

# A Journey with Loss and Grief

## The Valley of Baca (Weeping)

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Loss of a loved one...how does one even begin to cope? Whether the loss is sudden, expected or a gradual one, there is no easy way to deal. But you may already know that if you are reading this article. Those of us who have experienced loss recognize the *Twilight Zone Feeling* standing in the front of the funeral home while greeting the long line of well-wishers saying good-bye to our loved one. The imagery was vivid for me; I could see my mother's frail skeleton shrivel as her spirit left the body, her "house of clay." She died slowly with the help of hospice. But now...it was over, it was final. My dad preceded my mother in death by six years. Dad died suddenly, unexpectedly, that was not any easier.

No matter the type of loss, no one feels what you feel. They try. The nuances that go on in our psyches during this time are profound and we realize that no one can give us the one thing that we want, our loved to return. We play the "what-if-wish." What if I would have done this, or that? I remember thinking, "Just 12 hours ago, I was sitting across the table having a conversation with dad and this morning he is dead." I wanted to roll back the clock, even just an hour as when I found him and his body was still warm and moist.

But even before I lost my father and mother to death, I experienced another kind of grief; divorce. It was an unexpected estrangement. We were both in denial of marital problems until it was too late. Poof, he was gone. Several in my family lineage experienced divorce prior to me. However, I had no clue that divorce for me would feel worse than losing someone to death. No one told me how gruesomely painful it would be and that it would take years for my emotional recovery. The apparent oblivion and sudden loss created circumstances that I was not prepared for and presented particular difficulties that hardly anyone could relate to.

When we go through various types of losses there is an increased sense of vulnerability that tends to raise anxiety and intensify emotions. People can struggle with dissonance between what should be as opposed to brusquely and cruelly, what is. "This is not supposed to happen to me," regarding the divorce. But I found myself many places and many times emotionally, spiritually and physically thereafter in what was foreign "enemy" territory. "What was I to do with my life now?" I felt lost.

Other sources of distress during the grieving process may involve a possible undermining of beliefs, assumptions, and paradigm shifts which have made life meaningful. Making sense of loss and finding new meaning for life is an important component to the healing process. It is common knowledge that Kubler-Ross's, Five Stages of the grieving process is not lock step. There is fluctuation in and out, back and forth, like the waves of the sea, before we linger longer, in the

acceptance stage. It is apparent that struggling to make sense of loss may erode one's own spiritual, philosophical or religious paradigms. "If God is Sovereign, then how did this happen? This does not fit in our belief system, WHY? How will I ever feel like living life again?"

Although at the time, I remember those who had traveled before me on the road of grief would say the same things, "It will get better." The repetition of that truth gave me something to hold on to when I felt opposite, "It will never get better." Holding on to that truth, walking out my grief, moment by moment, (forget the one day at a time mantra), I was walking minute by minute, hour by hour some days. We each find our own path to healing. One thing from experience that I learned is that each of us possesses a different timetable for emotional healing. The other epiphany that came after-the-fact is that my journey of grief was transformative for me. I learned something through this grief experience that I would have never learned otherwise. It is paradoxical as I would not wish to journey that that same "Valley of Baca" again and yet, I am so grateful for where that journey has brought me.

For more information on loss and grief  
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waterdeep  
music & lyrics

### Lonely Sometimes

**I woke up from a *strange* rain  
And it was *dreaming* outside  
I rolled over for the telephone**

**I thought I'd call someone  
Tell them I dreamed I had died  
But I know that I was all alone**

**I just get lonely sometimes  
I want someone to take away my grief  
I just get lonely sometimes  
I want to wake up in the morning with someone  
Lying next to me who I can turn to for relief  
I just get lonely sometimes  
But I know I just need You**

**I probably slept in a bed of bitterness  
That's why I woke up this way  
That's probably why I'm in this lonesome hole**

**I probably got to needing everything  
And needing it today  
That's probably why I play this lonely role**

**But I know I know I know I just need You**