



The Family Room

By Dr. Roy Don Whitehead

Grief at the Holidays

"I don't know how I'll make it through the holidays," Sarah said. (All characters are fictitious.) "It's been six months since Mom died, and this will be the first Christmas without her. I have no desire to do any Christmas shopping or to decorate the house. I know my kids expect it, but I just don't want to. Maybe I should be over her death by now, but I'm not."

Sarah has a misconception about grief that needs to be laid to rest. The misconception is that she "should be over it" by now. Six months is a short time in the grieving process. Grief takes much longer than this to subside.

There is no way to be back to anywhere near normal in less than a year. Even after the first year there is more grieving to be done.

Dr. Edward T. Cragan, an oncologist at Mayo Clinic, has some other suggestions and observations about the grieving process. "We grieve alone, but we heal in community." No one can do his grieving for us. The pain of losing a mother and dear is something I must walk through myself. A community of support does help the healing process, however. That community may be family, church, friends, coworkers or anyone else whose love and concern help me to heal.

"Defer major decisions." The time immediately following the death of someone close is not a good time to sell the farm, retire, get married or quit a job. Grief affects my ability to make decisions. When grieving I see everything through the lens of my loss, and this my skew my perceptions.

There are times when it is impossible to avoid making a major decision, but for the most part, those should be postponed until later.

"Grief takes work." The grief process is hard on the human body. It takes a lot of energy to grieve. I need to eat healthy and get plenty of rest so that I can endure. If I cannot sleep or eat, then I need to see my doctor and discuss the matter with him or her.

"Time does not heal all wounds." Whoever claimed that time heals all wounds was mistaken. Time does ease the pain somewhat. That searing, stabbing pain of the first few months does grow less intense, but the pain is still there. Ask someone who lost a child fifty years ago if the pain is totally gone.

How can I make it through the holidays while I am grieving? Rely on those who are closest to me. While I may want to go to bed and pull the covers over my head, this is not a good idea. In the long run this will make the pain worse. I need to seek out those people who love and support me. They are the ones who

will help me through these dark days. I need to force myself to take part in some of the rituals of the holidays, if not for myself, then for others.

While others may avoid talking about the deceased, I need to recall memories of him or her that naturally come during the holiday season. Others may think they are sparing my feelings by not talking about the one who died, but they are not. Talking is healing, and I need to talk about the one who is not here. Past

Christmas will come to mind, and I can talk about those even if they do bring tears. Tears are often a part of the grieving process, so it is OK to cry at Christmas.

May your holidays be filled with happiness and with memories of those who are no longer present.

"Court News"

(Cont. from B-2)

Delbert R. Slusher: Open Season (wildlife) raw fat; \$100 fine and costs and 30 days in jail/conditionally discharged one year.

Sammy D. Stewart: License to be in possession, \$100 fine and costs; Failure to wear seatbelt, \$25 fine; Failure to produce insurance card, \$50 fine.

Roger D. Thomas: Failure to produce insurance card, \$50 fine and cost; Failure to wear seatbelt, \$25 fine.

Ronnie W. Vanzant: Operating motor vehicle under influence alcohol/drugs, \$200 fine and costs, \$250 service fee, \$10 victim compensation fund, 4 days in jail/30 day operator license suspension.

Glen A. West: Operating motor vehicle under influence alcohol/drugs, \$200 fine and costs, \$250 service fee, \$10 victim compensation fund, 4 days in jail/30 day operator license suspension.

Jason B. Calloun: Speeding, license suspended for failure to appear.

Deborah A. Ehringer: Speeding, paid.

Jenny L. Floyd: Alcohol intoxication, \$25 fine and costs.

James M. Ross: Speeding, paid \$160 fine and costs.

Christopher G. Wilson: Speeding, paid \$160.50 fine and costs.

Amanda B. Slusher: Menacing, \$45 fine and costs.

Delbert R. Slusher: Propaganda hold protected wildlife, \$25 fine and costs; Carrying Concealed Weapon, \$100 fine and forfeit weapon.

Melissa Harmon: Harassment, \$200 fine and costs/suspend \$150.

Jeff M. Harmon: Harassment, \$200 fine and costs/suspend \$150.

Timothy E. Renner: Reckless driving, \$100 fine and costs; No Ky. Reg. Plates, \$25 fine; Failure to produce insurance card, \$50 fine; Driving, DUJ Suspend License, 30 days in jail/conditionally discharged one year and \$100 fine.

Melissa A. Reed: Operating motor vehicle under influence alcohol/drugs, \$350 and costs; \$250 service fee, \$10 victim compensation fund, 30 days in jail to serve 7/12 month operator license suspension.

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