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FUNERAL HOMES

Serving the South Dakota Communities of Gettysburg, Faulkton, Eagle Butte, Highmore, Miller

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"Providing Comfort To Families"

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Chapters

turning the pages through grief



Finding Meaning in Loss

At least initially, the death of a loved one can feel like a profound waste, a meaningless experience devoid of anything good. The loss of meaning for those who live on in the wake of a loved one's death is perhaps the most frequently described experience of the grief process. As you attempt to find meaning in this experience, these ideas will provide direction for you...

Consider the content of your questions. Questions abound, especially after a sudden or violent loss. How did this happen? What were the circumstances of the death? Could any intervention have

prevented his death? Perhaps the most difficult question of all, however, is, "Why did this happen?" Seeking answers to your most pressing questions can be a valuable

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"I'm not saying it's not interesting, maybe even beautiful, I just don't know what it means."

part of the grief experience. At the same time, however, remember that not all questions can be answered, while others may require months or years to discover answers. You may want to ask yourself, "While I want to know the details and the reasons for this loss, what will I do if I never get those answers?" Even if answers are slow to come or never come, you must find a way to make sense of the loss and enfold it into the rest of your life.

Take stock of your own belief system. Your worldview, the term philosophers use to describe the values and beliefs that form your framework for seeing the world, effects how you grieve. Many

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*Everyone is doing the best they can
at any given moment.*

— David Kessler

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Americans, for example, hold as part of their worldview the notion that good things happen to good people and that we get what we pay for. As a result, we are often surprised when something bad happens and we refer to this turn of events with terms like “earth-shaking” and “life-altering.”

Making meaning means discovering who you are and how you have changed in the light of this loss.

Making meaning in loss requires us to ponder our basic belief system, our fundamental worldview. One way to do this is to ask yourself, “What specific ideas did I have about the way the world works that were overturned by this death?” You may have thought parents should never bury children, hard work pays off in a long retirement to enjoy the “fruits of labor,” or that God rewards good deeds with good health and long life. Over the next few weeks, write down these shattered ideas as you think of them.

Review your life priorities. Many bereaved people report that they have reevaluated their life’s priorities in light of this loss. Perhaps you want to be more verbally expressive to those you love or you would like to become more charitable toward those who are different. Making meaning means discovering who you are and how you have changed in the light of this loss. What changes would you want to make in how you view relationships, money, and time? Are there ways you think now you might want to change any of those?

Consider the circumstances of the loss as you seek meaning. Sometimes it is the circumstances of your loved one’s death that offers rich opportunities for making meaning. One mom began speaking to high school assemblies about the dangers of drunk driving after her daughter was killed in a alcohol-related crash. Great movements have grown out of profound loss; think of Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the Joshua Mutafya Foundation for Troubled Youth as two examples of how families used their own losses to create a sustainable organization in memory of their loved one who died.

Seek the counsel of others. Making meaning after a loss is rarely easy. In fact, meaning-making may be the most difficult, long-range task you undertake in the bereavement experience. Seek the counsel of supportive family members, bereavement support group participants, a leader in your faith community or a psychotherapist especially trained in helping people face grief and loss issues. Whatever you do, do not try to “go it alone” as you grapple with the meaning-making tasks of grief.

For most of us, making meaning in loss is a difficult task. If you have not already begun keeping a journal, begin one now. The insights you discover will be clarified as you write them down and your journal gives you a way to see how you have grown through your experiences.

■ Online communities and resources can provide new and fresh perspectives on grieving, coping, wellness, and allow opportunities for interaction with like-minded people. Your chosen funeral home’s website can also offer a variety of helpful information. You are encouraged to start there.



ONLINE:

- **FriendGrief, friendgrief.com**
Personal blog designed to support those who have lost friends.
- **Bereaved Parents of the USA**
bereavedparentsusa.org
Connects grieving parents with other bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings for one-on-one support.

TIME OUT



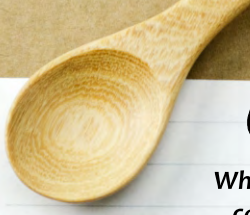
August

- **Birthstone:** Peridot
- **Flower:** Gladiolus and Poppy

A Call for August
By Sandra Fowler

There is a blue fragrance, essence of dusk.
The smoke of last things lingers on old clothes.
Sun has become as rare as goldenrod.
I call for August, but no answer comes.

Autumn awaits across a worn doorsill.
I need you to make sense of falling leaves,
When death paints a rich picture of itself,
And shadows measure out the long way home.



recipe card

CANDY BREAK

While candy isn't a substitute for a meal, it can be a satisfying, feel-good treat. The following are a few of the healthiest candy options from everydayhealth.com.

- **UnReal Milk Chocolate Gems:** Stick to the mini version of this treat that contains no artificial flavor and color comes from natural sources such as hibiscus and turmeric.
- **Endangered Species Dark Chocolate Bites:** Low in sugar, higher in fiber. Dark chocolate may help heart health.
- **Peanut M&Ms:** Peanuts provide protein and fiber, which help prevent blood sugar spikes and overindulging.
- **Snickers candy bar:** The “fun size” bar has less sugar and will leave you satisfied thanks to the protein.
- **Peanut Butter Cups:** Good combination of protein and fiber here too. Provides 110 calories per cup.
- **Blow Pop sucker:** A non-chocolate option, this sucker can be a practical choice. Less sugar than many candies, and the gum center makes it last longer.

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