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R I S E

L E A D

G R O W

avail [uh-veyl]

verb: to be of use or value; profit; advantage

Lose & Be Well

Finding wholeness in the mess

LESTER HOLT is an American journalist and news anchor for the weekday edition of NBC Nightly News and Dateline NBC. I look forward to hearing these words as he signs off: “Please take care of yourself and each other.”

The pandemic pushed us to take a deep dive in the well of holistic health—body, mind and spirit. The red light is on indicating maintenance is needed in the engine of our souls and in the souls of our children, who are experiencing innumerable trauma events. Often, the pain of global and personal grief and loss is the source of this alarm.

Leaders are often the “go to” people for those whose soul self care meter light flashes. They come with broken hearts, minds that can’t think straight and spirits that want to soar, but liftoff is hindered. The manifestation of the stress, anxiety and trauma of grief and loss settles in bodies as disease and disorder.

As influencers, what do we do when the state of our souls resembles the souls who come for help, care and hope?

Leaders learn to be the best at playing our game—and winning it! But do we know how to lose? We are “more than conquerors,” right? So, this question is perhaps counterintuitive and sounds almost blasphemous. John W. James and Russell Friedman, authors of *The Grief Recovery Handbook*, define grief as “the normal and natural reaction to loss of any kind” and “the most neglected and misunderstood experience often by both the griever and those around them,” adding, “We’re taught how to acquire things, not what to do when we lose them.”

In 2015, the senior pastor of my church died. I had served for 20 years as his executive coordinator. Our leaders and congregation didn’t know how to process the grief of this great loss in a healthy way. The infection of the untreated gaping wound and the rush to “move on” resulted in a diaspora of broken hearts and a broken church.

I am a certified Grief Recovery Method Specialist who walks with griever, many of whom are leaders, into the dark night of the soul where God often does His best work. Here our “true self” holds real feelings of bitterness, cold anger, unforgiveness, fears

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WHAT DO WE DO WHEN THE STATE OF OUR SOULS RESEMBLES THE SOULS WHO COME FOR HELP, CARE AND HOPE?

and rejection that yearn to be heard and healed so we can all breathe free.

How do we handle pain so that it won’t handle us and come out sideways? Consider learning to lose *and* be wholly well (see 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 and 3 John 2).

1. Slow down, and sit a while. Trust God to handle things as you rest in Him (Psalm 46:10; Matthew 11:28-30).

2. Talk to Jesus and a safe therapist/counselor about how you really feel. It’s OK (Proverbs 11:14).

3. Make a paradigm shift in understanding love (Romans 12:1-2; 13:10).

Signing off, Jesus says it best, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39, NKJV). ▮



RENÉE HILL CARTER is an Advanced Certified Grief Recovery Method® Specialist and Teacher. She is the author of two books, *What About Me? Staying Healthy and Whole (While You’re Helping Others)* and *A Good Work Begun*, which received the Christian Author Award for poetry. As a Soul Care Provider, Renée’s ministry is to encourage and inspire others to walk and work through grief and loss and other pains of life to unlock their God-given identity, purpose and potential. Married to her husband, Bill, for over 50 years, they are parents of three adult children and two grandchildren (reneehillcarter.com).

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