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Coming Together During the Coronavirus Crisis



Built Upon a Foundation of Unity, Integrity and Leadership



The Grip of Grief

By Alana N. Negroni, M.S., LMFT, *The Counseling Team International (TCTI)*



Grief. It may only be a five-letter word, but the devastation that it creates can be unfathomable until one experiences it for themselves. The amazing thing about grief is that we all feel

it, but we all feel it in different ways and under different circumstances. We can grieve the loss of a relationship, the loss of an expectation, the loss of a hope, the loss of a dream, the loss of a legacy, and the loss of a belief. Grief can cause us to re-evaluate our life, our relationships, our goals, and our direction. Grief possesses the power to completely devastate us and render us hopeless. So, this begs the question: how can grief and loss touch so many lives in so many different ways yet still have such dominance over our emotions and lead us to feel so much pain? The answer is simple. Grief preys on our future. Grief levels the playing field and makes each and every one of us vulnerable to the depths of its pain. On January 26, 2020, the world was

propelled into a grief tailspin when we received the news that nine people lost their lives in a helicopter crash in Calabasas. This tragedy garnered worldwide attention because onboard that helicopter was basketball legend, Kobe Bryant, and his 13-year-old daughter, Gianna. Sharing in the tragedy that day were seven other victims, John Altobelli, his wife, Keri, and their 13-year-old daughter, Alyssa, Sarah Chester and her 13-year-old daughter, Payton, Christina Mauser, and Ara Zobayan. With such worldwide attention, so many people were deeply impacted by the loss of these nine lives. For those of us who possess a personal connection to any of the nine individuals onboard that helicopter on that fateful day, the onset of our grief may have seemed understandable... not simple, not easy, but understandable. So many of us had no personal connection to any of the nine people onboard that helicopter and yet, we were hit in a much deeper way than we would have initially anticipated. So many of us found ourselves grieving in ways that may not have made sense to us at the time. How could this be? How could we be so devastated by something that seemingly had no direct

impact on us? Something that didn't change our relationships, something that didn't change our goals, something that didn't change our futures... or did it?

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a fan as someone who is a "very enthusiastic supporter or admirer." On this day, fans lost someone within whom they admired and supported. Someone whom many have modeled pieces of their lives after. One thing we all hear about time and time again in regards to Kobe Bryant, in particular, is his intense work ethic - his laser focus on a goal and his determination to reach that goal despite what other people think, what other people say, and what other people want. It was, in part, this laser focus and work ethic that helped make Kobe Bryant into the basketball legend that he will forever be. Many people over the years have connected with that determination and implemented aspects of it into their own lives. For fans, they not only lost someone who helped bring countless victories to their team, but they lost someone within whom they could look up to and strive to be like. Someone who had the potential to spark joy and encourage success and

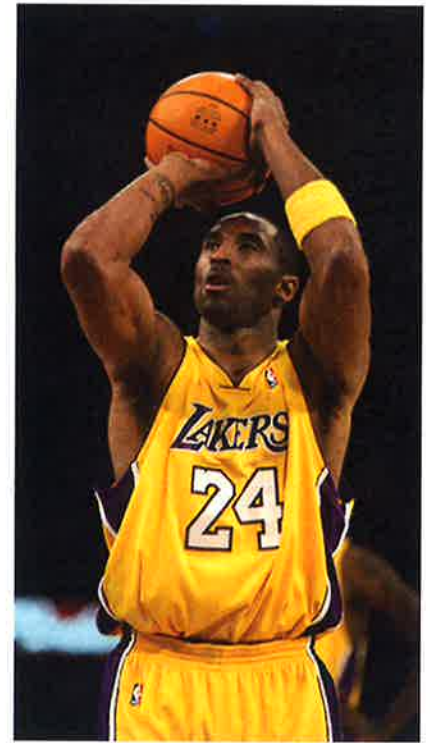


growth, and all just by living their own dream. I'm sure the other eight victims have fans within their own right and for each and every fan it is the same - we lost more than a star, we lost someone within whom we could look up to. Someone whose life helped guide our decisions and impact our choices. For fans, not only was our past and present impacted, but so was our future.

Since the crash, it has been evident that not only were direct friends and family members impacted, not only were fans impacted, but also people who do not really fit into either category. Parents who found themselves wondering if they could survive the loss of their own child, children - both young and adult - questioning how they will handle the loss of their own parent, significant others asking what they would do if their loved one died and they had to not only explain that to their children, but be strong for them as well? When we are faced with someone else's tragedy, one of the most human things is to imagine that same tragedy occurring in our own lives. We start to put ourselves in that person's shoes. Shoes that we don't want to be in, but because grief does not discriminate, shoes that we may eventually find ourselves in. It is because of this that we begin to play the "what if?" game. What if that was me? What if that was my child? What if that was my significant other? What if, what if, what if? When it comes to grief, these "what ifs" can not only drive us into deeper sadness, but they can infuriate us because they can't be answered. We never know "what if" until it becomes "what is." We can't judge or say what we would or

wouldn't do until we are there. There is little we can do in preparation for grief. There isn't much in the way of lightening the burden before it exists. Grief can hit us like a Mack truck when we are least expecting it, but it can also be foreseen in certain circumstances. No one is sure which is worse, to have to watch your loved one die slowly, or to not be able to say goodbye. Consequently, for those of us who played, or are still playing, that "what if?" game, our present and our futures have been impacted. Loss can be triggering.

Loss can trigger unresolved grief, it can trigger feelings of failure, and it can trigger just about anything that has any potential to be painful. If you, or someone you know, was hit by this grief more deeply than you imagined, I would encourage you to ask yourself "what



SUMMARY OF RIGHTS UNDER THE PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER BILL OF RIGHTS

1. When any public safety officer is under investigation and subject to interrogation, the interrogation shall take place under the following conditions:
 - Must take place during reasonable hours.
 - If during off-duty hours, the employee must be paid overtime.
 - Must be informed of who is conducting the interrogation prior to the interrogation.
 - No more than two interrogators at one time.
 - The interrogation shall be for a reasonable period of time.
 - The Deputy shall be allowed to attend to personal physical necessities.
 - The Deputy shall not be subjected to offensive language.
 - No promise of reward can be made as an inducement to answer questions.
 - No statement made under duress, coercion or threat of punitive action can be admitted in any subsequent civil proceeding.
 - The interrogation may be taped.
 - If taped, the Deputy shall have access to the tape prior to any additional interrogation.
 - If prior to or during the interrogation it is deemed that the Deputy may be charged with a criminal offense, the Deputy must be informed of his or her constitutional rights.
 - **The Deputy has a right to be represented.**
2. No deputy can be subjected to punitive action, or denied promotion, or threatened with any such action because of the lawful exercise of rights under the bill of rights or any grievance procedure.
3. In most cases, the investigation must be completed within one year.
4. No deputy can be compelled to submit to a polygraph and cannot face adverse action for refusing a polygraph.
5. No deputy's locker can be searched without consent or a search warrant granted except in the Deputy's presence.

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

Weingarten rights are derived from a United States Supreme Court case *NLRB v. Weingarten*, 420 U.S. 276 (1975). The case interpreted Section 8 (a)(1) of the National Labor Relations Act. It held that you have a right to a union representative present during any interview, meeting or interrogation which you reasonably believe could lead to discipline against you. You must request a representative. The people questioning you have no obligation to tell you that you have a right to a representative. Once you request a representative, the meeting cannot continue until you have a representative present.

AOCDS HAS ITS OWN BENEFITS WEBSITE

Did you know that AOCDS now has a website specifically for BENEFITS?

For all your benefit needs, log onto aocdsbenefits.org. It's an easy way to take care of the following all in one place:

- Review your benefits
- Update your contact information
- Add/remove dependents from your insurance due to a life-changing event, such as birth, marriage, divorce, adoption or if a dependent gains other insurance

First-time users will need to create a user name and password. The company key is AOCDS in all capital letters.

Health Hub, cont.



is this triggering?" The answer to that question may be directly related to something that has been left unresolved in your life. All too often, in the face of grief, we try to circumvent its grip. We try to distract ourselves from the pain, we try to pretend like it doesn't exist, or we may even dive into helping others get through their own grief – all the while ignoring our own. Then, eventually, the clock begins to move forward and we have enough distance and practice that we are able to ignore the weight of our own emotion. However, the toughest part about grief and loss is that it cannot be circumvented. In order to “get over

it,” we have to first “get through it.” In other words, we need to embrace the pain in order for it to not be as painful in the future. So, for those of us who were triggered by something left unresolved, not only was our past reignited, but our present and our future were impacted as well.

How then, do we get through grief if it's so devastating and we just need to feel it? There is an analogy that is, often times, used in conjunction with grief and loss that I want each and every one of us to remember. You see, grief is like an ocean. There are times when the waves are huge and intensely crashing the shoreline for what seems like an eternity. It can feel like there will be no shoreline left if the waves continue at this intensity for much longer, but eventually the tide changes. The waves slow down, and if we wait long enough, they become so small that we can hardly feel them. Yes, it's true, that at some point the waves are likely to turn intense and almost unbearable again, but it's also true that they will eventually be pulled back out to the ocean so that we can barely feel them. It is the vicious cycle of grief, but when we remember that waves come and waves go, we can get through the hardest parts by focusing on the fact that they are not permanent. Sadness will always be there, but the immediacy and intensity will soften, and eventually, we will be able to breathe easier.

During this ocean-like cycle of emotion, there are some things that each of us can do to lighten the weight. You must find which ones work for you and keep in mind that the person next you, who is grieving as well, may need something different than you do. This doesn't mean that there is something wrong with either of you. It's just a testament to how different each of us is. The following is a list of some of the most common healthy ways to manage feelings of grief:

- Talk about it: when we talk about how we are reacting to a certain situation, it helps allow our brain the ability to process through that reaction. When we allow our brains to process our reactions, we are able to reduce the impact they have on us and hone in on what we truly feel, or what we truly need. It is important when finding someone to talk with that you find someone you can trust. Share your reactions only with people who you either trust to maintain your confidentiality, or people whose reactions themselves are ones you would like to emulate.
- Understand what is ok: there is no real rule book on grief. Know that whatever emotions you are feeling are common. Yes, even if there are people around you who are not demonstrating that same emotional reaction. Keep in mind that anger, sadness, guilt, and loneliness are all common reactions when we are in the



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In addition to providing college scholarships to some of our members' children, it also aids members and their families during catastrophic situations. To donate any time, go to www.aocds.org/donate/.

As always, we thank you for your support.



grief cycle. There is no nice tidy little formula for how we should feel, when we should feel it, and what it will take to get rid of it. However, it is important to keep an eye on yourself. If you notice that your reactions are causing you to participate in harmful behavior, you should seek help in managing your reactions.

- **Feel it:** give yourself permission to feel it. Remember that there are only healthy and unhealthy ways to get through grief. Denying what you need to process through will only postpone your process. The worst part about that, is that if you wait long enough, you will be the only one still grieving at that intensity. Everyone around you will have moved forward in their grief while you are sitting still pushing pause.
- **Make amends:** if your grief is triggering feelings of guilt for any reason and that guilt is rectifiable, make amends. There is no better thing to come from grief than growth and connection. If, however, making amends is not possible (or you have already attempted to make amends and the other party is not willing to forgive), then you need to learn forgiveness. Forgiving ourselves can sometimes be one of the hardest things to do, but when we hold back forgiveness for ourselves, we stifle the

growth and connection potential in all of our relationships.

- **Find balance:** life is all about balance. Find things that will help get your mind focused on the joys of your life so that you are not consumed with the tragedies of what you are going through. While it is crucial for grief processing to allow yourself to feel your emotion, it is also crucial that you continue to find joy in what can be found around you. Just make sure that you find balance between the two.

If you find yourself in any of the categories listed above, please know that you are not alone. One of the strongest lies that grief likes to tell us is that we are alone in our emotion. When we feel alone, we isolate because we think there is something wrong with us. When we isolate, our negative emotions grow deeper and deeper and we eventually have a more difficult time finding our way out. If you find yourself in any of the categories listed above, please reach out to your support system. Surround yourself with people you can trust and trust them in times like these.

Public Safety/Peer Support/First Responder Coach App now available on:



AOCDS, in partnership with The Counseling Team International (TCTI), offers the below listed professional licensed and confidential services to members of the AOCDS Medical Trust, at no additional cost. Please visit TCTI's website at <http://thecounselingteam.com> for details.

**Counseling services can be obtained 24 hours a day,
365 days a year by calling 1-844-655-1035.**

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