



# Caring Companion

Family Grief Support Letter... Spring 2016

## Church and Chapel Funeral Homes

Providing Comprehensive, Compassionate and Dignified Funeral Services

[www.churchandchapel.com](http://www.churchandchapel.com)

*To Love is to fully live... To grieve is to have fully loved...  
To heal is to fully live again, anew*



Family owned and operated by the Larsen Family  
Brooklyn, Ted, Garrett, Hunter, Chad, Pam, and April

*From our family to yours...  
the Ted and Pam Larsen Family*

### Am I Crazy?!

By Pete Reinl, CSG, Director of Grief Support Services for Church and Chapel Funeral Homes

An expression sometimes shared with a loud and frustrated voice! Sometimes shared with a whisper of embarrassment – sometimes shared with a despairing sigh – sometimes shared with a tearful resignation – but often shared out of fear, and a sense of powerlessness, and the reality of life as known in this moment: AM I CRAZY!!!???

Feeling like we're going crazy while in grief is quite normal. When someone we love dies, we are faced with many emotions, reactions and behaviors that are simply not in our normal experience – often uncharacteristic of us. Whether a death was anticipated or not, it frequently throws us out of our usual orbit – that alone can help contribute to the feelings of "going crazy." Lack of concentration, forgetfulness, not being able to complete a project, crying "out of the blue," not feeling passionate about any of the things that used to give us life, lack of self-confidence, feeling incredibly unsafe, all of these, and more, may give us the illusion that we are going crazy. In fact, all of this is quite normal, albeit unwelcome.

Grief affects the totality of our person – physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally and socially. There isn't a single part of who we are that is untouched. Is it any wonder why we might think we're going crazy? Here are some common occurrences:

#### Physical

Tightness in the throat or chest...Shortness of breath...Sick to the stomach...Difficulty eating or sleeping (or just the opposite)...Tension headaches and muscle aches...Overly sensitive to noise...New physical pains or an increase in illness or accidents...Shakiness...Low energy

#### Mental

Forgetfulness...Lack of concentration or not completing tasks...Preoccupied with death (in general)...Assuming attributes of your loved one...Obsessed with images of your loved one's death...Change in work performance...Misplacing objects...Missing appointments

#### Spiritual

Anger at God...Being drawn to or away from religious practices...Feelings of abandonment or anger toward your faith community...Questioning God, God's existence, our beliefs, meaning and purpose of life...Feelings of spiritual desolation and isolation...More questions than answers

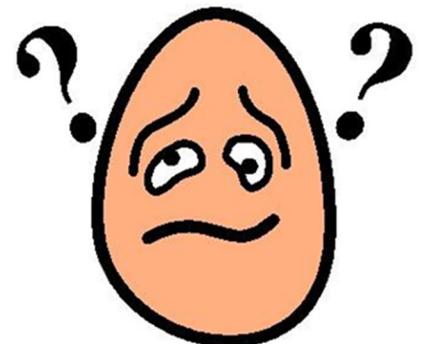
#### Emotional

Anxious or fearful about the future...Crying for no apparent reason...Not being able to cry...Sighing frequently...Short temper and / or bold, brazen responses...Anger and hostility or little patience...Feelings of guilt...Feelings of depression... Wanting to join your loved one in death...Sloppy dressing or poor personal hygiene

#### Social

Withdrawn and isolated...Hyperactive – over involvement and stimulation...  
Workaholic...Unable to seek out needed support...Your network of friends is absent or changing...Feeling 'out of place' or like a 'fifth wheel'

Clearly not an exhaustive list, but, perhaps, some things you can relate to. If these symptoms persist over many months and you're concerned about what is happening, please see your doctor or a counselor who specializes in loss and grief. You can find a list of counselors in the grief support section of our web site at [www.churchandchapel.com](http://www.churchandchapel.com). It is far better to error on the side of caution when it comes to your health.



(continued on the other side)

I guess, in a way, we ARE a bit crazy when first journeying through grief. It's important to realize these feelings and these experiences are normal, particularly considering what has happened. Also important is our need to check-in with safe people about how we are doing. Safe people are folks in our lives who truly "get it" – who understand. They won't sit in judgement of us and add layers of "shoulds" (advice and expectations) to our already heavy lives. Safe people earned the right to hear our story. These people might be friends, spouses, family members, support group participants, ministers, counselors, etc. You'll know pretty instinctively and quickly who these safe people are. Oh yeah, safe people totally get "Am I Crazy?!" Please, dare to find your safe people. They are out there and don't be surprised if they turn out to be not the people you expected.

## Upcoming Grief Support Programs



### Loss of a Parent... Understanding Grief

Saturday, May 7th,  
9:30 – 11:30am

Knights of Columbus Hall...  
1800 S. 92<sup>nd</sup> Street,  
West Allis (between  
National Ave. and  
Greenfield Ave.)

Even as an adult, you are still your parent's child. The death of your parent(s) can leave you with a broken heart, as well as with mixed feelings depending on your relationship. No matter the experience of our parent-child relationship, the death of a parent is a significant loss in our lives on a number of different levels.

Using the wisdom of a story entitled "Tear Soup," our time together will include:

- ❖ A discussion of the grief journey
- ❖ An exploration of the effects and expressions of loss
- ❖ Sharing some practical healing strategies
- ❖ A tribute to honor our parents

#### Presenters:

**Sandy Wolf**, RN, MSN, CT

Bereavement Coordinator for Froedtert Hospital & the  
Medical College of WI

**Pete Reinl**, CSG

Director of Grief Support Services for Church and Chapel  
Funeral Homes

#### Snacks and refreshments will be served.

For planning purposes, registration is appreciated but not necessary, by calling 414-651-2737 (leave a message with your name and number attending) or email the same info to [petereinl@churchandchapel.us](mailto:petereinl@churchandchapel.us)

### Men Journeying Through Grief (for men only)

Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>  
6:00 to 8:00pm  
Harwood Place

8220 Harwood Ave., Wauwatosa

Men Journeying Through Grief is a gathering of men who have experienced the death of a loved one, friend or co-worker – who find themselves on this journey called grief. This FREE gathering includes a simple supper, grief information, discussion and resources.

RSVP by calling 262-524-4132 or e-mail  
[petereinl@churchandchapel.us](mailto:petereinl@churchandchapel.us)



### Journey of Grief Video Series

A wonderful seven part grief support video series entitled *Journey of Grief*, featuring Doug Manning, can be found in the grief support section of the Church and Chapel Funeral Home Web Site. Titles included in the series are:

*The Journey of Grief*

*The Dimensions of Grief*

*The Ceremonies of Grief*

*The Normal Reactions of Grief*

*The Significance of Grief*

*The Definition of Grief*

*The Needs of Grief*

Simply go to [www.churchandchapel.com](http://www.churchandchapel.com) and click on *Grief Support* found on the menu to the right.

For an updated listing of area grief support groups, upcoming grief seminars or programs visit the web site of Church and Chapel Funeral Homes at [www.churchandchapel.com](http://www.churchandchapel.com) and click on the grief support icon or call Pete Reinl, Director of Grief Support Services, at 414-651-2737 or email Pete at [petereinl@churchandchapel.us](mailto:petereinl@churchandchapel.us)