



WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Healing After Loss



Letter from Bereavement Coordinator

Dear Readers,

The month of June is the month we official think “it’s summer!” That means time for going to the beach, traveling, and getting together with friends and family that we may have put off in the winter months. However, for those who are dealing with a recent loss, the “joy” of summer may feel a bit different this time. While some of you may look forward to the activities that come with summertime, others may feel a bit overwhelmed with the social expectations these longer days and warmer months may put on us. This can create increased anxiety, anger, and sadness. It is so important to listen to your body...what is it telling you today? Is that outdoor family barbeque something you feel you want to do today, or is your body telling you that today it may just be too much, and for today we focus on ourselves and our own self-care? Only you have that answer, and it is okay, whatever that answer may be. The same goes for how we celebrate our Father’s Day. For some, having celebratory moments may be exactly what the doctor ordered, but for others, the day does not bring the feelings of celebration and joy.

In this issue, we will talk about Father’s Day, both from the perspective of celebration and remembrance, and the perspective of how to deal with this day if it is challenging for you. However you choose to spend time this month, or this Father’s Day, we continue to wish you moments of peace and healing.

Sincerely,
Lisa Gardner, Bereavement and Volunteer Coordinator

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How Can We Honor Dad This Father's Day?

by Rebecca Fleckenstein, Volunteer Content Writer



Honoring our father's memory on Father's Day, or any day, can bring comfort and keep their legacy alive. No matter what your relationship was like, you might also honor a father figure or someone who made a positive impact on your life. By making use of ritual, and finding ways to connect with your dad, or dad-like figure, this allows us to experience a deep connection with our loved one's memory, and keeps that energy and power alive, and the imprint they left behind.

Here are a few heartfelt ways to remember and celebrate dad:

- Keep an item that belonged to them and repurpose it for yourself or loved ones. For example, make a pillow or quilt out of their favorite shirt.
- Do random acts of kindness in their name.
- Volunteer to support a cause that your dad was passionate about.
- Share stories with family and friends to keep their memory alive.
- Allow yourself to feel the emotions as they come on this day, whatever they may be. It's okay to feel a mix of joy and sadness as you remember your dad.
- Dedicate a day each year as a "service day" to do the things your father did, like yard work or cooking a meal that took all day to cook.
- Visit a place you both enjoyed. You can either share this with someone else, or go alone.
- Reflect on the types of adventures your father enjoyed and create a family 'awesome goals to achieve' list.
- Watch one of their favorite movies, shows, or eat one of their favorite meals.

It's also okay if all you do on this day is breathe, and take care of yourself. There is no right/ wrong when it comes to how we spend this commemorative day. Listen to what your body is telling you, and go from there. However you choose to honor your dad, or spend your day, remember that your love and memories will always keep his spirit alive.



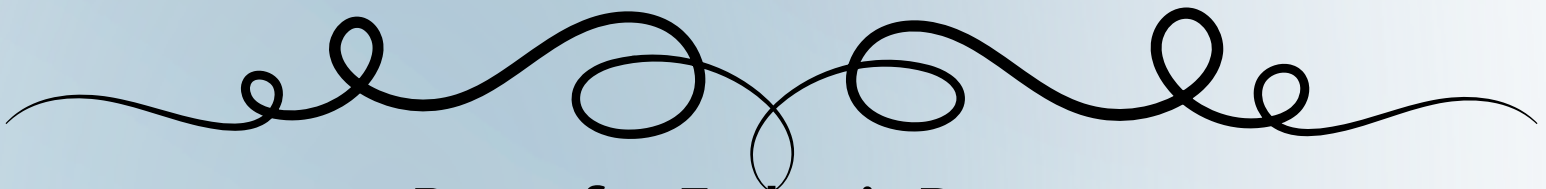
Navigating Father's Day (cont.);
What If Your Relationship was Complicated?
by Rebecca Fleckenstein, Volunteer Content Writer

Father's Day can bring up complicated emotions for those grieving the loss of a father with whom they shared a strained relationship with. Unlike traditional narratives of celebration and fond remembrance, people in this situation may feel a mix of sadness, anger, guilt, or relief, all of which are valid responses.

It's important to acknowledge these complex feelings rather than suppress them. Give yourself permission to feel these emotions and express whatever arises. Just because your relationship with your father was difficult doesn't mean your grief isn't valid. Activities such as journaling, engaging in mindfulness, or talking with a trusted friend or therapist can help you process these emotions.

Social pressures to "celebrate" Father's Day can amplify feelings of loneliness or discomfort. It's okay to mourn the relationship you wished you had, and healing might mean setting boundaries with others, or skipping expected rituals. You get to decide how you want to celebrate Father's Day according to your needs.

For those struggling this Father's Day, remember self-compassion is key. Whether through reflection, reaching out for support, or crafting new traditions, coping begins with honoring your unique experience.



Poem for Father's Day

HE IS GONE

YOU CAN SHED TEARS THAT HE IS GONE,
OR YOU CAN SMILE BECAUSE HE HAS LIVED,
YOU CAN CLOSE YOUR EYES AND PRAY THAT HE WILL COME
BACK,

OR YOU CAN OPEN YOUR EYES AND SEE ALL THAT HE HAS
LEFT.

YOUR HEART CAN BE EMPTY BECAUSE YOU CAN'T SEE HIM.
OR YOU CAN BE FULL OF THE LOVE THAT YOU SHARED.
YOU CAN TURN YOUR BACK ON TOMORROW AND LIVE
YESTERDAY,

OR YOU CAN BE HAPPY FOR TOMORROW BECAUSE OF
YESTERDAY.

YOU CAN REMEMBER HIM AND ONLY THAT HE IS GONE
OR YOU CAN CHERISH HIS MEMORY AND LET IT LIVE ON,
YOU CAN CRY AND CLOSE YOUR MIND BE EMPTY AND TURN
YOUR BACK,

OR YOU CAN DO WHAT HE WOULD WANT: SMILE, OPEN YOUR
EYES,

LOVE AND GO ON. -DAVID HARKINS



Managing our Spiritual Well-Being

Written by Lisa Gardner, Bereavement and Volunteer Coordinator

What do we mean when we talk about spirituality? Is spirituality the same as religion? These are common questions, and sometimes, it's difficult to fully put into words how we define spirituality. According to Mental Health America, spirituality is defined as connecting to whatever you consider meaningful and holy, and that brings you a connection with something bigger than ourselves. Spirituality provides a sense of purpose and meaning to our lives, helps us to identify and follow a moral compass, and impacts how we view the world as a whole. How one connects to their spiritual being is individualized, much like how experience grief.

Many individuals do find their spiritual connection within a religious affiliation. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, religion is defined as "an organized system of attitudes, beliefs, and practices." A Director of Pastoral Care from the Miami Cancer Institute once described this as spirituality being an internal force, and religion being an external force. One can practice spirituality in their daily lives and not be part of a religious group, or these two can co-exist and impact one another.

According to VeryWell Mind, research has shown many benefits to practicing this self-care dimension, including increased activity in the "feel good part of the brain," quicker healing results, and increased life-expectancy to name a few.



How can we practice this self-care dimension in our daily lives? How do we find that sense of purpose, value and connection? Here are just a few tips to get us started:

- Finding a meditation practice that works for you. There are many different types. This is anything that calms our body, and grounds us in the present, to allow us to fully connect with our bodies.
- Expose yourself to new experiences, as this will allow one to have increased connections to others.
- Identify good qualities in ourselves and others.
- Keep a gratitude journal.
- Volunteer to support your local community.



SELF-REFLECTION



WHAT IS A LEGACY THAT YOUR FATHER, OR
FATHER-LIKE FIGURE IN YOUR LIFE, LEFT
BEHIND FOR YOU?

WHAT IS ONE ACTIVITY YOU WILL CHOOSE TO
DO FOR YOUR OWN SELF-CARE THIS MONTH?

References

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