

LET'S TALK ABOUT ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

Sonja Smith Funeral Group



ANTICIPATORY GRIEF...



That feeling of dread that hovers over you

when you know it's coming,

and while it hasn't yet... it's everywhere and you feel it,

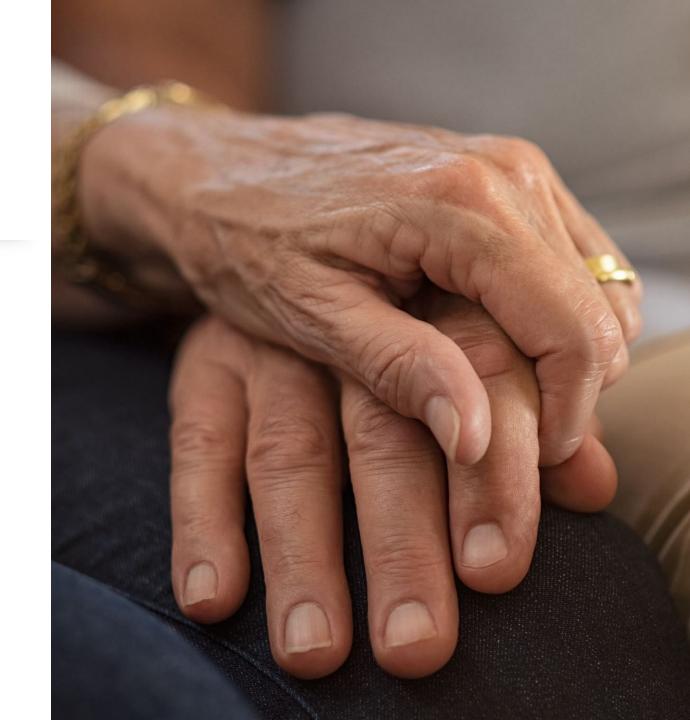
and you know it's on it's way.



Anticipatory Grief

is the experience of grieving for what has not yet happened.

It is grief for what we know is coming (and wish we could avoid).



THE ANTICIPATION OF LOSING A LOVED IS ACCOMPANIED BY LOSS AND GRIEF LONG BEFORE THE LOVED ONE DIES. IT'S A PAINFUL PART OF THE JOURNEY AND ONE THAT NEEDS TO BE VALIDATED AND ACKNOWLEDGED.

ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

Pre-loss grief or pre-death grief

Grief may come before death does

It is a state of deep, painful sorrow



 Anticipatory grief does not mean that you will grieve any less

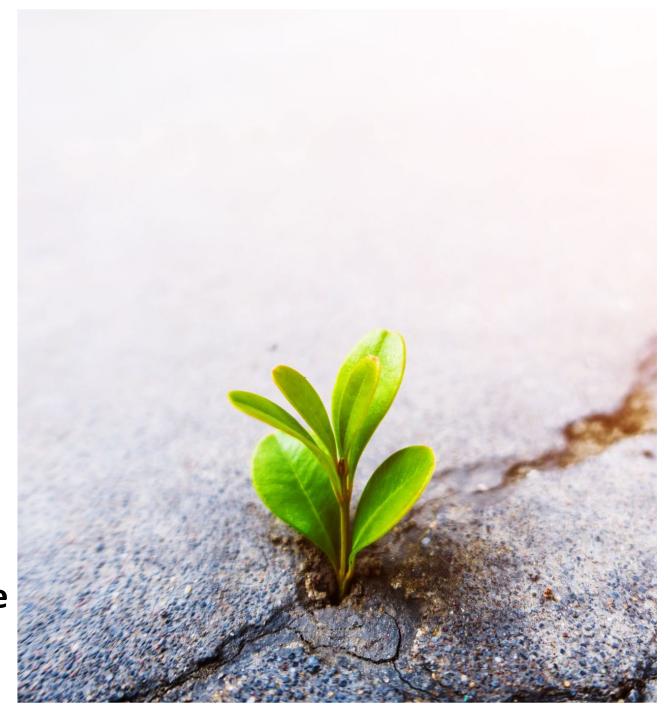
 You just process elements of the loss more slowly and over time

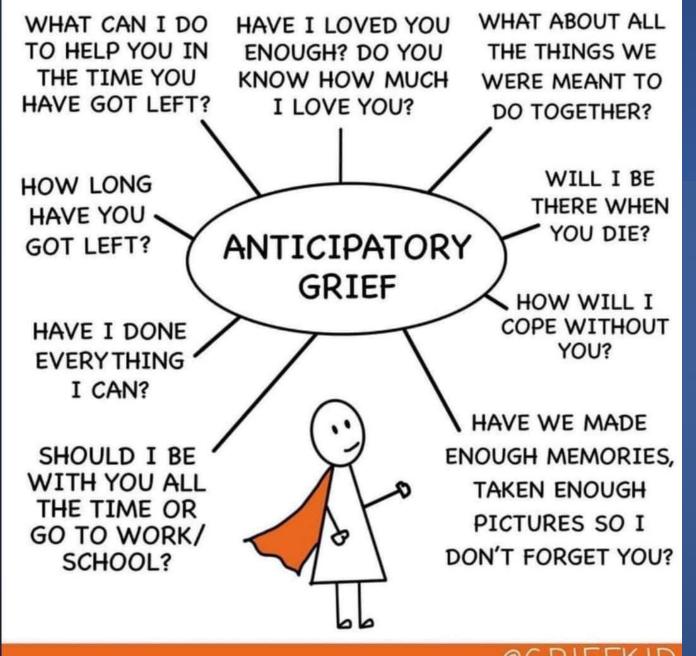
What does this grief feel like?

It feels like an "in-between place".

This middle grief can feel lonely and isolating.

During this stage, find a safe place in your heart to hold space for both hope and reality.





@GRIEFKID

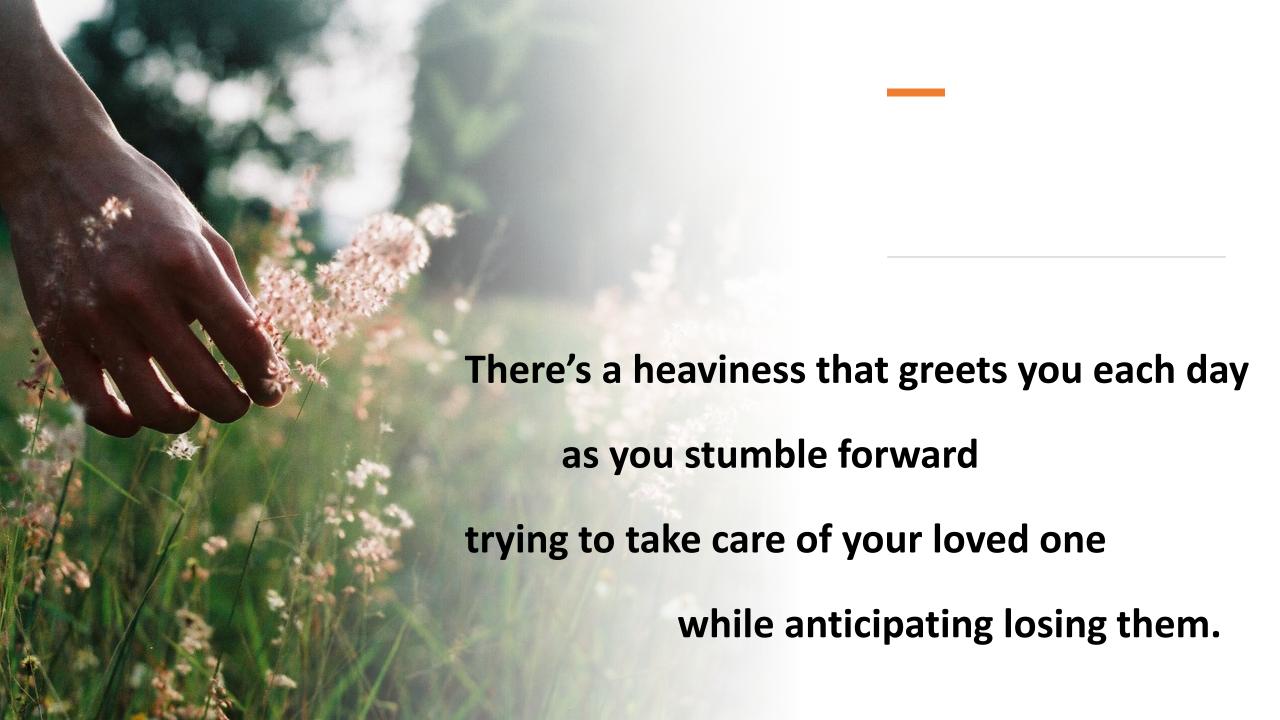
Grief can start as soon as you become aware of an illness, devastating injury or terminal diagnosis.





The weight of grief and anticipating the loss

can feel heavier for those who are in caretaking roles.





GRIEF



- Unpredictable
- Uniquely individual psychological experience
- No set amount of time
- No normal pattern that can be expected or predicted
- The price we pay for love

What are we grieving?

- Grieving the loss of a future with your loved one
- Shared dreams that will never come true
- Loss of security





One of the hardest things you will ever have to do is to grieve the loss of a person who is still alive.

Jeannette Walls



ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

Hardest part of caregiving

Watching your loved one slip away step by step

Knowing you can't stop the decline and grieving the loss before they die

Common among caregivers and family members of people suffering from:

- Alzheimer's disease
- Cancer
- Other terminal illnesses





- Depression
- Anxiety, Fear
- Anger, Irritability
- Forgetfulness
- Hyper-alertness
- Exhaustion
- Decision making
- Intense pre-occupation

- Frustration
- Problems concentrating
- Loneliness, isolation
- Mood swings, tearfulness
- Loss of sense of self
- Appetite changes
- Insomnia
- Physical aches and pains

It's normal to feel relief when the suffering comes to an end but feelings of relief can lead to confusion and guilt.

Relief does not minimize the intense feelings of loss and grief after a loved one dies.

CONFRONTING GUILT: THE UNINVITED GUEST



You want your loved one to be free of pain, even if it means dying

OR

You want a loved one to stay, even if it means suffering.



It is natural then when their suffering ends to experience a sense of relief — both for them and for yourself.

This doesn't mean you loved them any less, nor does it make you a bad person.

It makes you human.

ALL OF THESE SYMPTOMS ARE NORMAL

IT'S ALSO PERFECTLY NORMAL NOT TO HAVE ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

REHEARSAL OF DEATH

Visualising what it will be like without your loved one

OR

If you are dying, you may be imagining how your loved ones will carry on without you.



STAGES OF ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

FREUD:

ELISABETH KÜBLER-ROSS

GRIEF AS AN EXPERIENCE

- actively worked on
- creating an emotional separation
- Grief work is a process to undertake in order to fill the void and move on

STAGES OF GRIEF THEORY

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

The stages of grief theory are now widely understood to be an inaccurate and oversimplified depiction of grief.

It turns out that
there is a tremendous amount of variation
in the ways and amounts of time
that people grieve.

BENEFITS OF ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

- It may help you find closure
- Settle differences
- Prepare yourself for the pain of letting go





Strategies for coping with anticipatory grief

- Know that anticipatory grief is natural
- Allow yourself to feel what you feel and know that it's part of being human
- Do what you can to prepare
- End-of-life wishes
- My Life File, legal & financial matters
- Educate yourself about the person's illness, what to expect, prognosis
- Focus on the here and now



Strategies for coping with anticipatory grief

- Ask for help with care of your loved one
- Express yourself
- Journal, painting, scrapbooking to release stuck emotions
- Exercise, playing music to ground your body and offer a sense of healing amidst the pain
- Don't put your life on hold

Make the most of the time you have now

- Share meaningful experiences
- Listening to bird sounds
- Looking at old photographs
- Giving them a massage
- Taking an afternoon nap together
- Create pockets of joy and connection while they're still here with you.

Words that you can consider exchanging with the person:



- I love you
- I forgive you
- Please forgive me
- Thank you



When possible, forgive...

You forgiving them, them forgiving you, you forgiving yourself, or both of you forgiving each other.

Communication in trying times when a loved one is dying

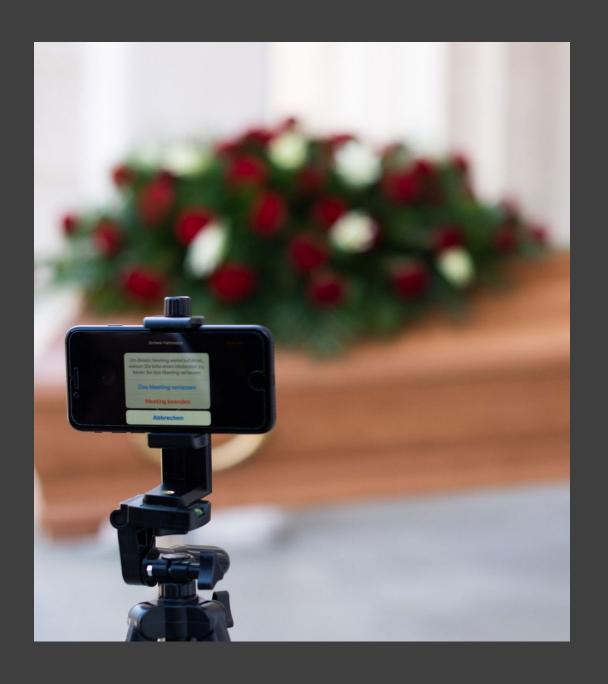


May 10, 2021 by Max Binks-Collier

Consider how you want to honour their legacy

- Qualities about them that you love and respect
- Writing down their stories, recipes, poems, or other mementos
- Physical legacy such as a cookbook, scrapbook, movie, or biography





And when that day comes:

- •When your loved ones cannot be near you, make use of technology.
- Talk about the person who is dead, be honest about your feelings and be there for each other, even if it's virtual.
- Make use of live broadcasts of funerals. Then it is simply recorded as well.

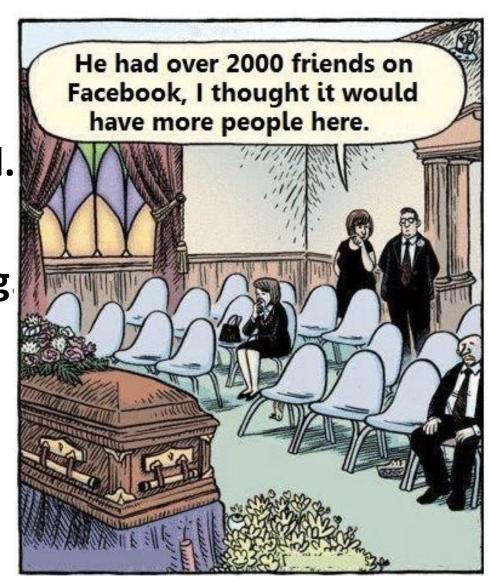
Our digital legacy

 Use social media for tributes, video or voice messages, poems, music in memory of the person who died.

Create opportunities for online mourning.

Online passwords

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram



Nurture your spirituality

Important aspect of dying

Prayer

A connection to nature or music, meditation

Making room for stillness





Connect with a support group

- Online
- In person
- Over the phone
- Unique therapeutic space where you connect
- Learn from others who are also grieving

Talk to your Therapist

- Grief is a deep sorrow that's hard to navigate alone
- Therapy: Explore unique experience of anticipatory grief or loss
- Develop healthy coping strategies
- Manage the complex emotions that arise
- Pay tribute to your loved one



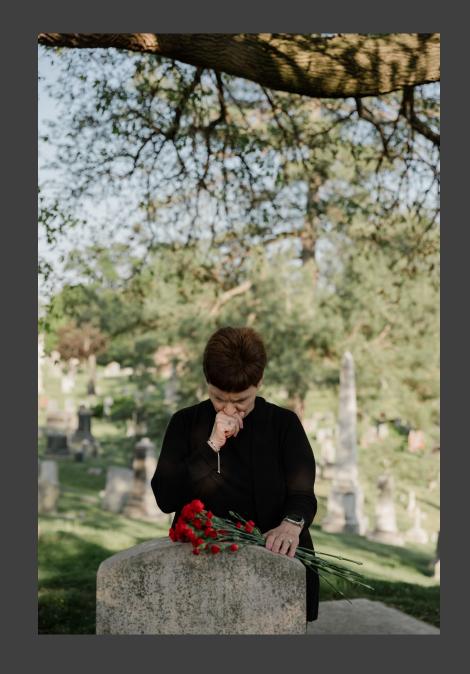
What is our definition of mourning?

Feel the hurt deal with it



in order to get on with your life again!

It is important to mourn!





"I know you're sad, so I won't tell you to have a good day.

Instead, I advise you to simply have a day.

Stay alive, feed yourself well, wear comfortable clothes and don't give up on yourself just yet.

It'll get better.
Until then, have a day."





When that day comes, will you leave a Legacy or will you leave a Mess?

Organise your personal paperwork in a Life File.

Download here: https://sonjasmith-funerals.co.za/my-life-file/



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