

Finding Love in Grief

By John Cooper

Death (and some will argue paying taxes) is about the only thing we can count on for certain in life. Even though, we realize that living each day embracing the reality of death can help us to not take life for granted, most of us would rather think and talk about something else. Its this uneasiness and avoidance that can make getting over a loss so difficult.

It doesn't have to be that way. I want to give you a glimpse into what members of the Grief Support group do for one another. I do this while maintaining the confidentiality which they strictly adhere. It just may be that you or someone you know could benefit from participating in this group, especially during this time of the year.

From the moment, I walked into the meeting, I felt welcomed and embraced. It's a laid back atmosphere with members sitting on comfortable chairs and couches like it was their family room. Everyone is accepted for who they are and how they handle their grief. You can feel comfortable in just listening. You don't have to talk. They recognize and appreciate that people approach healing in many different ways.

Facilitators lead by sharing thoughts and reflections on living with a loss. Members bring in articles and read excerpts from them. Someone highlighted an article in the Catholic Messenger about the grief. A facilitator read a moving quote from former Vice President Joe Biden's book about the death of his son Beau.

Discussion topics bounced around and freely flowed from member to member. One moment we were talking about how different ethnic groups handle death. The next we were reflecting on how important it is to get out from underneath our own grief by helping others. As I reflected on my own losses of family and friends, I found myself connecting with everything that was being said.

I asked those present to describe in a few words what attending this group has meant to them. "Support - Being there for me." "Smart and knowledgeable people." "Peace." "Comfort in friendship." "Helps me to remember the memories." "Accepted wherever I am." "Awfully good people." "Inspiration." "Great examples of how to carry on our lives."

Life and death are the two book ends that bind all of us together. That's probably my biggest take away from visiting with the grief support group this week. They are simply a group of individuals who find love and support through the grief that brings them together. As a sign of this, we all joined hands to close the meeting as we prayed the Our Father.

If you or someone you know is feeling the loss of family, friends, and neighbors, I highly encourage attending this Grief Support group. It meets on Tuesdays from 3:30 p.m. to 5 in the School Building's Library (building behind the Parish Center) and it's free. Dennis Xuereb is one of the group's long-time facilitators. For more information, you can reach him by [email](#) or calling at 563-332-1396. Another choice to contact is Ginny Carpenter at 309-523-9251.