

See the Good in Grief

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Good Grief!

Hello,

This time of year can be hard for grieving people. The weather is cold and dreary, and the days can be dark. Most people find their moods affected by the changes in weather, and grieving people can be affected even more. You may notice more physical symptoms of your grief in the absence of your ability to get outside and move your body. Your thoughts may reflect the darkness outside as well. This is normal, and even though it is challenging, it is to be expected to a certain extent this time of year.

After the winter, spring will return, and with it, more light and renewal of life around you. So it is with your grief. It is a slow and deliberate season that takes hard work and lasts longer than any of us want. To quote Alan Wolfelt talking about the paradoxes of mourning, “Mourners must make friends with the darkness before they enter the light.” Use this season to try to do just that. As always, we are here for you as you try.

We hope to “see” everyone soon,

Angela Hamblen Kelly, LCSW
Executive Director
Baptist Centers for Good Grief

*“Mourners must make friends with the
darkness before they enter the light.”*

ALAN WOLFELT, PHD

Beginning a New Year Without Your Loved One

Just as grief looks and feels different to each individual, a new year can look different to each grieving person. Some grieving people may feel a great deal of anxiety surrounding the turn of the calendar page. This anxiety stems from the unexpected, the unknown (and sometimes the known) stressors. When things feel anxiety-producing and overwhelming, try scaling back your thoughts. Are you thinking about 2021? Are you thinking about next month? Are you thinking about next week? Decide on a chunk of time that feels manageable to consider and stick with that. You may find that some days, you truly have to take things one minute at a time. That's all right, things will not always feel this way.

Other grievors have a lot of hope about the new year, but then may be let down when things do not feel a whole lot different the previous year. There is nothing magical about moving from one year into the next. Some of the same hopes, fears, and struggles that you experienced last year will likely follow you into this year. That can be disappointing and disheartening. An important thing to remember is that you have survived. There have been moments, days, weeks, and maybe even months when things have been difficult. But you are still here, and as long as you are, the hope remains that you will continue learning to cope and that things will start to feel more manageable. The Center continues to be a source of support for you in the new year, even if things don't feel new.



Grief Is an End but Also a Beginning

One of the most common misconceptions about loss is that the relationship with the person who died ends with their death. The reality is that the love that was felt endures, and though the relationship is much changed, it still exists in some form. Your loved one is gone in the



physical sense, but you hold on to the love that you feel, the memories that you shared, and often (in a concrete way) their things. This is the dawn of a new chapter in your relationship, a more spiritual chapter. You can look for ways to connect with your loved one in your mind and heart. In that sense, the relationship starts anew.

Not only is it a new beginning in your relationship with your loved one, but it is a new beginning for your identity. This is not a new beginning that feels good. It's not a new beginning that you asked for, but grief has forced you into it.

Now, you are having to consider the question, "Who am I without my loved one?" If it overwhelms you to consider this, then you may not be ready yet to think about this task of rebuilding. However, this remains a part of the necessary work of grief – examining how you have changed and how you want to continue to change in your own time and with the support of other trusted people.

Be the Good in Grief

Whether you are one who makes resolutions or not, a new year certainly presents us with new opportunities. We are looking forward to seeing what 2021 has in store, and we are immensely proud of the progress we made with you in 2020.

We began in 1999 as an annual grief camp for children, and over the years, we have expanded to employ 13 master's-prepared counselors across 3 locations in the Mid-South. Annually, we provide more than 6,000 individual grief counseling sessions per year. There are multiple ways in which grieving people may receive support, and we know that there is great value in

including, as part of their support system, specifically trained professionals who can help children, teens, and adults process their life losses.

We are honored to walk beside individuals and families grieving the loss of a special person, and we cannot embark on this journey without the financial resources we receive from individuals, businesses, and foundations.

We need your support this year.

We would love for you to visit

<https://baptistgriefcenters.org/give/>

to make a gift today! We are asking you to consider donating \$1 a day. You can easily set up a recurring monthly gift to do so. A \$365 gift divided over 12 months is just \$30.42 a month.

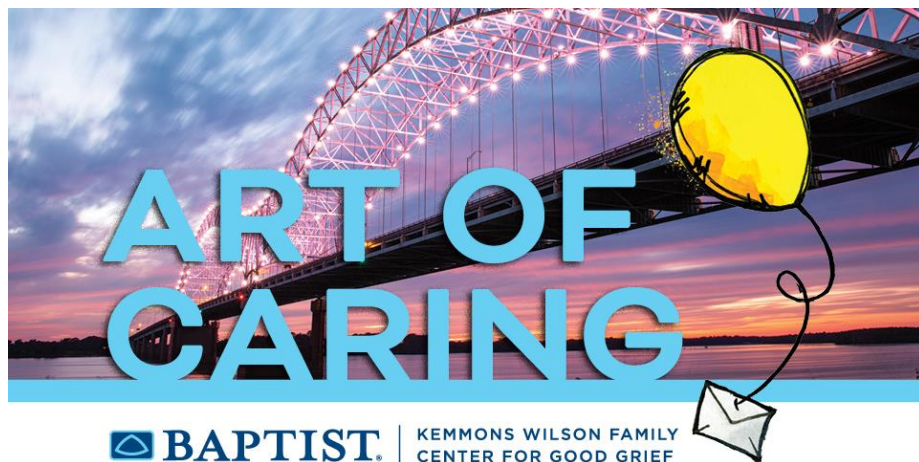
You can be the good in grief for others, too!

As always, you can like, comment, and share our messages on social media. Follow along on Facebook at *Baptist Centers for Good Grief – Kemmons Wilson Family Ctr & Milla’s House* and *NEA Baptist Center for Good Grief*.



Save the Date

We hope you will make plans to participate in Art of Caring, our signature fundraiser benefitting the Kemmons Wilson Family Center for Good Grief. Stay tuned for exciting details and announcements about this year’s event, which will be held on Friday, April 30th!



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Dates to Remember

Kaleidoscope Series - educational and supportive virtual grief seminars provided by grief counselors for grieving adults.

Grief Overload - January 21 from 4:00-5:00pm

Grief Support Groups

Adult Grief Groups

6 Week Series Grief Group – weekly virtual group

January 19, 26, February 2, 9, 16 & 23
from 4:00-5:00pm

January 20, 27, February 3, 10, 17 &
24 from 5:30-6:30pm

COVID-19 Grief Support Group -
weekly virtual group

January 21, 28, February 4, 11, 18 &
25 from 4:00-5:00pm



Widow And Widower Grief Support Group - weekly virtual group

January 19, 26, February 2, 9, 16 & 23 from 10:30-11:30 am or
4:00-5:00pm

Registration Required:

TN/MS call 901-861-5656

AR/MO call 870-936-7719

Take Five!

Here are five resources to help you along your journey:

1. *Gentle, Relaxing, Cozy Flow* – yoga for relaxation
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHZPtn15agE>
2. “New Year’s Resolutions for Grieving” –
<https://www.hrrv.org/grief-support/new-years-resolutions-grieving/>
3. Big Life Journal’s Growth Mindset 2021 New Year Kit (for ages 4-10),
<https://biglifejournal.com/collections/all/products/2021-new-year-kit-ages-4-10>
4. *The Paradoxes of Mourning: Healing your Grief with 3 Forgotten Truths* – Alan Wolfelt, PhD
5. *The Year of Magical Thinking* – Joan Didion



The Next Step

If you feel ready and able, take a moment to consider your past and your future as the new year begins. Reflect on the following questions. You can write down your answers or just use the questions as talking points with a trusted support person.

How has the past shaped who I am today?

If I could change what happened in the past, would I and how?

Do I have any goals for the future?

How hopeful am I about the future?

What have I learned in the past that might help me cope in the future?



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