

# LAMENTATIONS

Issue 2

G.R.I.E.F

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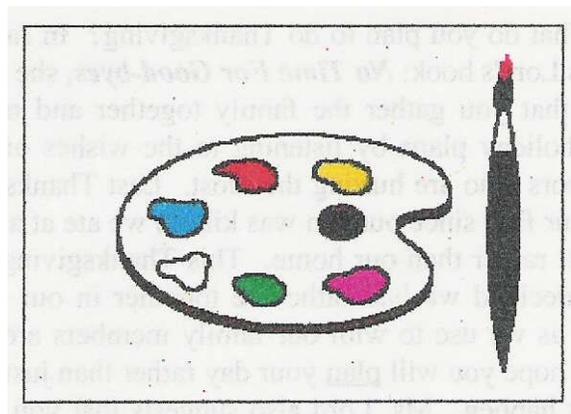
Thank you so much for your response and your interest in LAMENTATIONS. This newsletter evolved from my personal need to write to others who have experienced similar grief. I need to write about my feelings which include: pain, anger, laughter, tears; actually, every emotion- and at times simultaneously. Do you feel that same need? There is comfort in knowing that others do understand. Albert Schweitzer made the statement: "Anyone who has had pain is obligated to help someone going through pain." May each of us feel the need to help each other, because it is in **giving** we **receive**.

The following list of meaningless clichés and positive statements were adapted from Erin Linn, "I Know Just How You Feel . . . Avoiding the Clichés of Grief" See if these sound familiar:

<u>Meaningless Cliché</u>	<u>Positive Statement</u>
Time will Heal	You must feel as if this pain will never end
It's a blessing	I'm sorry this has happened
God never gives us more than we can handle	This must seem like more than you can handle
You must be strong	Don't feel you need to be strong for me
You're holding up so well	It's okay to cry
This is God's will	Some things just don't make any sense
I know how you feel	I just don't know what to say
Let me know if I can do anything	I'll call tomorrow to see how I can help

I'm sure you have also heard "God must have needed another angel." What a stupid cliché- If you had known our son- an angel- he was not (but close). I have also heard "God let this happen to you because you are so strong, I would not have been able to cope." Are they saying that I have been punished because I am a strong person- I don't think so. Have you been told any others? Aren't there times when you want to scream at them and tell

Last week we were in New York City and I saw several beautiful paintings, and was reminded of the artist's palette which is used to hold the different colors they are using. It immediately reminded me of our grief and the different colors it represents. **White** represents the absence of color. This is the first color I believe we see/feel when we first hear of our loved one's death. There is an absence of a feeling and all reality. **Yellow** represents our cowardliness to accept what has really happened. We say over and over again "this can't be happening; it is not real" Him. **Blue** is our depression." **Green** represents the envy we have for others how still have their loved ones. **Purple** represents the Purple Heart we should receive because we have been "wounded" and our loved one has been killed in action. **Red** represents the rage and anger we feel because of the death. Black is a mix of all the colors (That is my color). But let's regress we want to be white which represents cleansing and renewal.



Colors are so important in our lives. I have found that in am having a difficult day that I often have on drab colors. I am trying to make a conscious effort to always wear bright- vibrant colors that will not only lift me up, but perhaps those with whom I come in contact. Give some thought to your dress and see if you are perhaps committing the same faux pas.

How are you planning to remember your loved one? If you are like we, you want to be sure they are not forgotten. Several ways we have already remembered Young Jim are: We placed hymn books in our church, and each Sunday the congregation sees his name and he is remembered; we have established a scholarship in his name and it will remain as long as the college is in existence; two of our friends have planted trees in the yard of the President's Home with his name inscribed on the plaques; we placed many of the "good" books on grief in our church library; and we have just rededicated our Chapel on campus and there is a stained glass window that depicts his life. (I am enclosing a picture of the window.)

Last night I was reading *Beyond Endurance When A Child Dies* by Ronald J. Knapp. In several of the books I have read pertaining to grief, this statement is quoted many times: "When one loses a parent one has lost the past; when one loses a child one has lost the future." Dr. Knapp suggests that in order to find some meaning to our loss, we should think of ourselves as "the living reincarnation" of our child. We really are all that remains of our child's genetic endowment. The only way we can "pass on" their future is by acting in his/her behalf. In a way, our children are still alive- alive in us and in our thoughts and memories. In this way we should tried to live the best life possible. We can accomplish this by doing things for others" in the name of our loved one."

What do you plan to do Thanksgiving? In Janice Harris Lord's book: *No Time For Good-byes*, she suggests that you gather the family together and make your holiday plans by listening to the wishes of the survivors who are hurting the most. Last Thanksgiving (our first since our son was killed) we ate at a restaurant rather than our home. This Thanksgiving we have decided we had rather be together in our own home as we use to with our family members around us. I hope you will plan your day rather than just letting it happen. Ms. Lord also suggests that you balance solitude with sociability; relive pleasant memories; set aside some "letting go" time; find a creative outlet; and consider the needs of the remaining family members.

Ronald Knapp lists "needs" of bereaved parents. They are:

Need to be with others who know what I'm feeling  
Need help in accepting the loss I have experienced  
Need strength to deal with my present situation  
Need to share how I feel about Why God took my child  
Need help to maintain relationships  
Need someone to care about me so I know I'm not alone  
Need help to preserve our marriage  
Need others who know what I'm feeling and who are willing to communicate with me  
Need to discuss and set new values for my life  
Need to learn how to express my true feelings to people who are close  
Need emotional support  
Need to deal with the loneliness  
Need to improve communication with my family  
Need to learn more constructive ways of living with my sorrow  
Need to understand some of my feelings of helplessness and loss  
Need support as I attempt to deal with the emotional impact of death  
Need to understand me  
Need a place to share thoughts about my child  
Need a place to just talk about everything  
Need someone who will listen

In other words- **WE NEED EACH OTHER! We have been "thrown" into a group. It is not a group we would chose for ourselves, much less our worst enemies. We belong to that unique fraternity called**

**G -rieving**

**R - ationally**

**I - n order to**

**E - merge**

**F - unctional**

Please take a few minutes and express your individual feelings by developing your own acronym from G.R.I.E.F. It is a way of making you face your own grief and it also shows you the methods you are using in "working" through your grief. Let me know what words you are using to describe your grief and what you are doing to help you and your family in dealing with grief. We can help each other so much by sharing what has helped, as well as what has not helped. Hope to hear from you soon.