

The following is from: psychologytoday.com/blog/the-journey-ahead/200804/time-heals-all-wounds-or-does-it .

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I have added some highlighting to this and the other papers I have included.

Time Heals All Wounds, or Does It?

Time doesn't heal, it's what you DO with the time that does.

Posted Apr 24, 2008

As a counselor who specializes in end-of-life and bereavement matters, I often hear of people giving bereaved people advice similar to “you just need some time, after all ‘time heals all wounds.’” It is as if these **well-meaning people** are saying: “Just sit back and in time you’ll no longer have the sadness, anguish, yearning, guilt, anger, and fear you’re feeling now. **They’ll fade away, and you’ll be fine.**” Wow! What an interesting concept! But wait a minute, that approach to grieving raises a couple of questions. First, how long is “some time” - two months, one year, two years, five years? The second question is why doesn’t this apply to the rest of our lives? After all, we have to look for a new job, search for the right house, study to get through school. Even if we want to win the lottery, we still have to buy the ticket. We have to take the initiative to do something to cause something else to happen. Is grief different? Can it really be true that time alone is enough for grief to go away? I don’t think so and let me give you an example why.

Last year, a bright, highly-educated, articulate young woman came into my office six years after her father had suddenly died. My new client told me she was working two jobs, one of which was heading up a new company she had started. She described how she had found it very difficult to talk, or even think, about her father without bursting into

tears. To keep herself “under control,” she kept herself frantically busy. She threw herself into her work, taking on tasks others wouldn’t do, answering email and writing proposals until late at night, and traveling on most weekends. At home, she spent hours cleaning and straightening up her apartment so it looked like a picture out of a magazine. One thing she did that really irritated her new fiancée was that she spent hours folding and re-folding towels and then aligning and realigning them in the linen closet until they were just right. She was doing whatever she could to distract herself from acknowledging what she already knew - her father had died. She was running from her grief.

She finally realized she had to do something because she couldn’t continue this way after she married and had children. Her first attempt at addressing her situation was to attend a Loss of Parent bereavement support group. However, she could go only once. As she later told me, she was embarrassed that she was in the same place in her mourning as others whose parent had died only six months earlier. It was as if her mourning had gone no further from where it was 5.5 years ago. She was stuck, and no more time would have eased or erased her grief. Time had done nothing for her; time had NOT been her friend.

After six months of counseling she worked through what she had been running from for over 5 years and found peace with her father’s death. Her frantic behaviors have ceased and now, she is a fully functioning young woman with plans for getting married next year.

The point here, though, is that time does NOT heal all wounds. A more apt saying is “IT’S WHAT YOU DO WITH THE TIME THAT HEALS.” Like any other aspect of life, mourning is an active, working process, not a passive one.