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CULTIVATING COURAGE WITH CHAILLE

Being With Loss

By Chaille DeFaria MCC, CDWF

"We are all just walking each other home."
– Rumi,13th-century Persian poet.

Have you ever contemplated your ability to manage being with someone who has lost a loved one, or a life crisis that has turned their world upside down? Have you been afraid to reach out because you have no idea what to say or how to behave with such loss? While none of us can fix someone else's pain, or take it away, we can certainly learn to become more "grief literate."

GRIEF LITERACY

Being educated and literate in our culture is highly touted, but not when it comes to grief. Within days, weeks, or months, society expects us to move on quickly. Pull up your bootstraps, get to the other side of your pain, and get back to business as normal.

Grief is a natural, involuntary, and universal response to loss. It's a part of life and none of us look forward to the experience. In fact, many of us will try to anticipate loss before it happens or try to avoid the feelings when it does, but then the inevitable happens and we are faced with that emptiness. A void like no other.

UNDERSTANDING

- Each person's grief is unique.
- We *do not* all grieve the same.
- Assuming our grieving is similar is a big misstep on our part.

BEREAVEMENT vs. MOURNING

Understanding the difference between bereavement and mourning was profound in helping me to better understand what to do when someone is experiencing deep shock or pain.

- Bereavement.
- Torn apart.
- An internal experience.
- A private response to the deep pain.
- Mourning.
- More visible expressions of our deep sorrow.
- Mourning rituals heal the soul.

Grief may be universal, but we do not all process in the same way. Some helpful ways of being with someone dealing with loss are:

- This is first and foremost. "I'm sorry this is happening. Do you want to talk about it? What did you most appreciate about this person?"
- Companioning: Bearing witness to the others pain. Listening and practicing compassion. "Do you want to be heard, helped, or hugged?"

Never assume you know how someone else is experiencing grief, and remember, you don't need to fix it.

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Chaille DeFaria is a MCC (Master Certified Coach), and CDWF (Certified Daring Way Facilitator for Brené Brown).

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