

Hello, everyone,

Thanks to all who attended the August meeting of Suddenly One. I was happy to see some new faces join those who were with us last month. As we continue to evolve as a group, I hope we will make some lasting friendships. If you missed this meeting, I hope you'll consider returning in September.

I'm attaching the new membership list. For the people who don't have email addresses, Ingrid Crane has graciously offered to deliver this message to your home. If you find any errors in the list, please tell me so that I can correct it. If you don't want to return to the group, please let me know, and I'll remove you from the list, but I hope this won't be the case, and you'll give us a chance.

Kathylee Johnson has generously offered her experience in grief counseling. Kathylee's phone number is 570-650-7099 and she will make herself available to anyone in the group who might need a little extra help in getting through this. Tom Ilmud may also be ready to reach out and help someone. Please keep in mind when you talk with them that they are also grieving the loss of a loved one. Sometimes when a person is so outgoing and helpful, it's easy to forget.

We had a good discussion of what we'd like to see the group become. We spent some time in the first two meetings getting to know each other and why we came to the meetings, but I think we are ready to shift the focus to a more social group, or at least offer some social outings for those who care to participate. I think you will see some of these changes begin in October when the weather cools off a bit.

Here are some of the things that were discussed in August's meeting:

- Including addresses and neighborhoods on the membership list so that we can find an ally near by if we need support or company
- Finding a balance: shifting to a more social group while still being able to support and lean on each other
- Not liking to eat out alone: offering some dates for getting together for lunch and planning some group outings
- Self-care: trying to help each other stay away from self-destructive behavior and taking more control of our physical and emotional selves
- Finding the right people: compiling a list of trusted vendors that we are comfortable recommending to others who can help with handyman chores, lawn or auto maintenance or other things we need someone else to do
- Witnessing grief: some of those who passed during Covid weren't honored in the way we might have liked, and we may feel our grief wasn't witnessed. While we can't change that, we can perhaps honor them and others now. By honoring someone else's loved one, we honor our own.
 - I will offer a ride every month or two months (depending on participation) to anyone who has a loved one in a cemetery within 100 miles of Oak Run. This would include the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida. I'd like to open this to non-members who need a ride because they don't drive, or don't drive long distances. If you know of someone who would like to do this, please let me know.
 - The organization *Wreaths Across America* places wreaths at headstones in National Cemeteries in every state during December. We could, as individuals or as a group, sponsor wreaths or go to the National Cemetery in Bushnell in December to help lay the wreaths. A sign-up sheet will be at the next few meetings for those who want to do this.
- Who can we call? We will compile a list of vendors that we have used and trust to recommend to others. If you have someone you can recommend, please send their names and contact information to me via reply email, text, drop it in the suggestion box, or bring it to the next meeting. When we the list put together, we'll make it available to our members.

- One of our members suggested a method for ideas or questions that come up between meetings or by someone who doesn't feel comfortable speaking in a group setting. I've provided a suggestion box and forms and will work with the ORHA board to have this located in the cabinet of the card room on a permanent basis. You may leave ideas, comments, suggestions anonymously if you like, but it would be more helpful if you leave your name and contact information so we can discuss your input. The box is locked, so I don't think your privacy will be an issue. Once it's located in the card room, I'll put the word out and check it once a week or so.

The next meeting will be **Friday, September 10, at 10:30 in the Card Room**, and will be a little different:

- at **10:35 Ingrid Crane** will guide us in an 18-minute program of breathing and focus entitled "Coming into the Present Moment with a Sense of Spaciousness and Ease". This will be done with us sitting in our chairs and is designed to help us relax and focus. **If you want to participate, please be in the card room promptly at 10:30. We will close the doors and put up a "Do Not Disturb" sign so we won't be interrupted, so don't be late! If you don't want to participate, you are invited to come a little later that day and we'll begin the meeting at 11:00.**
- at **11:00** the meeting will begin with a run through of any admin or discussion items we may have. This will be followed by a presentation by **Kathylee Johnson** based on Elisabeth Kubler Ross's Five Stages of Grief. The balance of the meeting will be for discussion.

I'm also working out details on the October and November meetings, which will be announced at the September meeting, so stay tuned.

Now, a couple of editor's notes (that's me!):

- If at any time a member of the group needs a ride to a meeting or outing, please let me or someone in the group know and we'll gladly pick you up and take you home.
- Masks: I was questioned about whether I've checked to see if everyone is vaccinated. The answer is no, I haven't. Vaccination is not a requirement, it's a personal choice. Oak Run sets guidelines for access to the Orchid Club and meeting rooms; there is no need for us to add further restrictions. Mask-wearing is optional, but recommended if you are health-compromised, unvaccinated, or recently exposed to Covid in any of its forms.
- I have added the Wreaths across America Link to the Suddenly One Website. If you have any other links you'd like to share, please let me know. I would also invite anyone who is interested to be a guest blogger if there is a subject you think might be of interest to our group.

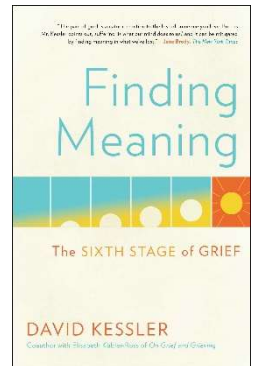
That's it for this time. Feedback is welcome, so please share your thoughts, ideas or suggestions by email, phone, or the suggestion box.

Shelley
210-410-0090

Excerpts from *Finding Meaning:
The Sixth Stage of Grief*
by David Kessler

Grief Must Be Witnessed

Each person's grief is as unique as their fingerprint. But what everyone has in common is that no matter how they grieve, they share a need for their grief to be witnessed. That doesn't mean needing someone to try to lessen it or reframe it for them. The need is for someone to be fully present to the magnitude of their loss without trying to point out the silver lining.



The decision to live fully is about being present for life, no matter how hard life is at the moment. It's about what you are made of, not what happens to you.



"...meaning comes through finding a way to sustain your love for the person after their death while you're moving forward with your life."
