Individual and Family Dev. weekly paper due February 21

Dr. Wells

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My first point is from the readings from the GG book and has to do with the mediators of the Mourning Process. So many of the mediators such as kinship (who died), nature of he attachment(how close and how dependent or complicated the relationship was), and nature of the death or which NASH (natural, accidental, suicide, or homicide) all matter as to what type of grief the person will walk through. I want to mention an accidental/child death that had a complicated grief. My son-in-law (Dave) lost his best friend in high school due to an automobile accident. His friend's mother was driving the car and they were hit broadside by an oncoming car on a blind curve. Dave's friend was killed and his mother who was driving blamed herself even though the accident occurred on a blind curve, and the car that hit them was speeding. At the funeral the mother was distant and would hardly speak to Dave. Dave understood she was grieving and decided he would try and stay in contact hoping to visit now and again and to hopefully comfort one another in their shared grief. On the visit after the funeral the mother asked Dave not to visit anymore. Her grief was so intense that Dave only served as reminder of her dead son. Dave has been very close to the family and had been a frequent visitor of their home as her son had been his best friend. Dave tried again as time had passed when he was in college, but again the mother thought of how her son should be in college. Dave only brought a grim reminder to her of where her son should be in life if he had lived. I understand this (Dave and his friend even looked alike), but she never did let Dave in. She definitely was experiencing

chronic grief. Everything Dave experienced such as his wedding and birth of his children served as a reminder of what she had lost. I wonder if she could have moved past the grief to remember good times of her son with Dave, and Dave possibly could have become like a son to her (never replacing her own son of course). Dave loved their family, and grieved the loss of not only his friend, but their family as well. He was willing, but with her guilt, she just couldn't bear it. The loss was just too great. He has accepted the rejection as not personal, but the trauma of the accident still remains. When my daughter and my son-in law were looking to buy a house, the entrance to the plan of homes was on a blind curve. When Dave saw the blind curve, he didn't even want to look inside the home. He told my daughter he would always worry about her driving at that intersection. My son-in-law said you can't make people get over their grief. As a counselor, I would want to try and alleviate the guilt somehow. Even if you tell them, it is not their fault, they have to come to that belief themselves, and respect their timetable on grief.

My second point is on guilt, and is taken from the Grief Counseling Grief Therapy book. The book talks about different types of guilt a parent can take on after the death of a child. I feel that my son-in-law's friend's death caused the mother to experience three different kinds of guilt. The first would be cultural guilt because society deems that parents are responsible as guardians for their children. In the mother's mind she failed because she didn't look back again at the blind curve to see the oncoming car. Which because of how the accident occurred would also fall under casual guilt which has to do with some type of negligence on the part of the parent for the death of the child. And lastly survival guilt, would be at play here because they were involved in the same accident and the mother lived, but her teenage son died. The book

goes on to say that parents feel the need to blame someone, and the father may have even blamed the wife for the death of their son. So as a counselor, you have to be aware that not only do parents grieve, but they may also be facing a crisis in their marriage as well. The book explained the parents may share a bond associated with the death, but then also can become estranged with not understanding their different coping styles. Men cope differently than women and process grief differently. This is an area where a counselor can help the parents to see that each coping style although different is still ok, and to give each other permission to grieve as individuals.

My third point is from the book the Myth of Closure. I found it eye-opening that "closure" might be more for the other people close to the bereaved that are uncomfortable with the grief process than for the bereaved person. Pauline Boss who is comfortable to sit and talk with people who are grieving seems to have come to this revelation through her counseling sessions. It made me realize it is selfish to want a person to experience a closure for the benefit of the person who is not experiencing the grief. Her quote of Mitch Albom, " Death ends a life, not a relationship" was so comforting to my soul. When you hear something that just seems right in your spirit, it brings a ring of truth. That statement rings truer to me than the idea our society has adopted of closure. Closure to me means shutting a door or shutting someone out. I could never do that with loved ones. Better for me is Pauline's idea of continuing bonds. I truly believe these bonds we form in this life carry on into eternity. With faith, hope, and love in Corinthians 13 love is the greatest of these, because it lasts forever. We won't need faith and hope because we will see him face to face. I am not sure I will ever use the word closure again

that is how profound this was for me. I don't want to be selfish in wanting closure for my own discomfort, when it comes to someone else's grief.