



*“The historian Francis Jennings wrote poignantly that the Mayflower landed not in a virgin land, but a widowed land. Epic disease had already nearly emptied a long stretch of coastline that once thronged with people. Every survivor, which is to say, practically every living person had lost someone, and some people lost everyone.” – David Silver*

## THE FIRST THANKSGIVING:

### ALL WERE GRIEVING YET GRATEFUL

*Thanksgiving will soon be upon us. Some will relish the comfort of family celebrations, sharing stories, playing games, feasting, pondering the things for which we are grateful. For some that will mean football. For others it will be awkward and mournful looking at the empty seat at the table. I hope you take the time to talk about your loved one. Perhaps light a candle as each person shares a story. Laughter and tears.*

*ALL were grieving at the first “Thanksgiving.” Three years before the Mayflower, the Pokanoket tribe of Chief Massasoit was 300 strong, only 90 survived a devastating disease. Of the original 102 Mayflower passengers, 44 survived. Only four women were left to cook the first Thanksgiving meal called by the new governor, William Bradford, recent widower.*

It had not even been a year since Dorothy Bradford, twenty-three years old, braved the wintry December air, escaping the dark dingy damp cramped quarters of the Mayflower moored in Plymouth Harbor. Her husband, William, and the other pilgrim men searched the land for a suitable place to build, leaving women and children on ship. Hours had passed. She slid her way along the moist deck towards the bow, clutching the railing, hoping to get a view of their return.

The cold sun warmed her heart. The salty wind stung her cheeks. Through seven years of tragedies and torments, including the turbulent ten weeks across the ocean, William and Dorothy Bradford held tight to each other and in their trust of God.

Her only heartbreak was leaving their son John behind. But once it was safer, he too would join them. Their family would be together, faithfully building in the New World.

She felt a tug. Her heavy skirt caught a nail. Her strong arms yanked them free. Her foot slipped. Her hands missed the railing. She fell overboard. Grasping desperately at the air, her feet and legs pierced the water. Her billowed skirts floated on the surface, soon soaking in the icy sea water, pulling her down. **Dorothy Bradford disappeared under the dark swirling waters never to be seen again.**

William, thirty years old, never showed his broken heart through words, except in prayer. His grief took the form of action. There was land to clear, trees to cut, shelter to build, food to be hunted and grown. Shoulder to shoulder the men worked, they all lost family and friends. The women cried, talked, and prayed together while, cooking, sewing, gathering wood, nursing the sick, and giving comfort to the dying. They all would honor the deceased by trusting God’s vision and mission to create a community where they could worship freely without persecution.

Now, a year later, 1621, Bradford stood before the 44 survivors mourning 58 of their community. He remembered how close he came to death himself only two months after his wife. He nodded at Chief Massasoit, grateful for their alliance and wisdom. Massasoit too harbored grief, a disease swallowing over 200 in his tribe shortly before the Mayflower arrived.

(Article continues next page...)



Bradford offered a prayer of gratitude, thankful for God's Providence and People. Thankful for the friendship of the Pokanoket and Squanto who taught them how to plant, creating this bountiful harvest. Gratitude with Grief? None of us are thankful for the death of a loved one! Yet there is space for gratitude even in grief.

**Gratitude's source is the heart.** Mind may lead us to understand it as thankfulness. But gratitude? Gratitude is pure. Saturated in grace, it permeates other emotions around it with her velvety power.

**How do we access this?** First, we stop. Find a quiet place. Close your eyes. Take deep breaths. Focus on your breath for as long as it takes. Consciously, temporarily bracket the whirlwind of emotions, confusion, anger, fear, joy, sorrow, desire, chaos, and all that swirls in the aftermath of death. In that space consider the gifts of life: the fragrances, the brilliant colors, the warmth of the sun, the sound of children's laughter. Anything that brings you joy.

**Let Peace build** as you gratefully absorb the good memories, and hand over any trials and troubles still lingering. Give Thanks. With Gratitude comes release and healing. This takes time, this stilling of ourselves. Consider practicing this daily. (This also works while driving, just don't close your eyes!)

**Gritty Gratitude** might be more your style. Fall is a good time to plant trees, bury bulbs, or start a project: ANYTHING to honor the life of your loved one. I've noticed in our grief group that **the men DO things, quietly, shoulder to shoulder with other men, to grieve.** Keith made a gazebo, Larry painted the house, and Rex built the porch his wife always wanted. (See next article based on Tom Golden's book [The Way Men Heal.](#))

**This autumn, like the Pilgrims, let us blend grief with gratitude.**

*VickiJolene Lindley Reece©, Continuous Care Coordinator*

**"Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough."**

**Dr. Paul Jehle of the Plymouth Rock Foundation considers the questions Bradford and the survivors surely asked themselves. Questions we too face today in the wake of our own losses:**

*"So, what do you do when you have made your settlement upon the abandoned ground of previous inhabitants who died from a devastating disease?"*

*What do you do when half your own number dies in only a few months?"*

*Death has swallowed you up as it had your predecessors. Do you give up?"*

*With so much death around you, with what confidence do you hope for the future? Their confidence and hope resided in their faith in God and that His calling and mission for them had not changed."*

**Bradford didn't talk about his grief; he honored the losses by pouring the rest of his life into creating a democratic model of governing, which President John Adams later credited for inspiring our Constitution.**

**Personally, Bradford moved forward and chose a happy home life. John did come to Plymouth to join his father in their work. Three years after Dorothy's death he married widow Alice Southworth. They raised a family, who raised their families, and now there are millions who claim them as ancestors.**

## PEACE OF MIND BY PREPARING

It's 80 degrees outside. We haven't even had a freeze or one flake of snow. But the city has already connected the poles to the fire hydrants. The ones that mark their location in case they get buried in snow! It will snow soon. God forbid if there is a fire and we can't find the source of water to put it out!

Planning ahead is very important. We don't like to think of the painful things that can happen, yet is best to prepare. Preparation brings peace of mind.

No one likes to think of death. Yet, it is inevitable. For some it is pending and heartbreaking. At Locke Funeral Services, we are glad to sit down and talk; no strings attached. We know it's overwhelming. We also know that at the time of death it is such a relief when one has taken the time to make decisions ahead. Please consider:

- Talking with your loved ones.
- Calling a funeral home professional to discuss and ask questions, such as options and costs.
- Recording your biographical information and wishes.
- Creating a cost estimate of your choices and related miscellaneous items.
- Prepaying, if you so desire.

## SIX THINGS YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT MASCULINE GRIEF

*“My brother just lost his wife! Why isn’t he crying? Doesn’t he care?”*

*“Ever since Julie died all he does is renovate the house! She’d bugged him about that. Why is he doing it now?”*

*“He won’t talk with his sisters? But he’s going fishing with his buddies every weekend?”*

Men and women communicate in different ways. Sometimes this can be frustrating, especially when grieving. Many times, women complain or worry that the men are not grieving. They aren’t talking, they aren’t crying. And the men can feel shamed, judged, and misunderstood while they are deeply grieving. Masculine grief can be invisible, but once we understand it, we’ll find it’s right there in plain sight. We just need to know where to look. The answer is biological, psychological, and cultural. **Healing from grief does not require crying. We must feel to heal, but can those feelings take the form of action in concrete future-oriented ways? Yes.**

The purpose of this article is to understand how the majority of men process their grief based on physiology and cultural expectations as they have traditionally been established. When we recognize and respect the differences, we can prevent frustrations and even get what we want in our relationships.

### **#1 Why don’t men grieve like women? Answer: BECAUSE THEY ARE MEN**

Dr. John Gray gives helpful insights in Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus. “Without the awareness that we are supposed to be different, men and women are at odds with one another. We usually become angry or frustrated with the opposite sex because we have forgotten this important truth. We expect the opposite sex to be more like ourselves. We desire them to “want what we want” and “feel the way we feel.” Gray goes on to explain that when under stress, men will pull away. They need space and time to think. Women will draw closer. They need time to talk and share feelings.

“A woman’s sense of self is defined through her feelings and the quality of her relationships...personal expression, especially feelings are very important. Talking and relating to one another is a source of tremendous fulfillment.” When men quickly offer solutions, it is seen as uncaring because “he’s not listening.” When a man listens at length and acknowledges her feelings, she feels cherished and cared for. Then she is open to his insights on how to “fix it.”

“A man’s sense of self is defined through his ability to achieve results,” adds Gray. Men are motivated to prove their competence in autonomous ways. When he does need help, he will ask for advice. When women give unsolicited advice, it is seen as criticism and a questioning of his competence to solve the problem.

Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross gives high praise to Tom Golden who has worked with men and boys in trauma for over 30 years. He has been featured on CBS, CNN, ESPN and the NFL Channel along with numerous New York newspapers. She said this about his book Swallowed By A Snake: “I find this material interesting and stimulating and feel

it will fill a void in the literature about grief and gender differences. The material presents a fresh look into the uniqueness of a man’s grief in a way that both men and women will find extremely helpful.” His later book The Way Men Heal distills his findings in a practical way to help us understand how we can help a man heal in a way that works for most men.

### **#2 Why doesn’t my husband cry? Answer: IT’S BIOLOGICAL**

Golden lays the foundation. It’s physiology: it starts in the brain. If a man isn’t crying, we must understand that it all began when he was in his mother’s womb. The little two-month-old fetus received a flood of the masculine hormone testosterone which primed his brain for the rest of his life. That flood comes again at birth and at puberty. As a man ages, the testosterone decreases, which is why older men cry more easily.

Females can also have a masculine brain. Twenty percent of women get the testosterone flood. Males can have a feminine brain if they receive a flood of the hormone estrogen like 80% of women. And some get both creating hybrid brains!

How does testosterone affect the brain? A masculine brain is more prone to deal with things systematically and look for solutions. A feminine brain helps one to be empathic and under stress will emote to others or “tend and befriend.” A masculine brain leads one into action (fight) or inaction (flight).

This article focuses on the men with masculine brains with the hope of increasing understanding and compassion. But all will apply to women with masculine brains, and those who have chosen to have testosterone treatments. Let’s explore this with open minds, we must not pigeonhole, yet a broad brush will give us a general understanding.

Studies show that testosterone “1. diminishes access to emotional tears, 2. slows the ability to verbally articulate emotions when in the midst of feeling them, and 3. encourages a physical response.” (Golden, p. 23)

### **#3 Why do men hide their grief? Answer: IT’S INVISIBLE BUT IN PLAIN SIGHT.**

“Big boys don’t cry” and other admonitions are internalized by men at a very young age. Society traditionally avoids male pain in many ways. Even in the most innocent ways boys are shamed when showing such emotions. This is globally practiced over the centuries.

“The cultural taboo and judgment of the culture at large of his emotions impels a man to seek out a more quiet and hidden path in working with his grief. The rigid male role of provide and protect goes a step further in encouraging him to follow the path of serving/protecting others and not making a fuss over his own personal needs. Our culture also follows this push and ignores both the needs and emotional pain of men unless it is connected to an issue that provides resources or protects others.

“The dominance hierarchy sets men up to strive for higher status and to cover their dependency since any show of neediness will immediately drop your ranking in the hierarchy. Finally, brain differences and testosterone dry up his tears, alter his ability to articulate emotions and encourage a solution having more to do with understanding and building systems or problem solving rather than one of empathy.

“The multiple factors pushing men in this direction each seem powerful but when bundled together it seems to be an overwhelming force. Seen together it is obvious that men simply don’t find public or open emotion to be a safe practice, rather they see it as a place of harsh judgment and shaming.” (p. 24)

Gray would add that when men feel stress, they will go to their “cave.” They will go it alone, finding their own solutions without being observed or criticized. Autonomy and competence are very important to men. If they need help, they will turn to a safe non-judgmental person who can offer knowledge and wisdom. But they must initiate this. When a woman offers unsolicited advice before he asks, he may crawl deeper into his cave or defend himself. It’s not a matter of not being willing to accept help. It’s a matter of when and where to give it.

#### **#4 Why won’t men talk about it? Answer: MEN HEAL SHOULDER TO SHOULDER**

Men will talk about it when approached in indirect ways. Whereas grieving women will draw in others and share their feelings. Women deal with loss directly, eyeball to eyeball. Men deal with loss indirectly shoulder to shoulder. To stand face to face is interpreted by males as a challenge. Consider the words “face off” in basketball or football, to stare eyeball to eyeball is interpreted as a showdown. Ladies we may love to gather in groups, share our hearts, but men? They are much more comfortable if engaged in something together, be it a project to be solved, building, washing a car, grilling a steak, running, working out, you name it. In the midst of the activity, the sharing of their concerns will happen.

Golden tells of a mother whose son wouldn’t talk to her. She wanted Tom to counsel him. But Golden asked her what her late husband did with the son. Since the answer was “shoot hoops.” He told her to play ball on the driveway. Imagine the banter as a son teases his mother’s inept talents at hoops. Then he scores a three-pointer and everything changes. He finally made the shot his dad was teaching him. Dad is gone, not here to see it. The tears, the talk naturally opens a portal to his grief. Mother and son sit on the driveway as he pours out his heart.

The same can happen when you honor his loved one. Take time to consider what that person enjoyed. The Green Bay Packers? Take him to a game in honor of his father. She died of cancer? Hold a fundraiser in her name to help others fight the battle or give a donation in her honor. He loved nature? Plant a tree, or go for a walk in the woods together.

This is most important: *Bringeth not thy agenda. Just listen, talk about the activity. Simply love your friend. Enjoy the moment.* He may bring up the loved one. He may not. If he initiates, good. If he doesn’t? Good. You just had a wonderful time together. You gave honor, love and respect. Just what he needed. He will appreciate it.

#### **#5 What are the ways men grieve best? Answer: MEN USE ACTION AND INACTION TO HEAL**

When Eric Clapton lost his son, he locked himself up with his guitar, only leaving his home to attend AA meetings. He played and the songs came. Creativity, be it songs, art, gardens, foundations, memorials, let men move their grief into something solid and lasting. Their grief takes on new meanings in a future forward way.

I never understood this. One gentleman in our grief group

made the most amazing gazebo in his backyard. Every week he added it to it. He brought us pictures. Her favorite flowers in her favorite colors. Bit by bit, like a beautiful collage, he honored her. He wrote her poems and letters; he made her favorite meal on her birthday. Now, after reading Tom Golden’s book, I understand him. I understand the men that continue to put birdseed in the wives’ feeders, who make sure red geraniums flock the porch, who tend the grave, who asked us to wear her favorite color (blue) to the funeral.

It made no sense when Michael Jordan left the Chicago Bulls Shortly after, he announced he would play baseball. Why? He didn’t say. Later we learned it was because his father, who had recently been murdered, always wanted him to play baseball even during Jordan’s amazing basketball career. Michael Jordan was honoring his father and in doing so used action to heal his grief.

The way men heal their grief is active and inactive: Scholarships, Charities, Memorials, Creativity, Painting, Writing, Sculpting, Building, Listening to Music, Playing Music, Sewing, Writing, Journaling, Reading, Family Gatherings, Cooking, Meditation, Solitude, Pilgrimages are just some of the ways men will process their grief. Pay attention. If he is fixing her favorite meal, pulling out the photo album, driving to a memorable place, even making a Facebook page, he is processing his grief. Consider coming along-side him. Instead of asking him how he’s feeling, simply ask him “How’s it coming along?” Be genuinely interested. He may say little, he may say more, just respect and appreciate him.

#### **#6 What can I do to help men grieve? Answer: RESPECT, APPRECIATE AND FEED THEM**

-Respect who they are and that their process is not your process. Criticism never works.

-Ask him how’s it going, or what he’s up to, rather than how he feels.

-Honor their loved through something tangible or active.

-Acknowledge and affirm them. Genuine interest in their projects, praise their attempts.

-Feed them. A good meal works wonders and is always welcome.

*Losing a loved one is horrible. I am sorry you are going through this right now. If you need extra support, please call our office at Locke Funeral Services. As Continuous Care Coordinator I’m here, to talk on the phone, or meet for a cup of coffee. We offer two Grief Groups, and yes men have been known to join a group, especially after a few months of trying to go it alone. We care about you and know the healing of grief takes a very long time. Please reach out. You don’t need to have any connection to the funeral home to do so. This is our gift to the community.*

*VickiJolene Lindley Reece©, Continuous Care Coordinator*

**HOMEWORK:** Order The Way Men Heal. It’s 54 pages, easy to read and only \$8.00. Gift it to friends. Not a reader? Search for Tom Golden on YouTube. He’s delightful. Men Are From Mars, Women are from Venus by John Gray is the only book my late husband asked me to read. It helped us in many ways. Five stars for both books!

# Blessing

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by John O'Donohue

*for Josie, my mother*

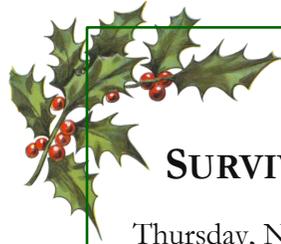
On the day when  
the weight deadens  
on your shoulders  
and you stumble,  
may the clay dance  
to balance you.

And when your eyes  
freeze behind  
the grey window  
and the ghost of loss  
gets into you,  
may a flock of colours,  
indigo, red, green  
and azure blue,  
come to awaken in you  
a meadow of delight.

When the canvas frays  
in the currach of thought  
and a stain of ocean  
blackens beneath you,  
may there come across the waters  
a path of yellow moonlight  
to bring you safely home.

May the nourishment of the earth be yours,  
may the clarity of light be yours,  
may the fluency of the ocean be yours,  
may the protection of the ancestors be yours.

And so may a slow  
wind work these words  
of love around you,  
an invisible cloak  
to mind your life.



## Special Workshop

### SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS

Thursday, November 2 and November 9, 2023

1:00-2:30 Cabin Coffee, 2040 Kimball,  
Waterloo

5:00-6:30 Locke at Tower Park, 4140 Kimball,  
Waterloo

*We encourage you to come with family and friends.*

Please join us as we look at the expectations and emotions of the holidays in the wake of grief. We offer this early to give you time to consider your true needs! Many people found this to be extremely helpful.

This hands-on workshop will help you look ahead, to fortify and encourage you as you deal with family and friends. We will listen and love together. You are encouraged to come with a friend or family member. This is free to the community.

Mary Ann attended last year, she says this:

“Christmas filled with traditions of food, drink, decorations, singing, family love, and spiritual connection that carried us thru the New Year now was replaced by not wanting to cook, not wanting to decorate, and drinking for a different reason. I dealt with doubts of spiritual connection; wondering now if I could make it to the next year.

“But what remained in forefront was the family love that was from my time of birth to our children and their children. Grief blinded me to the magic part of Christmas and to what was important: the meaning of celebration!

“I started asking what would Rich want? So a compelling reassessment took over and acts of love, acts of joy, acts of honoring Rich and the love we shared came to the forefront:

“At the dinner table was his place setting as we gathered around but it was not truly an empty place at the table. It was the beginning of grief’s grace learned from our group and inspired by love.”

We hope you will join us for this special two week workshop.

## In This Issue

- The First Thanksgiving: All Were Grieving Yet Grateful
- Peace of Mind by Preparing
- Six Things You Must Know About Masculine Grief
- Special Workshops Surviving the Holidays November 2 and 9
- Dates of Continuous Care Support Group Meetings

## JOIN US every Thursday!

### 2023 Continuous Care Support Groups



#### Grief Support Daytime Meetings

**TIME:** 1:00–2:30 p.m.

**LOCATION:**

Cabin Coffee, 2040 Kimball Ave., Waterloo

#### Grief Support Evening Meetings

**TIME:** 5:00–6:30 p.m.

**LOCATION:**

Locke Tower Park, 4140 Kimball Ave, Waterloo

**DATES:**

October 5, 12, 19, 26

November 2, 9, 16, 30

*Please feel free to bring a friend*

All groups are *free* and open to the public! Call with questions at 319-233-6138.

**WEATHER ALERT:** If schools are closed due to weather, the meeting is canceled.

Want to be on our mailing list? Give us a call, and we can add you to our quarterly newsletter list.

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