

THE USE OF LIFE STORY

CREATING LEGACY AND “RE-MEMBERING”
TECHNIQUES IN TIMES OF LOSS



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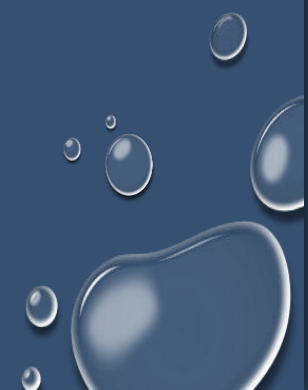
OBJECTIVES

- UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE STORY – WE LIVE OUR LIVES THROUGH OUR STORIES
- IDENTIFY HOW LIFE STORY IS USED TO ESTABLISH IDENTITY AND BUILD LEGACY
- DISCUSS THE CONCEPT OF “RE-MEMBERING” AT A TIME OF LOSS
- FINDING HOPE IN LOOKING TO CREATING THE “NEXT CHAPTER” WITHOUT LOSING SIGHT OF WHAT WE HAVE LOST



SWIMMING AGAINST THE TIDE OF CULTURAL NORMS

- WE LIVE IN A CULTURE THAT DOESN'T DEAL WELL WITH GRIEF AND LOSS
- WE ARE OFTEN FACED WITH PRESSURE TO “GET OVER IT” AND “MOVE ON”. WE ARE EVALUATED ON “HOW WELL WE ARE DOING” BASED ON OUR EMOTIONS AND HOW WE RELATE TO OTHERS ABOUT THE PERSON OR THING WE HAVE LOST
- TONIGHT, I WANT TO FOCUS ON HOW WE CAN USE LIFE STORY TO ACTIVELY REMEMBER AND HAVE ON-GOING INTERACTION WITH THE PERSON OR OBJECT OR DREAMS WE HAVE LOST.



WE LIVE OUR LIVES THROUGH OUR STORIES

- WHO WE ARE
- WHAT WE DO
- WHO WE LOVE
- WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED
- WHAT WE HAVE STRUGGLED WITH
- WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED
- WISDOM WE HAVE TO SHARE





WHY LIFE STORY MATTERS

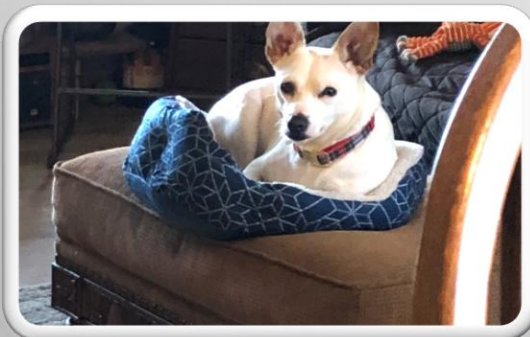
- WE LIVE OUR LIVES THROUGH STORIES
- OUR STORIES MATTER
- THE STORIES WE TELL OVER AND OVER AGAIN AFFIRM WHAT HAS MEANING FOR US (GIVE US CLUES AS TO WHAT MATTERS MOST RIGHT AS WE NAVIGATE OUR GRIEF
- STORIES HELP US PRESERVE MEMORIES AND CREATE LEGACY

L. - LEGACY

I. - IDENTITY

F. - FAMILY and FRIENDS

E. - EXPERIENCES



S. - SECURITY and SAFETY

T. - TIME STAMPS

O. - OWNERSHIP and ORDER

R. - RELATIONSHIP

Y. - YOURS! Uniquely your own



USING LIFE STORY IN BUILDING LEGACY

- BRINGS “LIFE” AND IDENTITY; AFFIRMS WHAT WE HAVE GAINED AND RETAINED IN RELATIONSHIPS AS WELL AS LIFE EVENTS
- PROVIDES TOOLS TO HELP OTHERS UNDERSTAND AND SHARE OUR EXPERIENCE
- SOLIDIFIES MEMORIES FOR CHILDREN
- PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO “INTRODUCE” THE PERSON TO NEW PEOPLE
- FOR CAREGIVERS, IT HELPS US TO PROVIDE A FEELING OF SAFETY; TO UNDERSTAND THEIR CONTEXT AND PRESENT REALITY; REMINDS THEM OF SUCCESSES AND PURPOSE

Incorporating the use of story

- It is empowering when we think about the stories we tell
- Use stories to create meaning
- Reminds us (and others) who we are and how who or what we have lost has helped to shape our identity
- Keep finding the moments of joy and celebrating who they (those we love) are and who you have been together
- As you adjust your expectations; grow in knowledge and Understanding of your loss - your unique journey- you will find Strength, joy and peace to begin to look to the future



Re-Membering

- **A deliberate reproduction of membership**
 - Thinking about the legacy of the person/object/Relationship/Identity that was lost – how has that legacy shaped who we are?
 - Thinking about what remains; what remains vital; the relationship changes, but it doesn't end
 - Telling the stories creates a new connection
- Lorraine Hedke , MSW, CISW
 - The origami of remembering
 - Remembering Practices in the face of death

• **Creating new membership or agency**

- **How will what I have lost remain a part of my life –**
- **How will it be different but still meaningful**
- **How will the “voice” of the person I have lost continue to influence my present day choices and actions**

Narratives

- As we make sense of our lives through our stories and experiences, we also have an opportunity to re-examine and re-frame - how we find meaning in these events
- We can look at things differently and assign it a new understanding - offering ourselves grace and hope



summary

- **We can help ourselves (and others) to heal and to grow through our losses**
 - **by telling our stories**
 - **By re-membering our lives to include who/what we have lost, but in a new place or role**
 - **By allowing the space for conversations that include the loss**
 - **By allowing space for difficult emotions**
 - **By being gentle with ourselves and other as we move through life's losses**



RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- REMEMBERING PRACTICES IN THE FACE OF DEATH
 - LORRAINE HEDTKE, MSW, CISW; PUBLISHED IN *THE FORUM, ASSOCIATION FOR DEATH EDUCATION AND COUNSELING* (27), ISSUE 2, MARCH/APRIL 2001. P5-6
- *THE ORIGAMI OF REMEMBERING*
 - LORRAINE HEDTKE – *THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF NARRATIVE THERAPY AND COMMUNITY WORK*, 2003 NO. 4



THANK YOU!!!

- QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS?

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