

Agnes Barilea

Grief Journal

February 2023

SF505 0A NOA

Two experiences with the sense of loss that I have experienced is loss of a loved one and surgical operations in my life. I have lost an extended family member in 2020 and 2022. I miss their presence around their house with my cousins in it. There were so many laughs, smiles, tears and joy at those gatherings. The words of advice and encouragement resonates with me to this present time. The family member that has passed is my aunt and my Uncle. They are the extended family that I have grown up with and known the longest in my life. My Uncle was a physician and Surgeon in his career. Having been a surgeon, he was the one who operated on me with my having my tonsils removed. I remember growing up where he usually sits when I just arrived from an eight hour drive. He was a smoker. I remember the lingering smoke from the garage into the bathroom. His laughter is prominent throughout the many gatherings that I have attended with the family. Perhaps God is speaking to me through those family members.

I remember the the places in the house where he walks, sits, and how he moves around the house. Its strange to see how now those visions are quiet in memory. He is not sitting where he normally sits. He not walking where usually walks. Family gatherings now from here moving forward will have that quietness around knowing he is being remembered. \ I don't remember much conversations with my Uncle. I remember the sound of his voice in conversation

The other sense of grief that I have experienced was when I was when I underwent a surgical procedure. I find this experience as a sense of loss of a body part of me. I was born With it. I also was born with tonsils. The season of grieving has passed on from my life in that I continue to do the things I enjoy. I give thanks to God for getting me through the rough times during the procedure and after the procedure. I realize there is spiritual and transformation process to get me through the tough times. Devotion to God and many Prayers have helped me through the two procedures and loss of extended family members.

The Church family is strong moral support to lean on in times of trials. They are always there with their laughter, tears and presence. Their presence means so much when I see them around the church building. I have already met a counselor to discuss my losses in life. As I am completing this Grief journal I have learned about going through the seasons of grief. Seasons of Grief in my experience so far come and go through many memories. Through the counseling sessions its not a bad thing to experience a sense of loss or Grief. Remember there is God with the help of the Holy spirit and Jesus can get me through the grieving process. It is important to have a spiritual provider in God to get through challenging times. Spirituality and self care requires a balance in one's life. I am still learning to stay positive to this day. Maintaining the positivity is the challenge in times of loss.

Although I haven't mentioned at the beginning of this journal assignment the third loss I am experiencing is learning and cognitive skills and processing speed that other students in the academic world have. I have learned to adjust and advocate for myself to seek assistance in this academic world. I have forgiven myself its okay to take A little bit longer to understand the work that needs to be done. I tell myself I will figure It all out. I am learning not to feel ashamed of not being able to catch up with the other

students. I continue to struggle with some academic skills. Some times the pain is still there of why am I not understanding the assignment or how do I approach this assignment. assistant of tutoring sessions and writing centers and libraries are there at my disposal. I find the assistance is very restricted and limited. I learn to seek other classmates for assistance and sometimes the help is none at all. I still don't understand. I continue to try to stay positive with prayer and supplication to God. He is my helper and source of encouragement as I have made it through since preschool to graduate level. It was not until undergraduate that I received documentation that there is a learning issue in my life. I now understand why it takes longer for me to complete assignments, I understand what I am going through in the world of classes it is a label, stigma and I don't have to think that way. I am trying to change the way of thinking.

I using multi media communication which helps in the sensory organs of the brain of seeing and hearing. believe God Can use me in the world serving others with my learning differences. I do try to think outside the box in certain situations. I do try to be creative.

In conversation with others. I am different in that way of dealing with a learning difference.

Advocacy for me means being learning how to ask for assistance when it is needed.

There are abilities that I possess and have gotten praise for it especially in the the work place. I have received many praise from the church family as well. I see that I have strengths to balance the weaknesses that I already have. I am learning to make weaknesses stronger. I have learned to forgive myself in the world of academics. I do enjoy reading of any type of subject. I do enjoy writing with the help of tutorials that give templates how to start a writing assignments. In the academic world books and assignments my loss would be processing speed, organization of ideas, and cognitive thinking. They are there in my brain to be found with plenty of assistance from the outside world. At my work place, I see that I have strengths that get me far and I don't Feel ashamed. I get praises from colleagues at the work place for doing what I do.

They have given me “ flash mob friday.” in which a the whole building of employees on a friday acknowledge the work I do. I was surprised at the gesture of acknowledgement. I just go to work and do what I need to do. I utilize my skills and have gained some skills from the work place. I find different ways to work with time management and communication skills with colleagues. I bring empathy and passion and patience to the work place. When I have questions at the work place with what I do, I just ask a colleague and leadership. The work I do is very routine so the work becomes second nature to me. In the counseling sessions, I talked about loss of achievement all throughout the academic years of school. I have learned to keep it moving and there is always room for improvement. I have learned about laughing at myself, forgiving myself and Its okay. My brain is wired differently from everyone else. There are bible characters that took longer to achieve. Moses had a speech problem. Isaac was blind. Jacob limped. Chushim, son of Dan was hard of hearing, Samson was born with a limp, Mephibosheth Jonathan’s son had crippled legs. I learn from what these characters and how they overcome their difficulties. I am learning alot from the counseling sessions as I process what I am thinking. I am sure after the five sessions I will still be grasping the concepts Of what it means to have loss of achievement. Each school that I have finished would be my seasons of grief. There is no definite time line to over come grief. It can be part of the process of spiritual formation. I have learned alot from loss and ideas come to mind every so often that I have not thought about before. I continue to practice the spiritual disciplines on a daily basis. The shame is still there in me of the loss of achievement but the shame seems smaller and smaller as I conquer the work in the academic world. I have learned to endure the hardship of not gaining the processing speed. The various Outreach ministry events help me overcome the shame of learning difficulties. Those activities get my mind off the grieving process and remind me to say that I am grateful for what I do have. I have attended so many activities around the church, interacted with

many people in those events. I have learned from their testimonies about overcoming their obstacles in their lives. I find it is inspiring to me for me to just hear from them in that way. I am inspired by many clergy who are in the academic world with multiple accomplishments in their lives. There are many clergy out there I look up to for support. They are out here, Its nice to have experiences that I went through and can share with others who have had similar experiences. This makes for long lasting conversation and relationship building with brothers and sisters in Christ. As long as I can remember I have attended many funerals and memorial services and graduations. I can definitely say I learn from these lifetime experiences. Positive feelings can come out of these experiences too. These experiences forces you to change to a positive outlook. I remind myself always there is God to seek comfort in all situations. See God first in what ever my thought processes. He know my thoughts and my heart and what I am going through. He knows what I am going through as I am writing this Grief journal. The ministry depending what type of ministry is full of challenges and emotions. there are many personality types you may come into contact with. I will achieve with what I have learned in this process. It will take me longer to understand why grief is important in the life experience phase. Its important to laugh. I have books That inspires me to laugh. Laugh your way to Grace is one of them. I am looking forward to put on the Calender reunion for later this year. A reunion of the prior working family getting together after fourteen years of not seeing each other in the workplace. It will be nice to see each one of them in particular three years after the pandemic. That is more poignant now. I keep in touch with my prior working family through gatherings, email, social media and telephone calls. It makes a difference when you see them in person. I am sure there will be plenty of smiles and laughing a few months from now. I miss my Aunt and my Uncle everyday that I think of them. They overcame obstacles to come here from across the Pacific Ocean. They persevered and succeeded to achieve what they came to

the United States for. I am forever grateful they have been part of my life and have taught me about being successful in life experiences.