



The Complexities of Men's Grief

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Remember when you were a kid and your favorite pet died, oh how you cried. The only person that made you feel better was your mom; she held you and made the pain go away. Your dad made you feel good too, but only after a good round of baseball or a special trip somewhere; he tried to help you forget the pain. The different approach or roles our parents played in our grieving process molded our response to how we deal with grief as men.

Men and women tend to grieve in different ways. We both want the pain to go away, but how we get there is defined in our upbringing, our expectations, and the roles we play. Most societies "generally" expect men to fulfill a protector/provider role, and women fulfill a caregiver role. There are lots of reasons about whether these roles are good or bad, where they came from, and whether they can or should be changed. For the most part most men still feel that we are expected to protect and provide for our wives, children, and community. We feel that we are expected to get hit and tackled, get up, forget the last hit, and do it again. AKA Football.

When a man is thrown into grief by various ways such as: becoming a single parent after losing a wife, such as myself, or when he loses a work companion, or a father's precious daughter dies, we often do what our father taught us, we try to keep busy so that we can forget the pain often causing us to go into a cave. Yet it is important for us to realize that we have to move through our pain and not around our pain in order to heal.

So how can men best help themselves?

1. Allow yourself to experience the painful emotions of grief. Crying in the shower is good.
2. Recognize that there are times that you may need to be alone and there may be times you will need reliable friends to talk to.
3. Don't be afraid to express your feelings. Communication is an important part in the grieving process.
4. Keep busy do activities that help you to express and work through your grief. If you golf, keep golfing. Or perhaps this is a time to try something new.
5. Take time for you, slow down and be reflective. Let God know how you feel and ask him to help you.
6. Stay healthy, eat good food and get sleep. Any activity in excess during grief can be dangerous.

So perhaps men do need to go into their caves for a while just like women feel they must go deep with in. And if what made us feel best was our mothers love shouldn't we explore her techniques.

We are complicated emotional creatures, but have a responsibility to family, others, and then maybe ourselves. We feel we must protect, make secure, and fix everything, including our grief.