

GRIEF IS LIKE A WAVE IN THE OCEAN

A transcript from:

<https://wisdomofthewounded.com/grief-is-like-a-wave-in-the-ocean>

Karen: Well, let's start with a metaphor. Someone once told me that the grief process is like a wave in the ocean. If that's true, Larry, what does that say about the grief process?

Larry: Well, I can think of two or three things. First of all, while I haven't gone through a lot of personal deep grief, I certainly have been in the ocean. And I have been in the surf. And I know what it's like when I'm riding a wave in the surf and I think I am on top of everything and in control, and all of a sudden, the wave totally inundates me and bowls me over; so, that one minute I go from the top of the wave down into the gravel. I'm being ground and hurt and scratched up in the bottom of the ocean surf.

Karen: I think that is really true also about the grief process.

Grieving people tell me that they feel overwhelmed, bowled over. They can't cope, they can't concentrate. They don't know what to do next. Their emotions seem out of control. Life seems like a lot of puzzle pieces just flying around. So grieving certainly can be like that wave. What else, Larry?

Larry: Well, I've also been in the deep ocean in very heavy seas in a larger ship, and I know that there the waves don't necessarily break, although once in a while they do. But there are big huge ocean swells that you ride up on and then you come back down. For one minute, you

can be on top of a huge sea and you can see all over the horizon. And 30 seconds, 45 seconds later, you're down in the wave trough, and one thinks that the water is going to come right over the deck of your ship.

Karen: Again that's just like the grief journey. It's like a roller-coaster. Sometimes you are up and you're feeling good. You're feeling like you can cope, and you even are starting to look forward to a future. And then you can round a corner and run into someone that looks so much like the person you loved and lost that you are thrown back down into trough again.

Larry: That kind of reminds me of another thing that can happen, at least in the deep ocean. The waves normally will have a rhythm and a pattern to them; so that after a while you know that you are going to go up, then you're going to go down, and you're going to go back up and you're going to go back down. But every once in a while, there will be an unpredictable rogue wave that will come from the side or there will be a breaking surf wave that will come right over the deck of the ship and just completely knock you off balance. And it comes so unexpectedly, that it is almost like a freak incident.

Karen: First you are saying, it's predictable but then it becomes unpredictable. And I think that is really true. We can talk about all of the different emotional reactions that are part of a grief journey, even though each person's journey is unique. But we've talked about anger and depression and guilt and physical problems and sadness. All of these are part of the grief journey. It doesn't mean that every single person is going to experience some and can predict them, because grieving is an unpredictable journey.

Larry: Finally, I think, that that no matter how difficult it is, when you are out in the deep ocean and you are in heavy seas, it is absolutely predictable that they will calm down. And there will be a calming of the ocean if you give it enough time. And there will be times when the sun starts coming through the clouds and you can see a glimmer of hope.

Karen: Yes, there is also hope especially if you have someone, a friend that walks along beside you.

© Karen Mulder and Wisdom of the Wounded. For reprint permission please contact: karen@wisdomofthewounded.com