CLOSURE THINGS WITH THOSE WHO ARE PASSING

Whether we are “religious” or not, all human beings go through a grief process when someone close to us passes. With the increase in losses due to COVID and the restrictions warranted for our safety, many are not experiencing those things vital to our healing. From my experience working with Hospice and losses in my own family, I want to pass on some things that have been helpful to me.

**First of all, what do we say when we know someone is passing?**

 \_\_\_\_**”I love you.”** (many times)

 \_\_\_\_”**Thank you for \_\_\_\_\_\_.”** (Pick a few things that you are thankful for about that person.

 Gratitude can be very healing.)

 \_\_\_\_”**I am sorry for \_\_\_\_\_\_.”** (If there was anything you did to hurt this person, cover it now.

 If a great many things, cover generally.)

 \_\_\_\_”**Please forgive me and I forgive you.”**

 \_\_\_\_”**I will remember you. I will tell stories of you to others. You will not be forgotten**.”

 \_\_\_\_”**It is all right for you to leave, we will be okay.”** (We were with a mom who was passing, and waiting for a phone call from a daughter in Seattle. She passed minutes after hearing from her. Moms and Dads can be like that.)

 \_\_\_\_”**I bless you back.”** (From parents or grandparents) We all long for the blessing and approval of our parents.

The above things are good for doing every day to maintain healthy relationships. It is never too late to start. Be the first in your family.

**Second, these things are helpful for our own personal closure.**

Because of COVID and health restrictions, we are missing some things that are helpful on our own journey toward closure. Sometimes, parents and grandparents recommend cutting these things off, because they don’t want to be a burden to those left behind. But those left behind need to do these things for themselves.

 \_\_\_ View the body of the one who has passed before they are taken away, if possible.

 \_\_\_ Set aside a time for quiet reflection and say goodbye. Then gather with others to remember

 this person.

 \_\_\_ Have a special time set aside to celebrate the life of one who has passed and say goodbye.

 \_\_\_ Have a printed record of someone’s life in the papers, an obituary. Or you can write one

 yourself to review in the years ahead, as your own grief process continues. Keep a picture

 of that special person.

 \_\_\_ Have a formal place where you have marked the passing of this person to go back to in

 the future, often in a cemetery with a marker.

There is nothing “normal” about grief. Each person is on their own private journey to closure. It can have different stages –

Denial (at the news) – Bargaining with God to intervene – Anger – Depression - and then Acceptance. Not everyone goes through all these and it may not be in that order. There are probably grief counselors and grief support groups in your area if you are struggling. It is helpful to do this with others. Then use this list to help others on their journeys toward closure.

Because of COVID restrictions and the increased choice of cremation, we need to find ways to facilitate what is now missing in our own grief closure journey.

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