"Six Common Errors…"

By Chaplain Sal Aguilera

Recently, I happened to pick up a "*CareNote*" entitled "*Six Common Errors to Watch for When You're Grieving,*" written by Carol Luebering. I found myself learning a few new things regarding the grief process. Right away it states, "Grief doesn't come with an instruction booklet. The death of someone you love leaves you feeling as if you are completely on your own, trying to make sense of your life when there is a gaping hole in it. There are many ways to grieve, and no loss is ever exactly like the other."

It goes on to state that there is no step-by-step guide to putting the broken pieces together but there are some ways to spot and avoid some of the most common mistakes during the grieving process.

Luebering gives six basic steps to try to avoid while grieving. "The errors we may make after the death of someone dear doesn't really ease the pain or help us find a way to live a full and happy life again. Instead, they can complicate and prolong an already difficult process."

Step 1: Try not to numb the pain. After the funeral of a loved one is over and people have stopped checking in on you, the pain will still be there. Luebering states, "It hurts and you want it to stop. You wish you could regain the numbness that carried you through the first awful days."

The booklet goes on to mention that some people try to stay very busy and avoid the pain. Others surround themselves with many people so as not to spend time alone, obviously this only works for a time. Others try and medicate the numbness and pain with drugs or alcohol.

All of these, especially the last, just don't work and can be dangerous. As Luebering states, "Feeling the pain is a necessary step to accepting the reality of your loss and begin to heal. It does mean you have to allow yourself to mourn. It is also especially important to keep reminding yourself of the good memories for they are the continuing presence of your loved one in your life and they affirm you are indeed a person that knows how to be happy, at a time when you are anything but."

Step 2: Don't let yourself be rushed. While time heals most wounds, Luebering points out that it is important how you use this opportunity to find peace. "If you never mourn your loss, you will have difficulty adjusting to the new reality of your life and discovering who you are now."

Luebering suggests thinking of all the significant dates that have meaning for you because "you associate them with the person you have lost, of holidays and other special occasions you once shared." The booklet also makes an important point that "most people say it takes them at least a year to let all the reminders pass without intense grief, longer if they were still numb the first time around. Grief will take as long as it needs to take." It's important to remember to be patient and good to yourself and eventually you will find that happiness in life again.

Step 3: No need to go it alone. Be ready to discover that even your closest friends may not be your best support during the grieving process. They may become "distressed" that you "still" need to talk about the death of your loved one. Luebering points out that you need to understand "they don't realize that you are still trying to internalize the awful truth, they may tell you it's time to put it behind you and move on. Or, they may avoid mentioning the dead person by name, or quickly change the subject when you bring up your loss, in a mistaken effort to avoid adding to your pain."

So what do you do? Luebering suggests you "try the direct approach and insist that you need to talk about you memories, pleasant or unpleasant." Or, you may find that you just need to find someone like a chaplain or a counselor at the Fleet and Family Support Center who is objective and willing to listen. You may even seek someone who has suffered a similar loss.

Step 4: Avoid hasty decisions. "Some folks rush to erase every trace of their deceased loved one from their home, "…but sometimes when we do things in haste, while still in pain, we regret it." As Luebering continues to points out, "…let the clothes stay in the closet for a while. They will still be useful to someone else after a few months; in the meantime, you may find it comforting to wrap yourself in a loved one's favorite sweater."

Step 5: Don't punish yourself. This is the step that really caught my eye because I find so many people punish themselves after the death of a loved one. Luebering points out, "Guilt walks hand in hand with grief, especially if we failed the people we love in some way or another. But there is no need to punish yourself for being human. Be gentle with your physical and emotional needs as well as with your conscience. Give yourself permission to cry or rage when that is what you need to do."

I feel it is important that you allow yourself to cry if you feel sad. If you feel embarrassed you may just want to set aside a little private time and "give into the tears or yell or throw a tennis ball against a wall with all your might."

The booklet also makes two very important points. First it states, "Give yourself permission to do something you enjoy as well. Rent your favorite comedy and see how healing it is to discover you haven't forgotten how to laugh. And don't feel guilty when you do!"

Secondly, it makes the point that you should try to eat and get some exercise into your day. The reason being that "…you are under a great deal of stress and your body needs all the help it can get to deal with it. You certainly won't feel any better if you get sick."

Finally, Step 6: Keep faith and hope alive. During the grief process it is normal to find yourself disappointed or even a bit angry with God. This is normal. Luebering makes a great point and reminds us of the times we get angry with people we love and how we don't stop trying to talk it out with them. Luebering reminds us of some scripture insights that might help. Such as the fact that the scriptures are full of references that keep insisting that God is close to the broken-hearted. And, finally that "Lives end, but relationships don't. They endure even into the next world for, as the Song of Solomon (8:6) insists, 'love is as strong as death.'"

If you would like a copy of this "*CareNote*," please stop by your Chaplain's Office. God bless you.

Being prepared, informed, ready for typhoon season

By Naoko Izumi Bibb, Seahawk Contributor

In Japan, the typhoon season runs from May to November, with the peak storm season for the local area occuring in September and October.

In a typical year, the Yokosuka area could be threatened by 8 to 10 typhoons, though not all those storms pass over the immediate area and they vary in strength. Service members and families are advised to be prepared for potential weather emergencies.

To fully prepare, create one or more emergency kits that include enough supplies for at least three days, according to Commander Navy Installations Command (CNIC). There are six basic items that should be included: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and items for medical conditions. Have one gallon of water per person, per day and non-perishable food.

Local maps, a family emergency plan and an all-hazards weather radio enable residents to respond to an emergency more quickly. Other essentials are dust masks, personal sanitation supplies such as moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties, according to the CNIC Web site.

Keep the items in an easy-to carry container and place them in an area where they are easily accessible in the event of an emergency, according to the American Red Cross. Possible containers include a large, covered trash container, a camping backpack or a duffle bag. Make sure every member of the family knows where the kit is. It is important to regularly evaluate the kit and its relevance to the threats in the area. Throw away and replace any expired or damaged medications, food or water.

There are four TCCOR levels and five other advisories. The highest level is TCCOR I with a threat of destructive winds of 50 knots or greater within 12 hours. TCCOR I advises residents to move fragile items away from all windows or cover them with plastic and tape windows. TCCOR II warns of destructive winds of 50 knots or greater within 24 hours. TCCOR III anticipates the same destructive winds within 48 hours, and TCCOR IV predicts destructive winds within 72 hours. Once TCCOR IV is declared, each command is responsible for completing a checklist to ensure that all relevant personnel are notified. TCCOR All Clear indicates that a threat of severe weather is over.

Tropical cyclones are more commonly called typhoons in the Pacific Ocean. Local weather information can be found via the Commander Fleet Activities website at www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka, or by tuning in the base informational channel 15. Additionally, updates can be found at https://metocph.nmci.navy.mil/jtwc.php. Updates can be obtained every six hours at this website for all typhoons in the Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

Also, the city of Yokosuka offers a disaster information e-mail service to deliver updated emergency weather information, such as storm and flood warning. The information can be sent directly to a personal computer or mobile phone. The service is available in English and Japanese kanji and hiragana/katakana. To register and read the terms of use for the service, e-mail di-yokosuka-t@ktaiwork.jp for English instructions; bousai-yokosuka01-t@ktaiwork.jp for kanji; and bousai-yokosuka02-t@ktaiwork.jp for hiragana/katakana.

Cut and save

Typhoon Condition Information

TCCOR Storm watch - Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and the CFAY website www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka for updates.

TCCOR IV - Essential personnel should be notified. Residents should obtain emergency supplies. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka.

TCCOR III - Residents are advised to secure outdoor loose items. Fill vehicles and gas grill tanks. Ensure emergency kits are ready. Move items away from windows and ensure sufficient money and important documents are easily accessible. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka.

TCCOR II - Secure outdoor items and all windows. Alert your commands' essential personnel. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka.

TCCOR I - Residents should move fragile items away from all windows or cover them with plastic. Tape all windows. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka for updates.

TCCOR I Caution - Non-essential personnel should remain indoors. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka.

TCCOR I Emergency - All personnel must stay indoors and away from windows. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka.

TCCOR Recovery - Stay indoors while damage assessment and cleanup is accomplished. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka.

TCCOR All clear - Threat of sever weather is over. Stay tuned to channel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio and www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka.

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