

1 14 10 Nurturing Happiness & Silliness is Good for Healing

The Taos News has committed to implement a weekly column to help educate our community about emotional healing through grief. You may write questions to Golden Willow Retreat and they will be answered privately to you and possibly as a future article for others. Please list a first name that grants permission for printing.

Dear Ted:

I am a senior in high school, my grandmother died and my father is going to prison. I have had a hard time finding joy in my life and find I keep seeing the darkness of everything around me. I miss the light-hearted and easy going person I used to be before this awful year. Is this normal and will I regain some of the oxygen that seems so far away? Sincerely, Where's the Joy

Dear Looking for Joy:

It sounds like your year has been difficult and you are feeling the depths of grief more than many people of your age group. Your bravery to write this question is commendable and expressing your feeling is the start to healthy healing in the midst of loss. When you have loss in your life it is as if you have died as well. The normalcy of your past is gone and you are forced to redefine yourself and the world around you. During this process it may feel like your heart and soul are hollow and in that vacuum it is easy to recognize the sadness and darkness around you and in the world at large. This is normal and as you heal you will have the opportunity to start to recapture your heart and soul. The key here is to honor the sadness while you allow lightness and good back into your consciousness. I don't know why but it seems easier when we are sad to search out more sad and bad things in the world to keep feeding that vacuum of darkness. In knowing this, you can choose to find moments of allowing joy back into your consciousness with things that warm the heart and may even break a smile. This can be so difficult due to feeling you should be doing this, causing an internal struggle of not wanting to give up relationship you have with the sadness. One of my saving graces in the midst of sorrow was the beauty of nature. This allowed me to feed little crumbs to my empty plate of contentment. As time went on, I was able to notice other activities, sounds, sights and conversations that allowed the crumbs to grow into a feast. I slowly found humor that brought the entire world back to color and gave me new passion to rebuild and enjoy my life once again. Healing from loss takes time and does not happen overnight. There are still days I can get caught in the darkness and in this I can honor my emotions, claim my feelings and continue to heal moving one step at a time back to a more well balanced life of joy and sorrow. Thank you for your courage of your question and I hope all of us are reminded to step into healthy silliness and love, honoring giggles, laughs and the brightness as each of us step into the light of another day. Until next week, take care.

Golden Willow Retreat is a nonprofit organization focused on emotional healing. Please direct questions to Ted Wiard, LPCC, CGC, founder of Golden Willow Retreat and clinical supervisor for Teambuilders Counseling at (575) 776-2024 or GWR@newmex.com.