is gone

Adopt a new sense of identity for yourself

1. Establish a specific tradition for the first or second year of holidays or events
2. Create a tradition that will symbolize your growth from your Pastor's teachings or from your family's traditions
3. Whatever his favorite food was- when going out to dinner, order a steak, if that was his favorite.

Checklist

1. Write a checklist of all the treasures that your leader or family invested into your life. How did it help you?
2. Purchase a pretty journal book that reminds you of your loved one.
3. Try to remember every encouraging word and lessons you learned.
4. What were their 3 greatest reflections that you will never forget? (life changing)
5. What were their greatest quotes and what they meant to you? (use journal)
6. If you had 5 minutes with your loved one now, what would you say? (every 6 months)
7. Develop a strong support system that will contribute to alleviating some of the most challenging aspects of grief

Coming to Terms

- How could this have happened?
- What could I have done to prevent this?
- What can I do to make this pain go away?

- What kind of world is this where something like this can happen?
- What kind of God would let something like this happen?

Help the griever identify and resolve secondary losses and unfinished business.

Help the griever to identify current and potential secondary losses (physical & symbolic) resulting from the death.

Help the griever to identify any unfinished business with the deceased and look for appropriate ways to facilitate closure.

Pastors / Leaders

1. Develop a grief church committee that will meet with the family up to a year or two years
2. Have a professional come to your church to teach grief counseling skills to individuals who feel inclined to minister in that area of grief counseling
3. Networking and collaboration with mental health agencies for referral situations and to know how to get help for your congregation and other agencies that are available for free of charge counseling

Available books by Dr. Phyllis Carter

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As I was completing my dissertation, my research project was limited to the culture and ethnic group as a means of identifying, statistically and demographically, one group as opposed to including several culture groups. Therefore, this book is not limited to just clergy wives. It is for all women.

The Silent Sufferers \$15(\$2 S&H)

Dr. Carter offers her own pain and exposes her own wounds as she reveals how the minister's wife can become a co-conspirator in the violation of the sacred life of children born to leaders of the church.

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