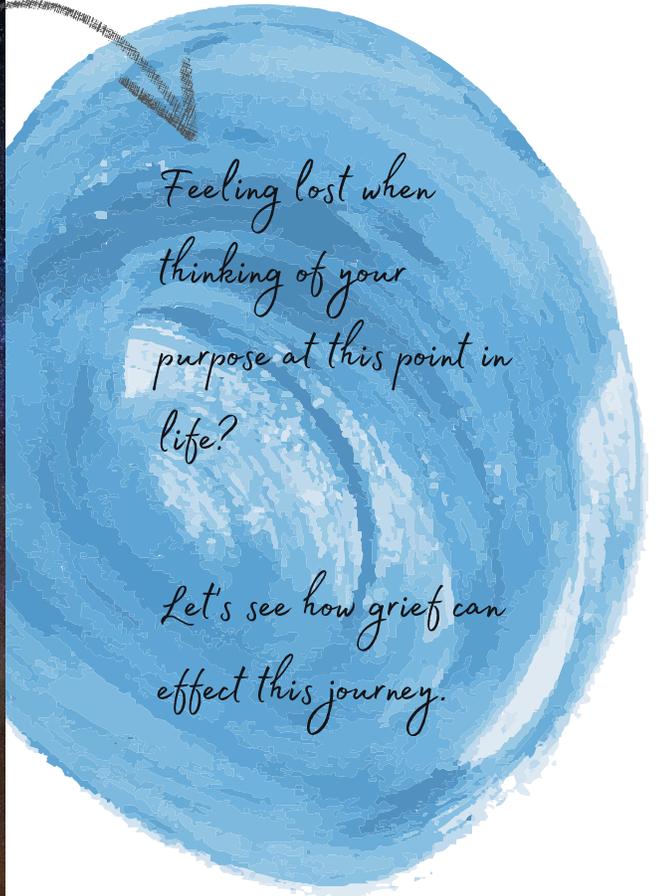
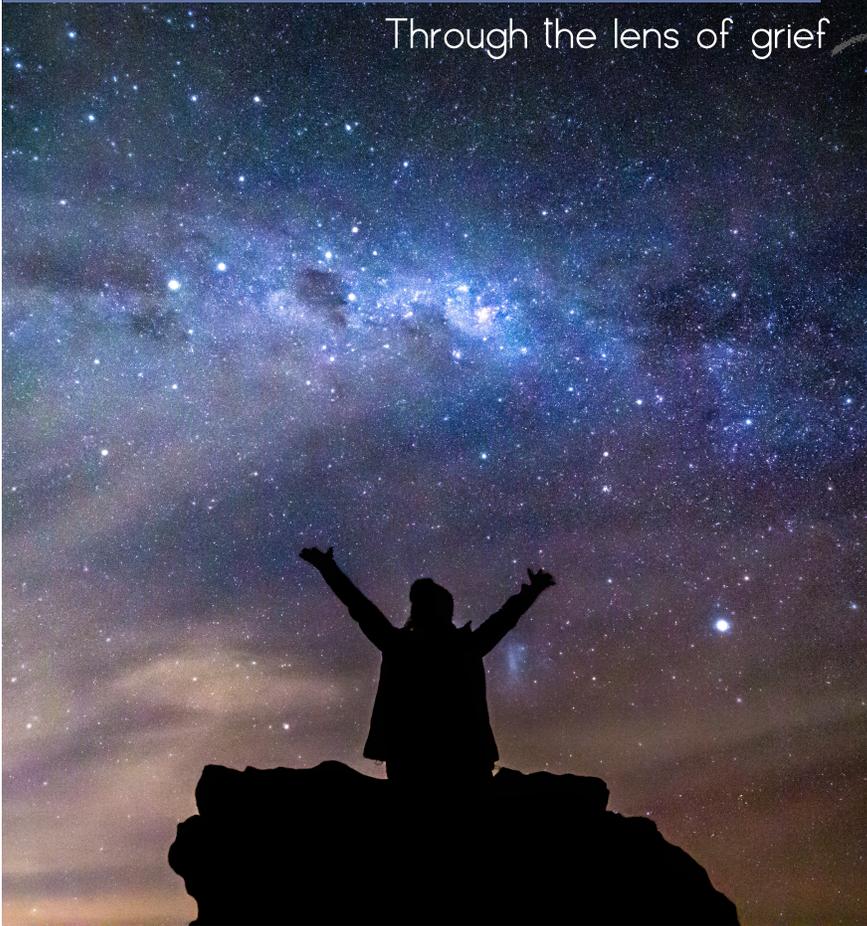


THE OTHER SIDE OF PURPOSE

Through the lens of grief



Think of the labels you give yourself. They may be related to a job, your family or friends, or what you value in life. Here are just five examples of what some of your life labels are:

- I am a _____

Please be very literal about these labels, such as: a teacher, a son, a nurse, etc. without adding feeling, such as: a distant friend, a tired caregiver, a depressed wife, etc. While those feelings are important, we are going to start small.

These labels help us to determine what is important in our lives, and where our energy goes. Throughout life, these labels may change. Some changes may be welcome such as becoming a parent or gaining a new job. Others may feel unwelcome because we do not like the change, such as, caregiver to a ill or dying person and griever.



It seems that especially when we get to this "griever" label, that so many of our other labels shift, fall off, or may not feel right anymore. We can feel as though we are just drifting through without that same feeling of purpose and drive, as we may have previously experienced. It's important to acknowledge that this is a real experience. Your life has just been shaken up and turned upside down. You have every right to pause and take time to re-examine what your life looks like now.

In the midst of grief, we are tasked with re-defining our purpose in life. Sounds like a daunting task, doesn't it? So many of us base daily tasks, overall mindsets, and life goals on our feeling of purpose. So when it doesn't feel as though we have a purpose, after so much change, what do we do?

We invite you to start small. Our society speaks of purpose as a large and all-encompassing feeling or journey. But what if we were to start with small tasks that felt as though they aligned with our soul and ways of living? What if our purpose is small and shifts throughout the day, everyday. What if we can have so many wonderful little purposes sitting inside of us just waiting to show us the amazing power of small, steady steps in life?

Let's take a look at some ideas.



- Taking care of your home.
- Smiling at someone in public.
- Complimenting someone on something they are wearing, doing, or just for who they are.
- Being a good steward of your yard.
- Calling someone to say "hi".
- Sharing your art with the world.
- Volunteering somewhere you love.
- Joining a group to support yourself and others.
- Taking care of yourself.
- Loving and caring for your pet.
- Paying it forward.
- Waving at a neighbor.
- Learning something new.

These might be things we do anyway, but may never have thought of them as wonderful little bits of purpose sprinkled throughout our day. Now that we have made this shift in our brains and our hearts, what are some bits of purpose you can focus on carrying out in your life?



Yes, grief brings with it many challenges, but if we can slow down and really examine some of what it brings us, we may also be able to find opportunity to take grief by the hand and learn to walk side-by-side with it. Instead of trying to turn away or even run away from it, we can embrace aspects of it to help us cope with the full experience and journey it places at our front door.

Purpose can be found in the smallest cracks of our lives and can join us as we are learning who we will become in this season of life.