

DML801: Orientation
Learning Experience 2: Grief Journal
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1/13/21

Most significant aspect of group time:

- Kelvin listened to my story and said the Holy Spirit impressed upon him that after my mom's death I was looking for someone to cover me. The name of God he heard for me was YHWH M'Kaddesh. It was amazing to be helped to see that God has been my cover my whole life.

Significant wounds/losses

- **Mom's death, May, 1985**
- Not knowing mom as an adult
- Loss of carefree childhood
- Leaving TN to move to MO
- Loss of nuclear family
- **Abandonment by dad**
- Distance from brothers
- Feeling abandoned
- Feeling like a burden
- **Torn between mom & dad's family**
- Overdeveloped sense of responsibility
- Relationship with LTEES
- Rejection/seeking others' approval
- ABD ADTED program PSU
- Dad's death/relationship Jan. 2014
- Shame – family history
- Marriage disappointments
- Not being a medical doctor
- Not happy with my life

Most significant, life-defining relationships/experiences

- Mom
- Dad
- Torn between mom & dad's family

Mom – my mom died on May 25, 1985, after spending years battling breast cancer that metastasized to her bones, brains and throughout her body. She was the spiritual anchor of our family. She had a sweet spirit, loved God, loved others and loved us. She put the needs of others before her own, sometimes to her own detriment. I remember my brothers and I taking turns reading devotions every day sitting on the couch. I remember her hands, her beautiful hand writing and her love. She knew she was dying and she didn't want us to be a burden so we became the most independent kids ever. Cooking, laundry, being responsible and taking care of ourselves. I didn't get a chance to have the carefree childhood with mom always being there.. I remember some of my childhood, early years in the country. But I also remember mom, weak and frail connected to oxygen tanks. I remember her losing her hair and her face all puffy from the cancer treatments. I remember aunts and grandma being there to care for us and care for her. The late night call to the hospital and grandma driving us because mom was dying. So much I don't remember though.. I know we had memorial services in TN and MO. I remember someone telling grandma to pull it together and she began to loose it in grief.

I grieve not having mom there.. I wonder if we would have gotten along or argued and fought a lot. I see others neglecting their moms and think, what I wouldn't give to have my mom here. All the talks I've missed.. How did you meet my dad? How did you know he was the one you wanted to marry? Did you ever regret your choice? What did you think of how grandma & granny treated you? What do you remember of your childhood? What was it like being the oldest? Were you granpa's favorite? Where did the shame come from? Did you ever talk to grandma and grandpa about it? What was your relationship like with Dad's family? What advice do you have for me? Do you see yourself in me? Are you proud of me? What do you

wish you would have done? Am I more like you or dad? How did you know dad and I were drifting apart before you died? What did you pray for us when you were dying?

Dad – I grieve never having a relationship with or the approval of my dad. When I was about 13 he made me choose between him, my brothers and his new wife and my aunt and her family. I made my choice and he hated and disowned me for it. He didn't provide for my needs. Phone calls were arguments. Family times with his family were tough. Being a child was over, except I was still a child. The mind games, manipulation and oh my word the conditions on love. Overt with dad's family while shame ran rampant in both mom & dad's families. My dad was not my protector he was public enemy #1. He would argue and belittle me. I was told to choose, chose wrong and spent the next 25/27 years paying for it.

A few years before he died from pancreatic cancer he seemed to be more open to a relationship. I'm not sure what happened. My uncle sent him a letter and challenged him on a lot of things.. possibly aligning with how God was at work.. we were building a relationship.. slowly.. not argumentative but just talking about life.. but then he got sick.. I don't feel like I ever got to know dad 2.0. My brothers knew him so much better than I did because they made the right choice. The rift between me and my brothers is closing, slowly. I wish my dad had been a better parent and kept our nuclear family in tact. From my vantage point he was so focused on alleviating his own pain he forgot about us.. he forgot about me.. He chose to just get to work on making family 2.0. Marry a divorced woman who didn't have custody of her own kids and we would all live together as the Brady Bunch. That's not how families work. That's not how you create a family. Oh... I've learned so much in the past year doing homework for counseling.. He was adrift on the sea of life, hellbent on doing it his way. My mom was in it for the long haul.. no matter how he threatened, abused or abandoned... She always took care of us. She made sure we were ok. But she stayed. She stayed, to be the good girl. And oh, the shame if she acknowledged what was going on... She was grandpa's golden girl.. and my dad, he was a sad little man who broke his family.

Torn between mom & dad's family – in addition to the undercurrent of conditional love, after mom died I always had to choose between mom and dad's family. I was a kid. A kid!! Why did I have to choose. I just wanted to be with my family. I couldn't ever enjoy being anywhere. When I was with my mom's family, there was guilt at not being with my dad's family. When I was with my dad's family I had to listen to the snide comments and cheeky comments like "so glad you came to spend time with us". I spent so much time trying to make other people happy. Be/do good in school so they don't regret having you around. Be a tattletale because everyone is supposed to be good all the time. After all I'm responsible for keeping everyone happy. I almost envied the teenagers and adults who didn't care and did what they wanted. Not I, with the overdeveloped sense of responsibility. I would be the one sensitive to all the players. Observing, engaging, smoothing over trying to make everything ok for everyone else. While me.. well somewhere in there I turned off the emotions switch.. Focusing on others was "safer". I didn't mean to turn them all off... just the ones that hurt.. but I didn't realize they were all connected.. I know now, you either get all the emotions or none of them..