

Grief and Our Own Mortality by Tim Soucy, Bereavement Coordinator

For many of us our lives are so busy that we rarely think about our own mortality. Our society tends to shy away from thinking about or talking about death. If we do consider our own mortality, it is generally the result of a loved one's death, a near death experience, or a catastrophe. Even if we have a philosophical, religious, or spiritual understanding of death, it does not mean that there is an absence of sadness, fear, or a host of other thoughts and emotions that come with grief.

You have received this Grief Note because you have recently experienced the death of a loved one. As a result, thoughts and emotions concerning your own mortality may have emerged. What often catches us off guard is that in our grieving of a loved one, we may begin to grieve our own mortality. This writer wants to acknowledge the sadness, fear, and uncertainty that may accompany thoughts of our own mortality and at the same time suggest the possibility of "befriending" our own mortality. There are benefits that can come from this.

Befriending our own mortality begins by facing that we all will die one day.

This is not a suggestion to think about death all the time, but it is a suggestion to simply, mindfully, and willfully live. This intentional acknowledgement of our own mortality may increase our capacity to live life with increased gratitude and appreciation.

As you befriend your grief and mortality, may you also enjoy the possibility of another day.

To befriend our own mortality creates opportunities to reevaluate what we are giving priority to in our daily living. We may begin to prioritize relationships, nature, travel, religious or spiritual communities, or whatever may be important to us. This befriending may encourage us to have our affairs in order so that others will not have to make difficult decisions on our behalf.

Befriending our mortality can make us able to be more fully present with others who are dying, grieving, or in need of a caring listener. As we have worked through some of the sadness, fears, and uncertainty of our own death and dying, we become better equipped

to support others who are facing their grief and uncertainty.

I end with a brief story. One of my grandfather's morning rituals was to read the obituaries. One day I got the courage to ask him why he read the obituaries every morning. He replied, "To see if I'm dead yet and since I'm not, I guess we get to go to work and enjoy another day." What struck me



back then and still today is the phrase "enjoy another day." As you befriend your grief and mortality, may you also enjoy the possibility of another day.

This writer wants to acknowledge that facing our own mortality is difficult. Please be kind to yourself in your grief journey, don't go it alone, and know that the Northern Light Bereavement Coordinators are here for you.